

Rocky Mountain Conservancy

QUARTERLY

Spring | 2026

Look Inside

LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
PG. 2

ASK OUR EXPERTS
How do donor-advised funds work?
PG. 3

FEATURED STORIES
Rocky's last lookout: A legacy worth preserving, Rooted in Rocky: Newest board member brings west side perspective, Research conference roundup: From discovery to decision, and Around the Conservancy
PG. 4-15

OUR AMAZING DONORS
Supporting Rocky Mountain National Park
PG. 12-13

CROSSWORD PUZZLE
Take your knowledge of Rocky and solve these clues
PG. 11

Mapping the future: How geospatial interns are shaping stewardship

By Gabby Sherwood, Communications Associate

From surveying invasive plant species to repairing an eroded trail, stewardship takes many forms.

Behind the scenes each of these efforts begins with another form of stewardship, one that takes place in front of computer screens, across digital maps, and within carefully managed datasets: geospatial data.

In fact, Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP) collects and maintains an astonishing amount of geospatial data: 1,196 data layers. This data is critical to managing a national park—it helps park staff accurately mark park boundaries, repair water lines, relocate archeological sites, treat invasive plants, maintain wilderness campsites, and monitor visitor use.

Within Rocky's Resource Stewardship division, the Geospatial Office hires interns to help manage this essential data. These interns are not observers; they are contributors.

Supported in part by Rocky Mountain Conservancy, the geospatial program leads are training the next generation of land stewards in crucial data, mapping, and technology skills that help inform park management decisions.

In this intensive, hands-on program, interns gain relevant and current skills in the use of geographic information systems (GIS), global navigation satellite systems (GNSS), and a variety of information technology (IT) tools.

By providing current data and high-quality map products that keep visitors and staff informed of the best available information, the interns' contributions benefit all areas of Rocky and its gateway communities.

2020 GIS Intern Camille Horn uses GNSS equipment to map ecological disturbances on the landscape at the Deer Ridge Junction.



Continued on page 14



An aspen grove in the Endo Valley Picnic Area.

A Message from our Executive Director

Board of Directors

WALTER BORNEMAN (PRESIDENT)
Estes Park, CO

GREG DANIELSON (VICE PRESIDENT)
Niwot, CO

DIANE GODDARD (TREASURER)
Estes Park, CO

CHRISTINA KRAFT (SECRETARY)
Estes Park, CO

BRIAN ROSS (PAST PRESIDENT)
Denver, CO

AMY CROSSLAND
Grand Lake, CO

RICH FEDORCHAK
Estes Park, CO

LIZA GRANT
Denver, CO

LAURIE MATHEWS
Denver, CO

CLAUDINE PERRAULT
Estes Park, CO

DARLA SIDLES
Tucson, AZ

KIM SKYELANDER
Loveland, CO

ZACHARY WIEBE
Ft Collins, CO

Dear Friends,

Stewardship of Rocky Mountain National Park takes many forms—and it begins with you.

When we think of stewardship, we often picture folks at work: trail crews, fire rehabilitation efforts, rangers leading field trip programs, and wildlife monitoring across the park. But these hands-on efforts aren't possible without the generosity of people like you who care deeply about our cherished park.

There are many ways to support your national park through Rocky Mountain Conservancy. From making gifts of stock, including the Conservancy in your estate plans, purchasing a license plate, or donating a vehicle—your generosity sustains not only the protection of Rocky's trails, plants, and wildlife but also the people who serve at the front lines of that work: park rangers, volunteers, first responders, and members of our Conservation Corps and High School Leadership Corps.

In this issue, you'll read about how a unique geospatial internship program is mentoring and training the next generation of land stewards by passing down critical skills that benefit all areas of Rocky. You'll also learn about plans for restoring the historic Shadow Mountain Fire Lookout, and the recent Biennial Research Conference.

The Conservancy team continues to grow and evolve. We recently welcomed a new corps field supervisor and a new board member, and we extend our sincere gratitude to longtime board members whose leadership and service have shaped our organization and the park's gateway communities in meaningful ways. We remain deeply grateful for our incredible staff, fellows, interns, volunteers, board members, donors, and members, who make our work in stewardship and education possible. And as Rocky Mountain Conservancy nears our 95th anniversary, we join our nation in celebrating the 250th anniversary of the United States and Colorado's 150th anniversary in 2026.

Because of you, Rocky continues to thrive today and will remain resilient for generations to come. Thank you for your commitment to this remarkable national treasure.

Warmly,



Estee Rivera Murdock

Estee Rivera Murdock
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Ask the Conservancy

How do donor-advised funds work?

You may have heard of the term donor-advised fund (DAF), but what is it and how does it work?

Think of a donor-advised fund as a charitable savings account. You contribute money to the fund, receive an immediate tax deduction, and then recommend grants from that fund to the nonprofits you care about, like Rocky Mountain Conservancy, whenever the timing feels right. DAFs are a simple, flexible way to give.

Here's how DAFs work:

- You open a donor-advised fund through a sponsoring organization (often a community foundation or financial services firm).
- You contribute cash, stocks, or other assets to the fund.
- You receive a tax deduction in the year you make the contribution.
- Then, over time, you recommend gifts from your fund to the charities you want to support.

Many donors appreciate DAFs because they allow you to plan your giving thoughtfully. You can set money aside during a high-income year, grow those funds tax-free, and distribute gifts to the causes you love when it makes the most sense for you.

Supporting Rocky Mountain Conservancy through your DAF

Making a gift through your donor-advised fund is an easy and intentional way to support the future of Rocky Mountain National Park.

If you're ready to recommend a grant to the Conservancy, here's what to do:

1. Log in to your donor-advised fund provider's online portal.
2. Search for Rocky Mountain Conservancy and use our tax ID number: 84-0472090.
3. Enter your gift details, including the amount and, if applicable, how you would like the gift designated.
4. Submit your grant recommendation to your fund administrator.



Pasque Flowers blooming in Tuxedo Park.

One important tip: Please ask your fund administrator to include your name and contact information with the gift. This allows us to properly thank you and keep you informed about the impact of your generosity.

