



Autumn | 2025

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QUARTERLY

Greener than Ever: Conservation Corps and Park Staff Complete Green Mountain Trail Restoration

By Gabby Sherwood

Just five years after the East Troublesome Fire swept through Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP), a major milestone in the Green Mountain Trail's restoration was reached. Park trail crews, in collaboration with Rocky Mountain Conservancy Conservation Corps, have completed and opened 1.5 miles of a newly-built segment of the trail, replacing the old route. The new trail is drier, less steep, and built for sustainability, ensuring future generations can continue to enjoy Green Mountain.

Shortly after the Cameron Peak Fire began in October 2020 - Colorado's largest - the East Troublesome Fire became the second largest and burned 193,812 acres on public and private land. Fast-moving due to high winds, severe drought, and beetle-killed trees, the fire prompted rapid evacuations in Grand Lake and most of the Estes Valley. Within Rocky Mountain National Park, 22,669 acres burned on both sides of the Continental Divide, including Green Mountain on the park's west side.

Due to safety concerns, the Green Mountain Trail, which is part of the Continental Divide Trail, was closed to public use until July 2022, and to horse access until mid-summer of 2023. During its closure, park trail crews cleared hazards left in the fire's path of destruction.

"There were hundreds of fallen and burned trees across the trail, many with large root masses," said RMNP Trails Supervisor Peter Kingham. "Significant and visible erosion occurred that following spring during monsoon season."

The Green Mountain Trail has seen strong ecological recovery and restoration since the fire. However, the restored trail required dedicated, meticulous work by park trail crews with several seasons of Conservation Corps support. "For a large-scale project like this, it's the extra hands that we need," said RMNP Trail Crew Lead Ren Bernas. "There's so much work to do and we only have 10 people in our crew on the west side. Without the Corps, this project would have taken about twice as long."

The Kawuneeche crew places logs as trail boundaries to prevent erosion on the Green Mountain Trail.



Continued on page 14

The Conservation Corps' Moraine Crew uses a grip hoist to move stones called 'pavers' to install on the Longs Peak Trail.



A Message from our Executive Director



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Dear Friends,

There is a common misconception that public lands and national parks can simply exist and 'sit there' without additional maintenance, care, and conservation efforts from humans. But the government shutdown this fall demonstrated to us, again, how important the folks are who steward these treasured places for us day in and day out, in ways visitors may never even notice. We may see the booths being staffed or the restrooms being cleaned, but most visitors never see the education team leading kids on a field trip, the greenhouse staff and volunteers tending to a tiny alder, or an archives technician carefully scanning a fragile historic document for future researchers to access.

2025 is coming to a close here at Rocky Mountain Conservancy, and we can't help but feel grateful for the ways we've seen individuals and groups step up to steward Rocky Mountain National Park during challenging times. If you're reading the Quarterly, it's probably because this place is special to you in some way: whether it was the destination for a family road trip years ago or you're a regular visitor, Rocky holds memories for many, belongs to us all, and is a precious place worth protecting.

Inside this issue of the Quarterly Newsletter, you'll notice a theme of park stewardship: Volunteers recognized for their thousands of service hours in the park, the secret powers of night skies, young people just starting out in their environmental careers, and the story behind how Colorado's second largest fire couldn't stop our Conservation Corps from helping the park rebuild the Green Mountain Trail from the ground up.

Now more than ever, we need visitors, volunteers, donors and members, the National Park Service, and other partnering agencies to work together to preserve Rocky Mountain National Park and other public lands for future generations to come. With a Volunteers-in-Parks program that ranks fourth highest for recurring volunteers across the National Park Service, a Corps program that attracts hundreds of applicants each year, and thousands of phone calls from caring individuals asking how they can support our mission, we feel fortunate to be the official non-profit partner to a park that brings in countless talented, passionate, and eager-to-help individuals. Let's keep stewarding Rocky together going into 2026!

Warmly,



Estee Rivera Murdock

Estee Rivera Murdock

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Ask the Conservancy



Have a question? Email Communications@RMConservancy.org

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© Jim Ward

Summer Ptarmigan



© Lee Kline

Blue Grouse

How do you distinguish a grouse from a ptarmigan?

Ptarmigans and grouse are in the same family. Ptarmigans are smaller than grouse and have a white tail, while grouse have black tails, sometimes with a light gray band. During the winter, the male ptarmigans have white plumage and, in summer, are brown with a white or lighter brown belly. In winter the male has red above the eye which stands out dramatically in the snow!

Habitat is also an important factor. Ptarmigans are alpine dwellers that mostly stay above tree line in the alpine. Although, they may go down to tree line in the spring to find juniper or willow to eat. I see a lot of grouse in the winter, too, in the lower subalpine and montane ecosystems in the trees. They are gray and brown all over with blackish tails with the gray and black band. They do not change their plumage like ptarmigan.