If you have questions about DAFs and other ways to give, we're here to help. Please contact us at 970-586-0108, ext. 109. As always, we encourage you to consult your financial or legal advisor when considering charitable giving strategies.

Shop Conservancy Nature Stores



HAT – RMNP BEAR FLORAL
This orange and peach hat features a vibrant abstract floral design within a bear outline. Under the brim is a similar design that is unique to each hat.
Price: $18.99
Member Price: $16.14



GLASS – RMNP ANIMAL HEXAGONS
This colorful 16 oz glass features hexagonal images of Rocky Mountain National Park animals with flowers and trees. Dishwasher safe.
Price: $14.99
Member Price: $12.74



TOTE BAG – WILDFLOWERS OF THE USA
This cream-based tote bag with thick canvas straps features a variety of colorful wildflowers found across the USA on both sides. Wildflowers feature both common and scientific names. Made with 100% recycled cotton. Roughly 16.5" x 16"
Price: $20.99
Member Price: $17.84



T-SHIRT – RMNP WHIMSY FOX
The front of this sage-colored t-shirt features a whimsical image of a fox with dark green, white, and red designs. 100% cotton.
Price: $26.99
Member Price: $22.94



MAGNET OR ORNAMENT – RMNP WOODEN FOX
This handmade wooden 3D fox design is available in both an ornament and magnet. The middle of the fox body features a carved wooden scene of a fox wandering through a forest. Measures roughly 4" x 3 1/2".
Price: $14.99
Member Price: $12.74

Find more great merchandise at www.RMConservancy.org/shop



A lookout park ranger scans for wildfires east of the tower (1933).

Rocky's last lookout: A legacy worth preserving

By Karen Lloyd-D'Onofrio, Development Officer

Each year, nearly two thousand hikers make the five-mile rugged hike up the mountain to visit the tower. Once at the tower, hikers experience views of Rocky, the national forest, and the town of Grand Lake.

Scan this QR code to support projects like this!

In celebration of Historic Preservation Month, we are proud to announce a new phase in a long-term project that will preserve the Shadow Mountain Fire Lookout located on the west side of the park.

In the past, the Conservancy has funded repairs to the tower's stairway and balcony (1996), followed by a historical structure report (2020/2021), and a construction design plan for rehabilitation options (2022/2023). To date, the Conservancy and its donors have committed around $300,000 to preserve this iconic structure.

This 1930 eras tower is the last remaining fire lookout tower within Rocky Mountain National Park and sits atop a natural rocky outcrop on Shadow Mountain at an elevation of nearly 10,000 feet.

Each year, nearly two thousand hikers make the five-mile rugged hike up the mountain to visit the tower. Once at the tower, hikers can experience views of Rocky, the national forest, and the town of Grand Lake.

This important structure is listed on the National Register of Historic Places for its rustic-style architecture of locally sourced rocks and logs and cultural history, but needs critical repairs to improve safety and accessibility. **The construction phase of this multi-year project begins this summer.**

The Conservancy's Conservation Corps will work alongside the park's historic preservation crew to stabilize the masonry stone foundation and remove the rotting stairway and railings leading to the upper floors.

The Shadow Mountain Fire Lookout was built in 1932 (Photographed 1933).



Although many habitats need occasional wildland fires to remain healthy, increasingly hotter and larger wildland fires, like those witnessed in 2020, have had devastating effects on our communities and ecosystems.

These devastating fires, in part, have evolved from the fact that fire had been intentionally excluded from our landscapes for nearly a century. Until the late 1960s, fire suppression was a key strategy in the National Park Service's (NPS) fire management policies, with fire lookout towers playing a major role in carrying out that strategy. Today, the Shadow Mountain Fire Lookout stands as a reminder of this earlier approach to forest and fire management policy within Rocky.

During the 1920s, the NPS adopted a forest management policy modeled after the United States Forest Service (USFS), one that emphasized fire suppression from national park landscapes.

NPS's embrace of fire suppression was driven by a series of devastating wildfires that hit several western national parks, including Glacier National Park. Charged with preserving wilderness and scenic landscapes for visitors to enjoy, park foresters argued that wildfires went against the park's values and wasted valuable resources like timber.

Fire suppression was implemented more aggressively during the New Deal era. Established in 1933, the Civilian Conservation Corps cleared burn areas and constructed miles of fire roads and trails throughout the park.

The Shadow Mountain Fire Lookout, built by a local contractor in 1932, emerged from this fire management philosophy.

During the early years, male rangers staffed the tower for several days at a time, often alone, despite its capacity to house up to ten people. Their daily routine centered on looking for signs of fire, sending daily reports via a rudimentary telephone system, and handling maintenance tasks.



The Shadow Mountain Fire Lookout is in critical need of structural repairs.

After WWII, married couples began serving as seasonal residents. **The tower remained in use until the late 1960s, when the NPS moved away from strict fire suppression and towards policies that recognized fire's role in restoring natural conditions with the introduction of prescribed burns.** The tower has been closed to public access since 2015 due to deterioration.

The Conservancy is an important partner in the preservation of the park's history and has supported the preservation of several properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places, which includes McGraw Ranch, the Moraine Park Museum and Amphitheater, Holzwarth Historic Site, and the William Allen White Cabin.

Each structure plays an important role in Rocky's historical landscapes and enriches visitor experience and understanding of our nation's history through thoughtful interpretation and programming.

The author thanks Tucker Stapleton, the Conservancy-funded museum technician at Rocky, for assisting us in locating the photographs of the Shadow Mountain Fire Lookout. **If you would like to learn more about the Conservancy's support of historical preservation in the park, please contact Karen Lloyd-D'Onofrio at karen.lloyddonofrio@rmconservancy.org.**



Crossland during her family's backpacking trip up the East Inlet in 2020.

By Kaci Yoh, Communications Manager

Rooted in Rocky: Newest board member brings west side perspective

"I've always looked for ways to connect with people in meaningful ways. Serving on the Conservancy board feels like a natural extension of that."

— Amy Crossland

Crossland is the newest board member of Rocky Mountain Conservancy.



Rocky Mountain Conservancy is pleased to welcome Amy Crossland as the newest member of its Board of Directors. Crossland brings an enduring connection to Rocky Mountain National Park, deep ties to the Grand Lake community, and an extensive record of nonprofit service.