Marlene Borneman, Field Institute instructor and birding enthusiast



EARTH BEAR CREWNECK SWEATSHIRT

This super cozy, heathered oatmeal-colored crewneck features a Rocky Mountain National Park abstract bear design in bright earth tone colors.

Price: \$39.99

Member Price: \$33.99



FALL BULL ELK PUZZLE

This 500-piece jigsaw puzzle features a graphic of a bull elk with a dramatic backdrop of Longs Peak and yellow aspen. Designed by the Anderson Design Group. Completed puzzle dimensions: 18" x 24". Made in the USA.

Price: \$24.99

Member Price: \$21.24



BEAR POM BEANIE

Stay warm while enjoying our public lands this winter with this heavyweight and stylish beanie! Features a repeating blue bear and golden snowflake design with a teal brim and pom. Made with yarn from recycled plastic bottles.

Price: \$28.99

Member Price: \$24.64



DENEEN BROWN ELK MUG

A classic 12-oz capacity Deneen mug. An iconic scene of a bugling elk will make this a favorite keepsake. Safe for the dishwasher and microwave. Handmade in the USA.

Price: \$24.99

Member Price: \$21.24



FALL BEAR SCENE GLASS ORNAMENT

This RMNP glass ornament showcases a colorful autumn scene in Rocky featuring two bears and beautiful aspen trees. The entire hand painting process for each piece requires up to two days, with no two pieces ever identical.

Price: \$20.99

Member Price: \$17.84

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

Rocky's Alpine Bloom Crew is an expert team of volunteers studying the alpine tundra.



By
Gabby Sherwood,
Communications
Associate

The Heart of the Park: Volunteers Commit Thousands of Service Hours to Rocky

"Rocky Mountain National Park would be stressed at every level were it not for our dedicated, hard-working volunteers. VIPs make all the difference and provide truly exceptional visitor experiences and resource protection expertise. Last year, some 450 recurring volunteers, along with several hundred event volunteers, contributed the work-equivalent of almost forty full-time park employees. That's an incredible 82,000 hours of annual work! The Rocky Mountain Conservancy is proud to support VIP efforts and work together on so many projects and programs. On behalf of our board and staff, I extend heartfelt thanks and appreciation to each of you."

— Walt Borneman,
Rocky Mountain Conservancy
Board President

Within Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP) lies a quiet yet unstoppable force that keeps trails clear, wildlife protected, and visitors inspired: volunteers.

With a Volunteers-in-Parks (VIP) program that ranks 4th highest for recurring volunteers across the National Park Service, Rocky would not be where it is today without its volunteers. This group of dedicated individuals offers thousands of hours of their time and energy not for recognition, but to steward the park for current and future generations to enjoy.

In August of 2025, park and Conservancy staff alike sang praises of Rocky's volunteers at its annual volunteer recognition events. Individuals across various divisions were in attendance to remind volunteers their work is not only noticed but deeply appreciated. Numerous milestones and awards were announced, including the recipients of the **2025 Excellence in Volunteerism Awards: RMNP Volunteer Program Manager Sarah Corning and the Alpine Bloom Crew.**

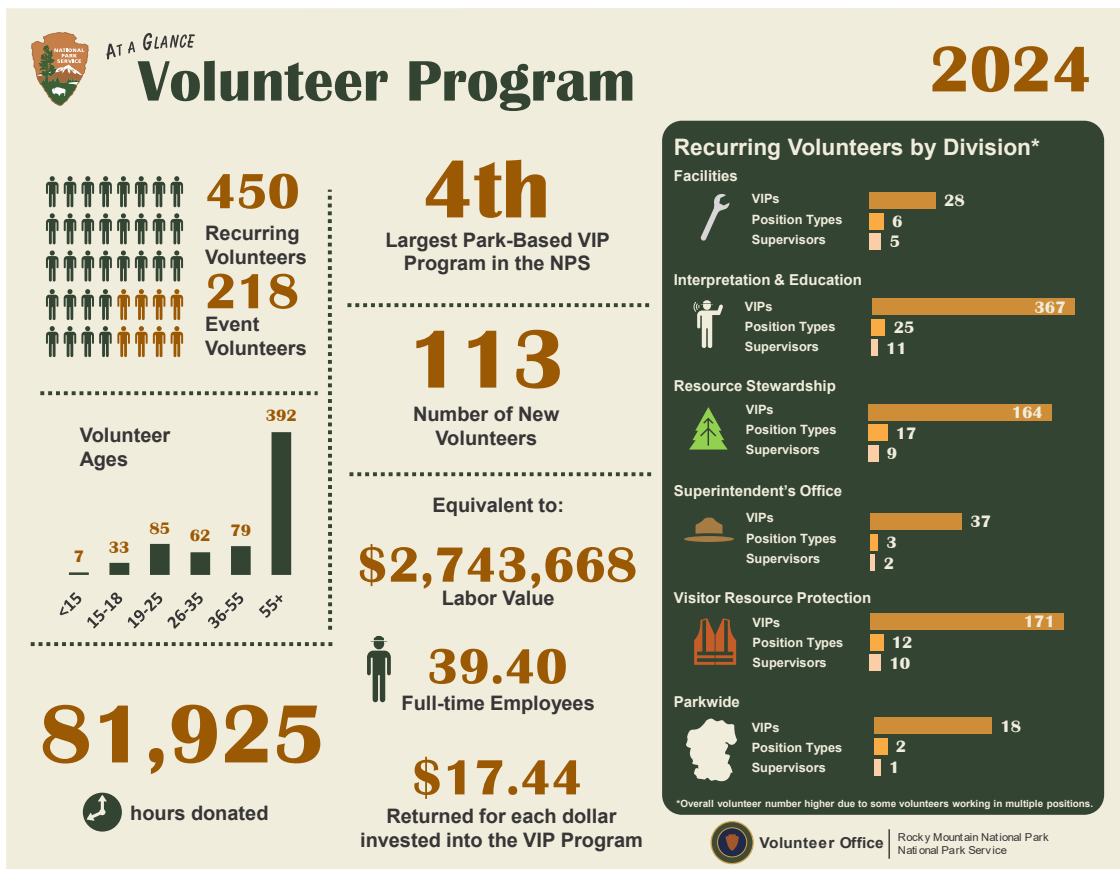
Alpine Bloom Crew
In 2025, Rocky Mountain National

Park's Alpine Bloom Crew received the National Park Service Regional Excellence in Volunteerism Innovation Award. The Alpine Bloom Crew is an expert team of volunteers dedicated to studying and preserving the park's infamous alpine tundra for the enjoyment of future generations. Made up of former park rangers, professors, authors, and photographers, they have over 100 years of collective experience in vegetation and research between them.

Supported by Rocky Mountain Conservancy, the Alpine Bloom Crew is continuing the work of the Alpine Community Science Project by collecting data at a historic tundra research site and contributing to a long-term alpine plant phenology monitoring program which will eventually open doors to future community science opportunities. The Conservancy extends a special thank you to the Simcha Rudolph Charitable fund for generous support of this project.

Sarah Corning

Sarah Corning is the national recipient of the National Park Service's 2025 Excellence in Volunteer Management Award. As the Volunteer Program



work we do!"

Rocky Mountain Conservancy has continually supported the VIP program over the years, including funding for staffing needs, uniforms, volunteer housing, equipment, supplies, and volunteer recognition events.

In 2025, the Conservancy funded a seasonal VIP coordinator position to increase staff support in the volunteer office and the frequency of single-day volunteer event opportunities for various groups. "I've enjoyed working with such a wide variety of volunteer

Manager for one of the largest volunteer programs in the National Park Service, Corning is a strong advocate for volunteer innovation at Rocky and has worked tirelessly to improve safety, efficiency, and compliance within the volunteer program.

In 2024, Corning "introduced background checks, revamped uniforms, and clarified role descriptions, aligning volunteer positions with park policy" (NPS.

gov). She also onboarded 113 new volunteers, as well as 300 returning volunteers. By upholding volunteer experience to the highest standard, Corning has ensured that hundreds of volunteers feel supported, valued, and qualified to safely and effectively give their time to the park. "While Rocky is one of the most visited parks in the U.S., the size of our staff is not large," said Corning. "In order to meet needs and reach our goals we are grateful to be supported by volunteers, whose skills and interests compliment the

groups," said RMNP VIP Groups Lead Bethany Balstad. "I've gotten to talk to so many different people and hear why they want to be involved in park projects. I especially enjoy seeing some of the volunteers sign up for multiple project dates."

Next time you're in the park, make sure to thank the volunteers you cross paths with. Their commitment is not only invaluable, but essential to building capacity for programs and projects in Rocky.

Sarah Corning, the national recipient of the 2025 Excellence in Volunteer Management Award.



Scan this QR code
for upcoming
2026 volunteer events



Sarah Paterson enjoys the shade of a limber pine in Rocky (2010).



By
Stuart Paterson

Donor Stories: Values and Value

"One of the most significant contributors to my values is Rocky Mountain National Park and those who love it."

— Stuart Paterson

All my life I have been nurtured, taught, and learned that values are what define your life. Some key values among these are kindness, thoughtfulness, honesty, humor, integrity, compassion, loyalty, respect for others, and the love of literature, music, beauty, and nature.

My professional career in finance and budgeting with governmental and nonprofit agencies was devoted to obtaining maximum value from resources for both human and monetary purposes.