"Amy brings both heart and perspective to the board," said Conservancy Board President Walt Borneman. **"Her personal connection to the west side of the park, her family's involvement with our Conservation Corps, and her lifelong commitment to service make her a tremendous addition to the Conservancy's leadership."**

Crossland's connection to Rocky began in the mid-1980s when she first visited the Kawuneeche Valley. Although she has spent decades returning to the area, a recent tour of the exclosure at Beaver Creek helped her fully understand the scale of wetland degradation taking place in the Valley and the critical importance of restoration efforts the Conservancy supports through the Kawuneeche Valley Restoration Collaborative.

"Seeing the impacts on the wetlands and wildlife was eye-opening," Crossland said. "It's such a vital landscape, not just for the park, but for everything downstream. The work happening there is incredibly important."

Crossland and her son Blake Crossland while he worked for Rocky's west side trail crew in 2021.



Originally drawn to Colorado as a college student, Crossland worked at the Grand Lake Lodge and later transferred to Colorado State University, where she completed her degree. She recalls arriving in Grand Lake at age 19—after applying for the job by mail and with little idea of what to expect—and instantly falling in love with the landscape. “That summer changed my life,” she said. “I found the place where I wanted to plant my roots.”

Crossland and her husband later raised their three sons in the Denver area but made a conscious decision to give their children the freedom to explore and connect with nature in Grand Lake. The family purchased a condo there when their children were toddlers, and Grand Lake has remained a central part of their lives ever since.

One of Crossland’s sons, Blake, participated in the Rocky Mountain Conservancy Conservation Corps, an experience she describes as transformative. Blake went on to serve as a crew leader, gaining leadership skills, technical experience, and a deep respect for the land—skills that later supported his work with Rocky and continue to serve him in his current role at the Winter Park Resort.

Crossland spends most of her time on the west side of the park and names Rock Cut as her favorite place inside park boundaries, particularly when changing weather reveals dynamic views of the peaks. She is especially inspired by the alpine tundra and the resilience of its tiny plants.

She has devoted much of her professional life to volunteer service. Crossland’s experience includes mentoring first-time mothers, supporting patients through the American Red Cross, volunteering with Ronald McDonald House, assisting with equine-assisted therapy programs for children with disabilities, and supporting free dental clinics for underserved communities.

“I’ve always looked for ways to connect with people in meaningful ways,” Crossland said. “Serving on the Conservancy board feels like a natural extension of that.” As a board member, Crossland looks forward to supporting the Conservancy’s work in the park to help ensure that future generations experience the same wonder and belonging in the wild spaces that have shaped her own life.

The Crossland family’s 2020 backpacking trip up the East Inlet.



Crossland and her husband Kevin Crossland at the top of Trail Ridge Road.





Attendees engage in open dialog about Rocky's wetlands during the Conversation Café.

By Ada Collins, Continental Divide Research Learning Center

Research conference roundup: From discovery to decision

Rocky Mountain Conservancy proudly supports the Biennial Research Conference to help foster awareness and education of important research discoveries.

The Rocky Vegetation Crew conducts restoration work in the Kawuneeche Valley.



Research is key to the interpretation, management, and preservation of natural and cultural resources. The Continental Divide Research Learning Center oversees research conducted in Rocky Mountain National Park, and the 2026 Biennial Research Conference is a showcase of this research.

Presented by the Conservancy, the conference took place March 4-5th in Estes Park. More than 250 researchers, park staff, and community members attended. Presented under the theme "Park stewardship: From discovery to decision", this free conference featured 26 oral presentations and more than 20 poster presentations.

To offer more opportunities for community engagement, a live screening of the "Challenges and changes for alpine ecosystems" session was open to the public at the Kawuneeche Visitor Center in Grand Lake. This session included a panel on alpine ecosystem stewardship and management, in which in-person attendees engaged in a Q&A session with vegetation, management, and law enforcement specialists from the park. In addition, round table sessions were held during the Conversation Café on wetland ecosystems. Attendees had the opportunity to engage in open dialogue of the importance of park wetlands, their perceptions, and how to be stewards of these vital ecosystems.

Sessions included presentations on fire effects and forestry management, archival research and the preservation of historic architecture, Conservancy-funded research, alpine tundra monitoring and management, wetland restoration, adaptive wildlife management, and long-term monitoring projects.

The "Next generation science: Rocky Mountain Conservancy research fellows" session featured four presenters comprised of past Bailey Research Fellows and Scholars-in-Residence, highlighting the diversity of research in the park. These fellowships are supported by the Conservancy and Rocky.

2024 Bailey Fellow John Lambert presented his research on

preparedness of wilderness day hikers and trail runners. Using a proxy definition for preparedness, Lambert found that 25% of trail runners and 15.7% of day hikers were “wilderness prepared”, yet that most individuals overestimated their levels of preparedness. Furthermore, almost a third of day hikers reported not informing a third party of their plan for the day and an equal amount of trail runners reported going significantly off trail during their run. Park managers can use this information to elevate preparedness messaging.

2024 Scholar-in-Residence Chris Maienza conducted surveys of lodgepole pine and spruce-fir forests in park plots burned by the Cameron Peak and East Troublesome Fires in 2020. This research can be used by park managers to understand how understory vegetation may change in response to future fire events.

2025 Bailey Fellow Theo Kuhn monitored long-term stream temperature trends across the park. Stream temperatures can have implications to natural resource management, especially fisheries management. Utilizing longstanding datasets, Kuhn found that from 2008 to 2023, there was a general upwards trend in stream temperature.

Continuing with water resources, 2025 Scholar-in-Residence Katie Gannon presented her research on algal bloom growth in Sky Pond and The Loch. Mountain lakes are sensitive ecosystems that can be studied as ecological indicators of global changes. As a member of the Mountain Limnology Lab at the University of Colorado, Boulder, she sought to evaluate how changes in water temperature and lake deposition could lead to filamentous algal blooms (FAB).

Rocky Mountain Conservancy proudly supports the Biennial Research Conference to help foster awareness and education of important research discoveries happening in our parks and communities. The next research conference is planned for 2028.