Values

One of the most significant contributors to my values is Rocky Mountain National Park and those who love it. It is second only to my family. It was this place and its people that instilled the immense benefits of curiosity, knowledge, personal responsibility, friendships, the five senses (especially smell), beauty, stillness, self-reliance, and teamwork.

Ben Slater was a seasonal ranger during my youthful years in Rocky. From 1946 until 1958 when I graduated high school, I was a member of the Big Horn Club mentored by Ranger Slater.

We met twice a week. Tuesdays were devoted to learning about the park,

such as the names of every peak and most of the lakes, streams, and rivers; how to pick the spot for your next step on the hike, animal tracks, park geology, park history, the difference between square spruce needles and flat, flexible fir needles, plant and flower names and characteristics, and types of clouds.

Thursdays were always an all-day hike to places such as Thunder Lake, Mummy, Rowe and Hague, the Gorge Lakes, Flattop, Hallett, Otis with a slide down Andrew's Glacier, Lawn and Crystal Lakes, and Lake of the Clouds.

I missed visiting regularly from 1958 until 2009 when Sarah, my wife, and I rented a cabin at Meeker Park for three weeks. We came back in 2010. She died just before our 2011 return. Knowing the restorative power of Rocky, I made the trip without her. The days were filled with tears – those of unbearable loss and those brought by the magic of happy memories and the magnificent surrounding mountains, lakes, streams, flowers, bird calls, and stars.

Value

Most of us are constantly searching for value. My Scottish heritage brings with it a quest for getting the most bang for my buck.

Stuart Paterson and Ben Slater (1995).





Stuart and Christine in Rocky Mountain National Park (1952).

Years in budgeting and finance taught invaluable lessons in maximizing the outcome of resource use. An important tool in evaluating this for a nonprofit organization is IRS Form 990. Many agencies make it extremely difficult to find access to the 990 form on their website. Rocky Mountain Conservancy does not.

Two things are of particular importance to me; the first is the percentage of total annual expenditure devoted to general management

and fundraising. An amount of 15% or less is exceptionally good. Many organizations exceed 50% meaning that just managing business affairs and paying the costs of fundraising consume over half its annual expenses.

The second is the amount paid in salary and benefits to board members and the chief executive. Admittedly a judgement call, but one worth making.

The Rocky Mountain Conservancy ranks at the top in both categories.

Total expenses for 2023 were \$6,441,118. Expenditures for fundraising were \$255,168. They were \$519,891 for management and general. So, the percentage of expenditures used for fundraising was 4% and 8% for management and general - a combined 12%. These are phenomenally low.

The 990 form also shows compensation paid to board members and the highest compensated employee(s). No Conservancy board member was monetarily compensated. (I'm certain they were metaphysically compensated). It's not my desire to state what was paid to the Executive Director in 2023 - you can look it up if you want - but it is certainly lower than what I would have expected given the range of responsibility and the size of the budget.

Kudos to the Board of Directors and the leadership team. And to those of you who contribute to the Conservancy.

There you have it - my take on values and value. The Conservancy and Rocky are both spectacular.

George Neuhoﬀ in Rocky (1956).



The milky way glows brightly above Trail Ridge Road in the summer.



By
Gabby Sherwood,
Communications
Associate

More Than a View: Why Preserving Night Skies Matters for Wildlife – and You

Just one artificial light source at night can cause rippling effects in areas of the surrounding ecosystem.

VIP Tom ready for visitors at a Stories of the Moon and Stars program.



There are countless precious natural resources and species in Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP) that NPS staff prioritize for preservation. An essential time for park rangers, volunteers, and visitors to protect these resources and species takes place after dark.

Supported in part by the Rocky Mountain Conservancy, RMNP runs numerous night sky and astronomy ranger-led programs each summer. Led by the park's interpretation division with volunteers who donate their personal telescopes for visitor use, these programs are an ideal time for people of all ages to not only gaze up in wonder at the stars, constellations, and galaxies all night long, but learn just how important dark night sky conditions are for the species they are excited to see during the daytime. RMNP Night Sky Ranger Lead Danielle York's goal for these programs is for visitors to not only have a positive, inspiring experience under the night sky in Rocky, but use what they learn to protect night skies in their home areas.

'Why do dark night sky conditions matter?' is one of York's favorite questions to get from visitors. In

Rocky, "dark night skies are critical to the ecology of a particular area," said York. "When species have access to dark night skies, it helps maintain their natural rhythms of getting food, migrating, and mating."

Just one artificial light source at night can cause rippling effects in areas of the surrounding ecosystem. For example, bats' eyes need to be in naturally dark conditions to hunt at night. One of their food sources, moths, is attracted to light sources. So, when moths leave dark areas that bats normally hunt in to be close to lights turned on at night, that forces bats to leave their natural dark habitat to find food, putting bats at risk of being vulnerable to predators. All amphibian species' eyes take longer than other species to readjust to full night vision.

The Helix Nebula seen from Lynn Williams' telescope.





RMNP Night Sky Ranger Lead Danielle York welcomes visitors to a night sky program.

Just one set of headlights from a car driving by a wetland area, such as Lily Lake, can leave amphibians vulnerable to predators for crucial minutes while their eyes readjust. Predatory species in Rocky also use the cover of night as camouflage while they hunt, like bobcats and mountain lions.

“Light pollution at night is artificially produced light that is impeding the natural functions that would be happening in that place,” said York. “Light pollution is also any light that is not facing directly down. It registers in our eyes as glare and prevents us from seeing so many details we would normally be able to see at night.” This includes the brightness, definition, and quantity of stars. Light pollution sources such as the glow from cities can typically be seen in the sky within at least a 100-mile radius. In areas of Rocky, the light domes from cities nearby like Fort Collins, Loveland, Longmont, and Denver can be seen brightening the horizon.

Humans need the cycle of dark skies and bright days to keep our circadian rhythms in sync, just like Rocky’s critters. “We need to sleep in naturally dark conditions for multiple hours of the night for most nights of the month,” said York. “That is when our bodies produce some of the hormones

needed for things like fighting cancer. Something as simple as sleeping in the dark benefits a person’s health for their entire lifespan.”

While the effects of light pollution on ecosystems and human health are vast, there is a simple yet effective way individuals can make a difference in helping protect night skies in their communities and neighboring public lands. “Whenever you have a chance to make a positive difference for night skies, we’d recommend reducing the amount of light, duration of light, and intensity of light you use outside at night,” said York. This could be turning a porch light off at night when it is not needed, closing the blinds in a house so that the light inside the building does not point directly out into the nearby ecosystem, or using a lower-powered flashlight instead of a strong, high-powered light when grabbing something from the car.

Although the 2025 ranger-led night sky programs in Rocky have concluded, you can still stargaze in the park at any point during the year. To have a safe and enjoyable evening under the stars, York recommends creating a plan and sharing it with a friend or family member. Arrive at your night sky viewing location before twilight to orient yourself with a star

Stargazing Tips

- Make sure the location is safe for you in the dark.
- Arrive at your night sky viewing location before dark to orient yourself.
- Use a red-light flashlight to help your eyes readjust to darkness.
- Bring extra layers!

map or app, and to make sure the location is safe for you in the dark. Use a red-light flashlight so your eyes can readjust to dark conditions quicker than if you use a white light, and don’t forget to bring extra layers!

Next time you gaze up in wonder at the stars in Rocky, remember that while many views of the park have changed throughout time, the night sky has not. “Night skies are independent of climate change, forest fires, and human development,” said York. “It is special that we are able to connect with the exact night sky views that people thousands of years ago would have seen from this exact location.”

Volunteers bring telescopes for visitors to use at night sky programs.



In Case You Missed It



Conservancy Fellows Continue their Conservation Careers:

By Gabby Sherwood,
Communications Associate



2024 Summer Education Fellow Chiara Brady's small mammal pop-up program.

Chiara Brady

Each year, the Conservancy hires seasonal fellows to provide support and professional development for individuals who are interested in careers in nonprofit work or environmental education. Our fellowships often open doors to networking opportunities with National Park Service staff as well. Our 2024 Education Fellow, Chiara Brady, just wrapped up her first season with the National Park Service as a recreation fee technician in the campground division of Sequoia National Park.

Brady is from Upper Saddle River, New Jersey and graduated from Ramapo College of New Jersey with a Bachelor of Arts in Communications in 2022. Shortly after graduating, Brady joined a trail crew working for the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference. She then applied for the Conservancy's education fellowship, excited for an

Around the Conservancy

opportunity to work closely with the National Park Service. "I felt that doing something education related was more in line with my overall career goals than being on a trail crew," said Brady.

"I knew conservation was the direction I wanted my career to go in," said Brady. **"And the Conservancy gave me all the tools I needed to move forward with that."** During her fellowship, Brady led educational bus tours in the park, worked shifts at the Beaver Meadows Visitor Center, promoted the Artist in Residence programs, participated in Field Institute courses, and presented pop-up table programs. "The skills I gained from my fellowship are very transferrable to what I'm doing now as a campground ranger," said Brady.

Brady spent her season at Sequoia building resource protection skills by connecting with visitors and enforcing campground regulations. With a long-term career goal of law enforcement, Brady has always felt drawn to serving her community in a protective role. "Growing up just outside New York City in the wake of 9/11, I saw early on how critical emergency response and public safety are to a functioning community," said Brady. "Now working for the National Park Service, I'm seeing firsthand how vital law enforcement is to carry out the park's mission: protecting both people and natural resources."

We are proud of you, Chiara, and excited to see all you go on to do for our national parks and public lands!