The CU Boulder Mountain Limnology Lab conducts field work on inflatable boats in Rocky.

Lambert conducts a survey with a trail runner in Rocky.



Around the Conservancy

From classroom to corps: Conservancy grows with new corps supervisor

By Gabby Sherwood, Communications Associate

The Rocky Mountain Conservancy Stewardship team recently welcomed Scott Vlasak, the new corps field supervisor.

Originally from Reading, Pennsylvania, Vlasak earned his bachelor's degree in secondary education and history from Temple University in 2016. He spent a few years teaching and substitute teaching across Philadelphia and eastern Pennsylvania before realizing he wanted to pursue a different path outside the classroom.

Vlasak was first introduced to the world of conservation corps in 2019 as a crew member of the Mountain West Branch of the American Conservation Experience (ACE) in southern Utah. What he intended to be a short break from teaching quickly became a long-term change. "Before I went out to Utah, I was coming to terms with the idea of being in a classroom for the rest of my career," Vlasak said. But once he started building trails and restoring wild places, Vlasak knew he'd found his new path.

Following his first season with ACE, Vlasak continued building his conservation career across Colorado and Utah. He maintained trails on Colorado's 14ers with Rocky Mountain Youth Corps and the Colorado 14ers Initiative, and later advanced within ACE from crew leader to senior project manager. With each role, Vlasak gained firsthand experience in both the challenges and rewards of corps work.



Vlasak leads a chainsaw training for new sawyers in Bryce Canyon National Park.

Now, as the corps field supervisor at the Conservancy, Vlasak draws on his background in education and conservation to provide training and support to field coordinators, crew leaders, and crew members throughout the season. **"Training the next generation of land stewards is a big part of my job," Vlasak said. "I want to help build an environment where people feel supported and safe, and where they can challenge themselves to grow."**

This winter, Vlasak worked alongside Stewardship Manager Dani Woods to interview hundreds of candidates and help onboard and train the field coordinators in preparation for the 2026 Conservation Corps season.

"I am so excited to have Vlasak on board as the new Corps Supervisor," said Woods. "Not only does having him here allow us to move through hiring more efficiently but Vlasak brings an absolute wealth of knowledge that will help us grow our program in the right direction."

In his first year with the Conservancy, Vlasak is eager to lead and learn. "I want to allow others to help me understand the culture and what they need out of it," said Vlasak.

"I'm most excited to share Rocky Mountain National Park with other people," said Vlasak. "Being a crew member was such a positive change in my life. It's amazing to provide this experience to young people who might fall in love with outdoor stewardship and make a career out of it."

This year, the Conservation Corps enters its 23rd year of providing unforgettable experiences for young adults in the beautiful Rocky Mountains.

Conservancy Corps Field Supervisor Scott Vlasak.



Rocky Mountain Conservancy Park Puzzler

Across

3. Supported by Rocky Mountain Conservancy, this program dedicated to getting kids to explore the park's wonders was launched at Rocky in 1993.

4. Rocky Mountain Conservancy Bettie Courses are named in honor of this tundra ecologist's legacy and lasting impact on alpine tundra research.

6. As the snow begins to melt, this hardy, early blooming wildflower is a sign that spring is coming!

7. This animal is used by RMNP staff to pack out waste from wilderness toilets.

8. This small cushion plant looks like a bed of moss, has pink colored flowers, and blooms in the alpine tundra from mid-June to August.

9. This individual served briefly as the first superintendent of Rocky Mountain National Park from 1915-1916.

12. This animal is the symbol of Rocky Mountain National Park.

13. This mountain in the park is named after its two prominent snow-filled ravines (couloirs) that converge, forming a "Y" shape.

14. This shrub produces small cherries that serve as food for many species like black bears, but the seeds, stems, and leaves contain cyanide, which is toxic to many animals.

Down

1. This species of finch is characterized by its highly specialized bill, adapted for removing seeds from cones.

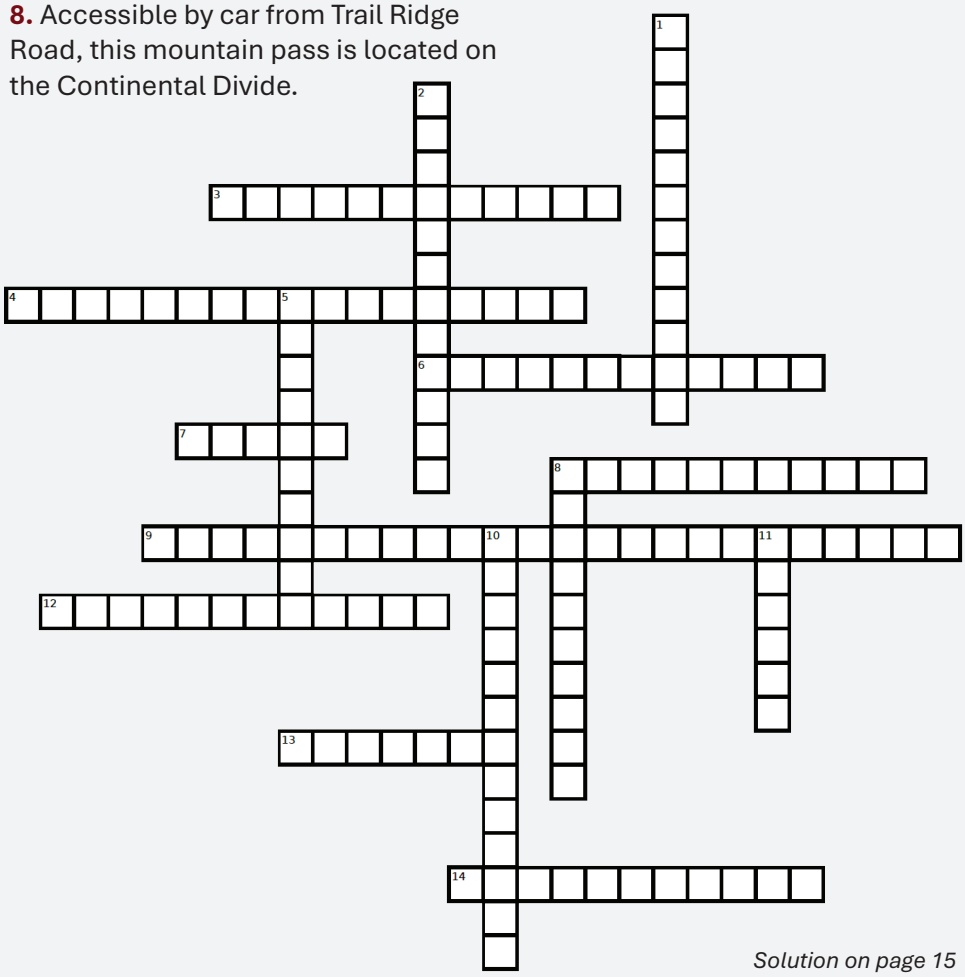
2. The Calypso orchid (Calypso bublosa) is commonly known by this alternative name.