Gabby Sherwood

Another recent fellow, Gabby Sherwood, was the 2025 Brown Family Education Fellow focused on creating distance learning opportunities. After graduating from Baylor University with a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism in 2024, she



Communications Associate Gabby Sherwood plants willow in Rocky.

searched for an opportunity to use her skills to conserve public lands.

From recordings of select Winter Speaker Series presentations, Sherwood produced videos with audio descriptions and captions to reduce potential accessibility barriers. These audio-described and captioned videos align with the Rehabilitation Act, which requires digital media and communications produced by federal agencies to be accessible to individuals with disabilities. She also created educational social media content and was a volunteer instructor for school field trips in the park. Her fellowship opened the door to joining the Conservancy full-time as the new Communications Associate. "I'm grateful to combine my academic background in journalism with my passion for bridging the education gap between nature and the public," said Sherwood.

In her new role, Sherwood is editor of the Quarterly Newsletter, puts out the monthly Community Update email, manages the Conservancy's social media pages, and supports the education department in various projects.



Rocky Mountain Conservancy Park Puzzler

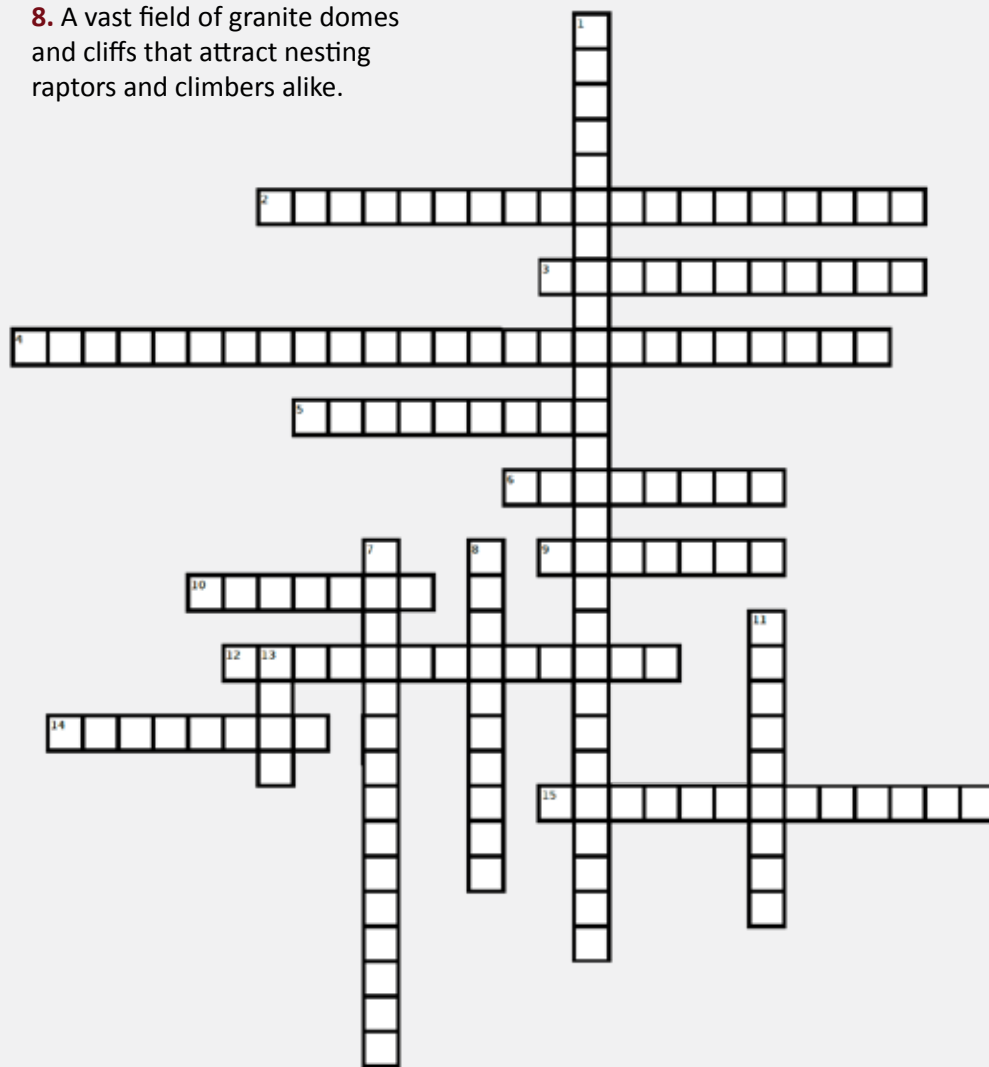
Across

- 2.** Beavers have this translucent third eyelid which allows them to open their eyes and see underwater.
- 3.** It takes six generations for this native butterfly species to migrate from Mexico to Canada and back.
- 4.** As part of the New Deal, President Franklin D. Roosevelt enacted this program that took place in Rocky and other public lands to build trails, roads, buildings, and maintain the park.
- 5.** This lake is named after the “father” of Rocky Mountain National Park.
- 6.** A hooved mammal.
- 9.** This depositional feature at the edges and ends of valleys is formed by glaciers.
- 10.** Both bighorn sheep horns and human fingernails share this important component.
- 12.** Colorado’s first and only designated wild and scenic river.
- 14.** The host plant for the monarch butterfly.
- 15.** A lake in the park named after a famous landscape painter who frequently visited and painted the Rocky Mountains. Before receiving its current name, Native Americans named it “Hanging Lake.”