5. This scenic waterfall in the park can be accessed by a short walk from a pull out on Old Fall River Road or a longer hike from the gate in the winter.

8. Accessible by car from Trail Ridge Road, this mountain pass is located on the Continental Divide.

10. This individual was the first director of the National Park Service. He advocated that park buildings should blend with their natural surroundings. His influence remains as many park buildings were built with a rustic design.

11. The teeth of this animal grow their entire lives because they need to continuously gnaw and chew on building material.



Solution on page 15

Florida: A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL-FREE, WITHIN THE STATES, 800-435-7352 (800-HELP-FLA) OR BY VISITING www.FloridaConsumerHelp.com REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE. Florida Registration #CH47404. **Georgia:** A full and fair description of our programs and our financial statement summary is available upon request at our office and phone number indicated above. **Colorado:** Colorado residents may obtain copies of registration and financial documents from the office of the Secretary of State, 303-894-2860, www.sos.state.co.us/ Reg. No. 20063004207. **Illinois:** Contracts and reports regarding the Rocky Mountain Conservancy are on file with the Illinois Attorney General. **Kansas:** In Kansas our license number is 21-024583. **Maryland:** For the cost of copies and postage, documents and information filed under the Maryland charitable organizations laws can be obtained from the Secretary of State, Charitable Division, State House, Annapolis, MD 21401, (800)825-4510. **Michigan:** MICS #54862. **Mississippi:** The official registration and financial information of ROCKY MOUNTAIN CONSERVANCY may be obtained from the Mississippi Secretary of State's office by calling 888-236-6167. Registration by the Secretary of State does not imply endorsement. **Nevada:** The state of incorporation of the Rocky Mountain Conservancy is Colorado. **New Jersey:** INFORMATION FILED WITH THE ATTORNEY GENERAL CONCERNING THIS CHARITABLE SOLICITATION AND THE PERCENTAGE OF CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED BY THE CHARITY DURING THE LAST REPORTING PERIOD THAT WERE DEDICATED TO THE CHARITABLE PURPOSE MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY BY CALLING 973-504-6215 AND IS AVAILABLE ON THE INTERNET AT: http://www.state.nj.us/lps/ca/charfrm.htm. REGISTRATION WITH THE ATTORNEY GENERAL DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT. **New York:** Upon Request, from the Attorney General Charities Bureau, 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271. **North Carolina:** Financial information about this organization and a copy of its license are available for the State Solicitation Licensing Branch at 1-888-830-4989 within North Carolina) or 919-807-2214 (outside North Carolina). This is not an endorsement by the state. **Pennsylvania:** The official registration and financial information of ROCKY MOUNTAIN CONSERVANCY may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free within Pennsylvania 800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement. **Virginia:** Financial statements are available from the State Office of Consumer Affairs, PO Box 1163, Richmond, VA 23218. **Washington:** The notice of solicitation required by the Charitable Solicitations Act is on file with the Washington Secretary of State, and information relating to financial affairs of ROCKY MOUNTAIN CONSERVANCY is available from the Secretary of State, and the toll-free number for Washington residents: 1-800-332-4483. **West Virginia:** West Virginia residents may obtain a summary of the registration and financial documents form the Secretary of State, State Capitol, Charleston, WV 25305. Inquiries can also be made to CAROLYN CARLSON at ROCKY MOUNTAIN CONSERVANCY. CONTRIBUTIONS ARE DEDUCTABLE FOR FEDERAL INCOME TAX PUPOSES IN ACCORDANCE WITH APPLICABLE LAW.

REGISTRATION WITH A STATE AGENCY DOES NOT CONSTITUTE OR IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL OR RECOMMENDATION BY THAT STATE

Thank you to the following donors who gave gifts in memory of or in honor of others. A complete list of donors will be available in the Conservancy's annual report.