Down

- 1.** A species of squirrel in Rocky with a striped back, which is commonly mistaken for a chipmunk.
- 7.** A rocky amphibian species that has the ability to exhibit biofluorescence.
- 8.** A vast field of granite domes and cliffs that attract nesting raptors and climbers alike.

- 11.** This historic site located on the west side of the park is named after a German family who made their home in the Rocky Mountains in 1917.
- 13.** This bright yellow alpine flower is one of the pika’s favorite to collect for their hay piles.



Solution on page 15

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Howard Nobel Cappel Jr.

Nicholas Dress and Susan Porter:
In memory of Jim Shuey

Richard and Sheri Fedorchak: In
memory of Joan "Jody" Magnuson

Calleen Giesick:
In memory of Lisa Horton

Donna Govan: In memory of
Jeffrey Joseph Hodge

Tom Graves:
In memory of Phyllis L. Graves

Susan K. Harris:
In memory of Carol Linnig

Susan K. Harris:
In memory of Dorothy Gibbs

Susan K. Harris: In memory of
Jenna Olschlager Williams

Carol and William Hayden:
In memory of Deanna J. Bigler

Carol and William Hayden:
In memory of W.G. (Bill) Plested, III

Patricia C. Hesch:
In memory of Linda Austin

Matthew C. and Mary Patricia
Hesse: In memory of J. Francis
and Jean Hesse

Irene and Michael Hinz:
In memory of Christine Metzger

Judith James:
In memory of Richard P. DeTar

James F. and Karen Jenchura:
In memory of R.M. Rescue
Volunteers

Brian Jenschke: In memory of
Howard Nobel Cappel Jr.

Celia Johnson:
In memory of Mary Boyington

Maureen Kiphart:
In memory of Bruce Kiphart

Linda and Craig Kloosterman: In
memory of Ronald Kloosterman

Kathleen E. Koch and Sasha Rowland:
In memory of Ronald Koch

Madelyn Madsen: In memory of
Kathryn and Robert Haines

Lubomir and Yana Manolov:
In memory of Helen Derechin

Lawrence J. Mason:
In memory of Margaret Mason

Frank Megorden: In memory of
Paula Kessinger Megorden

Sue Morss:
In memory of Lester Robert Morss

Martha Noe:
In memory of Norman Noe

Koren Nydick:
In memory of Sander Nydick

Dan Patrick:
In memory of Betty Patrick

Michael Rudd: In memory of Derf

John Schreck:
In memory of Beverly J. Schreck

John Seeck:
In memory of Vicki L. Seeck

Jennifer Siedlik:
In memory of Toni Siedlik

James Sprinkle:
In memory of David Joseph Essex

Ned, Ben, and Jack Steele:
In memory of Judy Steele

Victoria L. Stokke:
In memory of Olaf M. Stokke

Lenore and David Swaim:
In memory of Alex Lloyd Gibson

Karen M. Szews:
In memory of Ed and Jean Szews

Courtney Tague: In memory of
Wilma and Pete Peterson

Susan Thiel:
In memory of Diane M. Christoph

Deborah Tyler:
In memory of Anna and Neal Payden

Donald Wooldridge:
In memory of Sharon Chasteen

Deborah Wurdack:
In memory of Paul Wurdack

Karl Yambert:
In memory of Paul Yambert

**ALL IN MEMORY OF
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Charles Cox

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Bobby J. Lundy and Jennifer H. Lee

Steven Marlowe

Scott Vaughan

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Kathryn Tebay-Diggs and
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Greener than Ever

The Kawuneeche Crew, the Corps' only crew that lives and works on the west side of the park, has supported various stages in the rebuilding and restoration of the Green Mountain Trail. "We really enjoy working with them and have had great groups who are eager to help over the last three years," said Bernas. "It's exciting at the end of their season to see all the work they've done. Multiple people have said they'll come back to see the completion of the trail that they contributed to."

The 2025 Kawuneeche crew is the last group of Corps crew members to work on Green Mountain. The park is now directing hikers and horses onto the new trail and have officially closed the top and bottom sections of the old trail. "It's especially meaningful that this year's Kawuneeche crew are the people that saw the trail to its completion," said Conservancy Field Coordinator Eli Bolick. "Each crew member had a chance to walk the trail in its entirety up to the junction, so there's a great sense of satisfaction that comes with seeing the finished product."

The original Green Mountain Trail went directly up the main drainage of the mountain. Combined with its steep grade and damage from the fire, it became a catalyst for severe trail erosion. After the fire, park staff evaluated trail conditions and conducted land surveys. Their findings showed that the most sustainable option for restoring the trail was to build a new segment out of the drainage. Once the layout had been submitted for compliance, park botanists, wildlife biologists, and archeologists ensured that it would not go through sensitive plant life areas and created guidelines for the trail crews to begin laying out the exact route of the trail.

"We took the trail up out of the drainage and onto the cross slopes of Green Mountain," said Bernas.

"Now the trail is in a much dryer area, and it was a place we could build it at a sustainable grade." Park trail crews kept the new route at or below an eight percent grade, which will prevent the trail from eroding and forming ruts in the future. Ruts are deep, worn trenches that form over time when water does not drain from a trail.

"All of the larger trees on the mountain have burned, but the understory is already producing new pines, aspens, and all kinds of grasses and wildflowers."

— Eli Bolick, Conservancy Field Coordinator

"The grade was the most prominent determining factor as to which sections of the Green Mountain Trail received its appropriate prescription:

new trail route, rock stairs, log checks, turnpikes, or no action required," said Kingham.

Though there is evidence of a recent, catastrophic fire, there is also evidence of restoration on Green Mountain. "All of the larger trees on the mountain have burned, but the understory is already producing new pines, aspens, and all kinds of grasses and wildflowers," said Bolick.

Recovery after a large ecological disturbance takes time. But between the conservation efforts and the natural regrowth that has already taken place, Bernas, who has been working on the trail for three summers now, has already seen encouraging results. "Every summer I've come back, Green Mountain is greener," said Bernas. "There are so many baby lodgepole pines everywhere. Some of them are even two to three feet tall. I can imagine that in another 10 years, it'll be a forest of shoulder to head-height lodgepole pine."

Kawuneeche crew members crush rocks into smaller pieces to help installed trail features resist erosion on the Green Mountain Trail.



Before and After Green Mountain Trail



Park trail crews and Kawuneeche crew members dug out the new trail and added log steps to portions of the trail to prevent future erosion.



Once the rough layout of the new segment of trail was approved, trail crews placed pin flags into the ground every 5 feet to mark exactly where the crews would dig.

A crossword puzzle grid with the following words filled in:

- Across:**
 - 2: NECTITATING MEMBRANE
 - 5: PAINTED LADY
 - 8: CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS
 - 11: MILLS LAKE
 - 14: UNGULATE
 - 17: KERATIN
 - 19: MORaine
 - 21: CASH ELAPOUDRE
 - 24: MILKWEED
 - 27: BIERSTADT LAKE
- Down:**
 - 1: GOLDEN
 - 3: M
 - 4: N
 - 6: L
 - 7: E
 - 9: D
 - 10: R
 - 12: U
 - 13: M
 - 15: H
 - 16: O
 - 18: L
 - 20: S
 - 22: Q
 - 23: Z
 - 25: W
 - 26: B
 - 28: R
 - 29: T
 - 30: H
 - 31: E
 - 32: L
 - 33: A
 - 34: M
 - 35: A
 - 36: N
 - 37: D
 - 38: E
 - 39: R

Forest Canyon Overlook*

As we walk a path out to the overlook, immersed in our limited sense of time, we soon encounter a new reality of infinite space and a mix of winter, spring, summer, and fall all in one with snow-packed peaks, leafless aspen far below, amid dark fir and spruce trees, and right here a bright green tundra blessed with patches of tiniest blue alpine forget-me-nots growing at our feet reawakening in us a timeless here and now.

— Richard F. Fleck

Richard F. Fleck



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Nature Notes

- **Marlene Borneman** was delighted to spot this beautiful eight spotted forester moth (*alypia octomaculata*) near Box Lake in the Wild Basin area in June, 2025. Later in August, she then spotted the same species on the Cow Creek Trail: the eight-spotted forester caterpillar! While on the Cow Creek Trail, Borneman saw another uncommon insect, a tachinid fly sitting on a cutleaf coneflower (*rudbeckia laciniata*).
- On August 15, **Walt and Marlene Borneman** were the first hikers across a bridge with a new rail that a RMNP trail crew had just finished installing on the Tonahutu Trail. Great work!
- Friends **Margery, Jen, Alina, and Jodi** share tea and cookies at the Wigwam Tea House in Rocky in early fall. In the early 1900s, over 200 guests visited Anna Wolfram's tea house each day to enjoy refreshments and purchase souvenirs.



Marlene Borneman



Marlene Borneman



Marlene Borneman



Kaci Yoh