Gifts received between December 1, 2025 and February 28, 2026

Rocky Mountain Conservancy

ALL IN HONOR

Delia Bakeman in honor of Amy Hall

Jennifer and Robert Bell in honor of Richard and Karen Sandberg

John Benner in honor of T Alina and Mira Skujins

Kathy Blackburn in honor of Jim and Susan Westfall

Lynda Price Bohager in honor of the Z.Q.P. Forestry Operations Specialist

Kathy and James Brown in honor of James Brown

Dr. Thomas Buchanan in honor of Dr. R. Thomas Buchanan

Arlene and Barry Corey in honor of Estee Rivera Murdock

Christy Crosser in honor of Estes Park Museum staff

Deyan Crow in honor of Paul Burris

Julimarie Dagen in honor of Marc McCurry

James L. and Karen S. Daugherty in honor of Kyle Patterson

Riley and Rosie Donahoe in honor of Debbie and Jerry Smolinski

Sara Ferguson in honor of Craig J. Thomas

Wendy Fiedler in honor of Kate Wallerius

Mary Fischer in honor of Jackie and Scott Zey

Mary E. Fox in honor of Shelby Ahrendt

Rita Gaddis in honor of RMNP Trail Crews

Matthew Gonzalez in honor of Nicolas and Jory

Matthew and Marie Gordon in honor of Erik Stensland

Brittany Gratton in honor of Emma Marcucelli

Daniel Hagerstrand in honor of Eric Hagerstrand

Delmer and Deborah Harris in honor of Susan K. Harris

Kimberly Harris in honor of Sydney Harris

High Country Beverage in honor of Aaron Milanowski

Mary Sue and Dave Hodge in honor of Joe and Alisa DesJardin

Sheryl Horvath in honor of Glenn and Phyllis Pegram

Carolyn and Bill Howard in honor of the William T. Grant Family

Greg and Sheila Hraha in honor of Darin Hraha

Douglas Karowsky in honor of a helpful friend in the park

Rebecca Krafft in honor of Kathy and John Long

Deborah Leonard in honor of Vivita K. Leonard

Robyn Lightcap in honor of Ainsley Lightcap

Dale and Janet Lindstrom in honor of the national park

Duncan Liotta in honor of Brian Ross

Kelly Madigan in honor of Thomas and Kerry Madigan

Sue Mahoney in honor of Noah Kovar

Ronnie and Judy Markell in honor of Pam Prairie and Bill Premo

Ruth E. Medak in honor of the Medak Family

Suzanne and Alan Miller in honor of Linda and Fred Kelsey

Kerry Morimoto in honor of Linda Goff

Christopher Nekarda in honor of Susie Medak and Gregory Murphy

Douglas and Marcia Nelson in honor of Erik Stensland

Maximilian Neuberger in honor of Loraine M. Neuberger

Katherine and Andrew Parran in honor of Susan K. Harris

Jeri Peirce in honor of the Conservation Corps and park staff

Jennifer Petit in honor of Don and Linda Sperber

Jerry and Mary Ann Petr in honor of Jim and Jan Swaney

Mark and Meredith Pirazzini in honor of Kaia Pirazzini

William and Theresa Preston in honor of Joe and Sam Preston

Richard Purcell and Darlene Johnson in honor of Kathleen and Ken Rutter

Allison Ramsey in honor of Kathy and Ernest Cushing

Helen Robins in honor of Tom Robins

Mimi Rodgers in honor of Anna Rodgers

Richard and Karen Sandberg in honor of Owen, Colin, and Alison Bell

Rochelle Schantz Hoff in honor of Diane Friedman

Margaret Sharkoffmadrid and Michael Madrid in honor of Jane B. Sharkoff

Jonathan Shikes in honor of Bob and Patty Shikes

Caitlin Smallwood in honor of Christine Boesch

Margaret R. Stockover in honor of Every Ranger

Helen Stratakes in honor of Ann and Ralph Pratt

Jan Sturges in honor of Valerie McBeth and Kevin Allen

Nancy L. Tanner in honor of Amy Rodriguez

Jennifer Tempest in honor of Tom and Judy Ward

Christie Thomas in honor of Jim Addleman

Dr. Nancy P. Thomas in honor of Mr. and Mrs. L.B. Thomas

Nancy and John Thuit in honor of Judith Beechy

Donna Trentel in honor of Donald and Susan Trentel

Susan Trentel in honor of Donald and Susan Trentel

Celia and Steve Voorhees in honor of Paul Voorhees and Wendi Rea

Roger A. Walton and Helen T. Anderson in honor of our birthdays and wedding anniversary

Marsha Wertzberger in honor of Marsha Wertzberger

Kathryn Willis in honor of Nicki Willis Overeem

David Wise in honor of Andrew Washington Wise

ALL IN MEMORY

Boyd L. and Shirley E. Adkinson in memory of Alex Lloyd Gibson

Judy Allard in memory of Kermit Allard

Marian C. Ballerine in memory of Lester Ballerine

David L. and Luann Barlow in memory of Betty Ottesen

Sybil Barnes in memory of Audrey Putney

Amelia Battaglio in memory of Gregory King Dawson

Brian Beins in memory of Jim Beins

Gary and Elizabeth Bernhard in memory of Ed and Roberta Kice

Patricia D. Blume in memory of Arthur W Blume III

Christine Boesch in memory of Arthur and Ruby Andrews

Elizabeth Boesen in memory of Barbara Jean Manning Phillips

Sallie Brackman in memory of Jim Stensvaag

Dr. Ginger K. Brainard and Donald A.Brainard DMV in memory of James Stensvaag

Richard Brandon and Amy Skinner in memory of Eric Skinner

Richard Brandon and Amy Skinner in memory of Rosalie Bargmann and Gail Skinner

Virginia S. Brant in memory of William Nick Brant

Mark Bruno in memory of Mary and Virgil Bruno

Anita M. and Mark N. Clemente in memory of Ryan Clemente

James Colbert and Barbara Bly Colbert in memory of Lisa Colbert

James Colbert and Barbara Bly Colbert in memory of Rick Reblin

Nancy Cowen in memory of Tim Fromelt

James and Billie DeRuiter in memory of Travis James DeRuiter

Karen Duncan and Jack Stevens in memory of Donna Scheeter

Glen and Lisa Dunkin in memory of Jack and Louise Zobrist and Effie Pospisil

Michael Eilts in memory of Arlys Eilts

Anna Engeln in memory of Francille J. Walker

Laura Evancho in memory of Audrey Putney

William R. and Sharon M. Farr in memory of Betty Ottesen

Vickie Ferguson in memory of John Denver

Deborah and Luis Fierros in memory of Diane Arens

H. Veronika Gaia in memory of Kyra Toledo

Shan Galloway in memory of Kenneth Cheng

Danielle Gardner in memory of Melvin Earl Gardner

Janet L. Gehring in memory of Martin D. Wiesehan

Jim and Mary Louise Gerek in memory of Robert Grupe

Brenda Gibb Moore and Terrance Moore in memory of Wayne and Janice Gibb

James and Yvonne Glendenning in memory of Richard Ames Glendenning

Barbara Godin in memory of Thomas Godin

V. Jean Gratigny in memory of Kristin Weller

John Guthrie in memory of Ann Houghton

Carol Halvorson in memory of Jean M. Smith

Barbara Hansen in memory of Carl Dean Hansen

Susan K Harris in memory of Ron Harris

James and Diane Hein in memory of Stephen Carl Fry

Richard Hickman in memory of Beverly Kay Hickman

Patricia Hickman in memory of Isaac Martin Hickman

Joseph Hodges Jr. in memory of Elaine Hodges-Harvey

Bernard Hohman II in memory of Bernard Hohman

Barbara and Tracy Hood in memory of Lola Brett

Kathryn Hornbein in memory of Tom Hornbein

Robert W. and Mary Ann Jackson in memory of Dr. Allen Herrington

Barbara A. Johnson in memory of Chris Sibilia

Tom and Elisabeth Jones in memory of Barbara Lynn Gebhardt

Anna Jones in memory of Joe Yount

Elaine L. Karns in memory of Dorothy Gibbs

Milan Karspeck and Margaret McCreary in memory of Jim Disney

April Kasper in memory of Charles "Bud" Floerke

M.B. Kirkham in memory of Marguerite Glynn

Marianne Klocksiem in memory of Harold and Marguerite Klocksiem

Ann and DJ Knipping in memory of Ralph and Ree Ritzen

Deborah Kodros in memory of my parents

Kenneth L. and Linda L. Kovar in memory of Emmett T. Powers

Patty Lacey in memory of Dan Edwards

Biff F. Landeck II in memory of Sam and Marilyn Bruner

Christopher Levine in memory of Kathy Levine

Johanna B. Liebling in memory of Doug Liebling

Kay Linder in memory of Colley Tobin

Rala Mandelson in memory of Alice Schwartz

Kent C. and Régine Mericle in memory of Alexe Froment Mericle

Dana Miller in memory of Florence Miller

Frances and Albert Mitterer in memory of Betty Hedlund

Rosemary D. Morris in memory of Bill Morris

Mary Ann Morton-Bliley in memory of David M.Bliley

Loraine M. Neuberger in memory of Jim Stensvaag

Scott Newman in memory of Janice Newman

William Newman in memory of Janice Newman

Ruth Mary Nichols in memory of Kristin Weller

Jeffrey and Deb Norton in memory of Tony Ray Walter

Ann O'Leary in memory of George and Margaret Guthrie

Kim O'Leary in memory of Quentin Blakeslee

Laurie Oliver in memory of Kurt Oliver

Carol-Ann Olson in memory of Alan J. Olson

Steve Olson in memory of Judy Olson

Stacy Oshinski in memory of Julie Gwynn

Laura Page in memory of Jude Schroeder

Steve Poehler in memory of Richard Yates

Janet Prehn in memory of Brett Canfield

Kathleen Prucha in memory of Rick Prucha

Grant Putney in memory of Roy Leonard

Eugene Rardin in memory of Juanita A. Rardin

Susan and Bert Rewold in memory of Jo Ann Harvey

Sharon E. Rice in memory of Roy C. Rice

Patricia A. Robinson in memory of Richard and Ruth VanderMey

Eleanore Robinson in memory of Squid Goss

Victor Rortvedt in memory of James Stensvaag

Sarah Rossing in memory of David Cooke

Harriett and Dennis Sisson in memory of Aidan Robinson

Abigail Sperry in memory of Charles H. Sperry

Barie and Aliza Spiegel in memory of Alice Schwartz

Thomas and Beverly Ann Stark in memory of Rebecca Ann Stark

Ned, Ben, and Jack Steele in memory of Judy Steele

Paula E. Stepp in memory of Richard O. Walker

Martha Stofko and Mary Jane Tritsch in memory of Jane Thomas Mullen

Cynthia Story in memory of John and Joann Story

Deb Swartz in memory of Dave Swartz

Linda Thomas-Delancey in memory of Dan Delancey

Diane M. Thurston in memory of Chuck Edelstein

Donna Trentel in memory of Donald P. Trentel

Susan Trentel in memory of Donald P. Trentel

David G. and Patricia A. Unger in memory of Alex Lloyd Gibson

Michael Van Landingham in memory of Bob G

Tom Williams in memory of Rachel Williams

John Wilmoth in memory of Susie Nelson Duggar

Suzy Winchester in memory of Scott Lundgren

Rodney Wolford and Beth Larson in memory of Holly Larson Poage

Deborah Wurdack in memory of Paul Wurdack

Mike and Debbie Zeleznik in memory of Charlie Zeleznik

John M. Zenner in memory of Bill O'Halloran, a long time member and advocate

Jean Zerface in memory of Mark A. Reimers

Michael W. and Michelle S. Zimmerman in memory of Terry Wayne Venard

ALL IN MEMORY OF PAUL H. PRICE

Sandra Bilstad
Tanya Bjorklund
Thomas E. and Jean Christen
Michele Conroy
Kathleen and Dan Cundall
Donna Fick
Dave and Peg Fletcher
Brenda K. and Jonathan C. Fosse
Jessica Foster
Gregory Halac
Amanda Hatfield
Karla Henderson
Amy Heth
Michelle Johnson
Vicky and Tom Leahy
Jim Linden
William N. and Linda K. McCann
Kerry Miller and Peter Weckesser
Karen Mims
Lora A. and Kevin S. Patrick
Susan Samuels

ALL IN MEMORY OF SUSANNE NELSON DUGGER

Leslie Hyne
Jan Reader
Cheri Weyman
Mike and Julie Pratt

ALL IN MEMORY OF KEN SPONSLER

Harold F. and Frances A. Colby
Roger P. and Deanne Corn
Susan L. and Robert D. Ertmer

ALL IN MEMORY OF WAYNE SCOTT BARNES

Tammy Barnes
Terri Campbell and Jeff Odegard
Shirley Carlton
Cat and Charlie Lineberry
Tammy and Paul Poole
Garrett Smith
Pamela Walsh
Andrea and Jeff Wilson

ALL IN HONOR OF THE MCELHONE FAMILY

Scott McElhone
Frederick McElhone
Sarah Moriarty

To make a gift to support Rocky Mountain National Park, visit RMConservancy.org, or call 970-586-0108

Continued from page 1



Carter Patterson (left) and Noah Amme (right) collect winter data in Rocky.

"GIS permeates every aspect of natural resource management today," said RMNP Exotic Plant Management Lead Michael Mueldener, a former geospatial intern. "Developing a deeper understanding of these systems has enabled me to better utilize them in our work projects."

Inside the internship: Mentorship meets stewardship

RMNP Park Planner Cheri Yost and Geospatial Program Lead Shawn Wignall are the interns' primary supervisors. They match each intern to an individual project based on their skills and interests. "The most meaningful aspect of my internship was how I was challenged to grow beyond my perceived skill set," said RMNP Biological Science Technician Chris Coultas, a former geospatial intern. "I was trusted with complex, independent work that pushed me to problem solve, communicate clearly, and take initiative on projects."

While independent work is a major component of the internship experience, it's balanced with strong support from Yost and Wignall, who are invested in their interns' success and professional development. "They provided time to navigate challenges, answer questions, and offer feedback, which helped me build upon my technical skills and confidence," said Coultas.

"I am forever grateful to those I worked with at Rocky Mountain National Park. It was such an amazing experience to work in multidisciplinary data management, since the Geospatial Program serves the whole park, not just Resource Stewardship."

— Camille Horn, natural resource specialist and former geospacial intern

"Yost and Wignall are wonderful mentors and were very attentive to my career aspirations," said Natural Resource Specialist Camille Horn, a former geospatial intern. "They gave me specific tasks I was interested in, invested in my National Park Service career, and spent the time to teach me how to be self-resourced in problem solving."

The intentional and collaborative nature of the internship is part of what makes it special not just for the interns, but the mentors as well. "Working with these talented land managers early in their careers has been a highlight of my time at Rocky," said Yost.

Most interns come from seasonal park positions with backgrounds in cultural resources, vegetation, forestry, and research. "Almost all of them go on to permanent land management careers, where they incorporate their geospatial skills into their daily tasks," said Yost.

When Mueldener learned about the geospatial internship as a seasonal biological science technician at Rocky, he knew it was an opportunity he couldn't pass up. While Mueldener went into

his internship with prior experience using geospatial data systems in the field, he wanted to fully understand the backend of data collection and management.

“Completion of this program was one of the most pivotal steps in my career and provided me with an experience and skill set that has set me apart from many,” said Mueldener. “It gave me a foundation I continue to build upon and will keep building upon the rest of my career.”

Now, as Mueldener leads the RMNP Exotic Plant Management Program, he routinely uses the skills he developed in his internship and often assists his colleagues with what he learned from his geospatial mentors.

Horn had a similarly immersive and career-excelling experience to Mueldener.

“I did so much in a short amount of time,” said Horn. In the span of 6 months, she wrote and finalized a written communications strategy associated with the strategic plan, developed a scientific internal newsletter for park staff and partners, worked within various data management systems, contributed to the setup, distribution plan, equipment tracking, and checkout procedures for a new fleet of Samsung tablets used for field data collection, and contributed to park NEPA compliance. She applies many of her learned skills to her current position as a natural resource specialist at an environmental consulting firm in southern California.

“I am forever grateful to those I worked with at Rocky Mountain National Park,” said Horn. “It was such an amazing experience to work in multidisciplinary data management, since the Geospatial Program serves the whole park, not just Resource Stewardship.”

Rocky Mountain Conservancy’s support of the geospatial internship program reflects a commitment not only to protecting Rocky’s landscapes, but to investing in the people who will steward them into the future. Through hands-on training, mentorship, and goal-oriented project work, the program equips individuals with the necessary skills to succeed in their conservation careers.

“This internship doesn’t just prepare people for future jobs, it helps shape thoughtful, invested land stewards who understand the multifaceted complexities of managing public lands,” said Coultas. “That long-term investment in people is crucial for the future of our parks.”

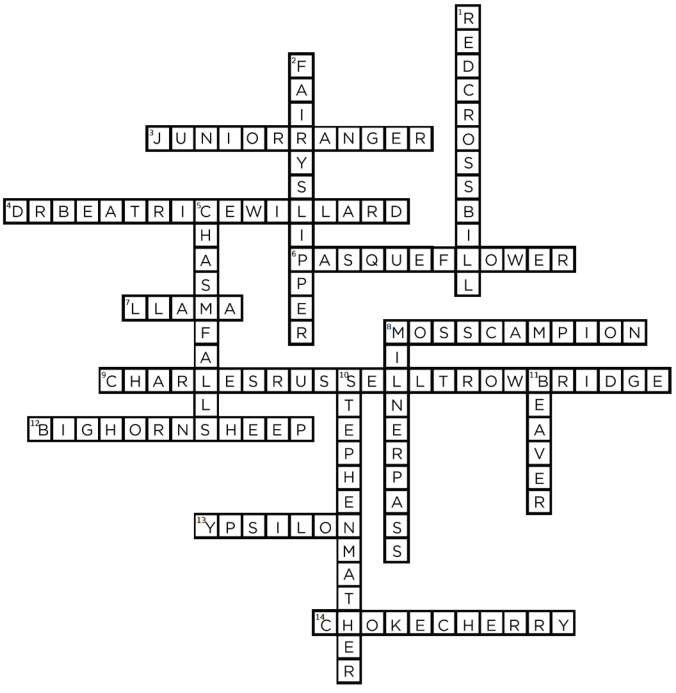


(Left to right) Chris Coultas, Noah Amme, Shawn Wignall, and Michael Mueldener have a geospatial team reunion.

(Left to right) Carter Patterson, Shawn Wignall, and Noah Amme head into the park with GNSS equipment to take field measurements.



Park Puzzler Solution





Katie Caperton, a Rocky Mountain Conservancy environmental education intern, leads students on a winter field trip at Bear Lake.

Visit RMConservancy.org or call 970-586-0108

Rocky Mountain Conservancy

Estee Rivera Murdock, executive director
Gabby Sherwood, *Quarterly* editor
PO Box 3100
Estes Park, CO 80517
(970) 586-0108
Communications@RMConservancy.org

Nature Notes

• **Anne Morris** spotted a harem and bull elk enjoying a midday rest near the Cub Lake Trailhead in September.

• **Anna DeCaria and Linda Gaboury** enjoyed the views at Sky Pond on Labor Day.

• **Patrick McSwiggen** was running along the Wind River Trail in August 2020. As he descended the road to the back side of East Portal, he spotted a black bear enjoying some berries near the road. Since the bear showed no sign of moving on, he redirected his route, allowing him to cross paths with a short-tailed weasel. He would never have seen the weasel without the bear detour!







