Welcome to Spring

Spring is stunning at Rocky Mountain National Park. Migrant bird species return, their songs filling the air. Animals like elk and sheep give birth and begin moving toward their summer ranges. Streams swell with melting snow and new rain. Exciting changes are happening every day!

But spring here is also different than you might expect. While a warm, sunny day can create the illusion that summer has arrived, the next day can turn cold and bring heavy snowfall. Lower elevations can be snow-free with hints of wildflowers while higher elevations are still covered in many feet of snow (Bear Lake, for example, usually has snow well into June).

What does this mean for you? Be prepared for any and all snowfall. Don't assume spring here will be like spring at home. It can be warm and sunny one day, cold and overcast the next. Bring layers of clothes for a range of temperatures and conditions—you’ll be more comfortable and have more fun.

Visitor center hours and program schedules change throughout the season. Please check times carefully, and when in doubt, contact the park.

Expect a wide variety of trail conditions. You could easily find snow-free trails near park entrances and deep snow on higher elevation trails in the same day. For more details, see page 2.

Helpful tips for enjoying spring in Rocky:

• Spring is Rocky’s snowiest season! On average, some of the biggest snowstorms of the year happen in March, April, and even May. Be prepared.

• Spring weather is unpredictable. It can be warm and sunny one day, cold and overcast the next. Bring layers of clothes for a range of temperatures and conditions—you’ll be more comfortable and have more fun.

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For tips on hiking in spring and a list of short trails, see page 2. For more detailed hiking information, ask for a hiking brochure or trail guide at entrance stations, visitor centers, or at staffed trailheads.

Rocky has five campgrounds. Moraine Park Campground is open year-round, with other campgrounds open only in summer (reservations highly recommended). For details, visit go.nps.gov/RockyCamping.

For wilderness camping, visit go.nps.gov/RockyWildernessCamping or stop at the Wilderness Office (east side near Beaver Meadows Visitor Center) or the Kawuneeche Visitor Center (west side).

Free Park Movie

See the stunning 23-minute park movie Spirit of the Mountains in the Beaver Meadows and Kawuneeche visitor centers. (At the Kawuneeche Visitor Center, showings will be intermittent June 5-9 and 12-16. Call 970 627-3471 for times.)

Beaver Meadows has assisting listening devices for audio description and amplification and induction loops for those with hearing aids. Both visitor centers have a captioned version of the park film and a version en Española. All park visitor centers are accessible.

Road Conditions

Trail Ridge Road is scheduled to open May 26. Due to weather, opening may be delayed, and temporary closures may be reinstated. Call 970 586-1222 for the most up-to-date status of Trail Ridge Road.

Old Fall River Road is scheduled to open to motorized travel in early July.

Visit go.nps.gov/romp/ for the latest news.

Spring 2017
March 19–June 17
Stay Safe

Be Responsible

It is your responsibility to be safe and know how to obey park rules. You can find park safety information, rules, and regulations at visitor centers, entrance stations, trailhead bulletin boards, and the park website at nps.gov/romo.

Altitude Sickness affects many visitors every year. Symptoms include headaches, nausea, fatigue, dizziness, vomiting, and in acute situations, even unconsciousness. Altitude can also aggravate preexisting conditions like heart and lung disease. Take your time, drink plenty of water, eat lightly, and rest. The only cure for altitude sickness is to go down to a lower altitude.

Avalanches can be easily triggered by wilderness travelers. The park does not do any avalanche control. Never assume trails are free of avalanche hazard. Wear an electronic transceiver when traversing avalanche terrain, and avoid skiing or snowshoeing in steep gullies. If caught in an avalanche, make swimming motions and try to stay on top of the snow. For current conditions, check at a visitor center, call 970 586-1206, or visit avalanche.state.co.us.

Wilderness Travel should be done in a group, not alone. Leave a detailed trip itinerary with a friend. This helps park authorities if you fail to return. Mountain weather changes quickly. If conditions are more difficult than anticipated, turn around. Longs Peak, a popular climb, can have treacherous ice and snow any time of year. Camping is only allowed in designated sites (see page 5).

Bicycles are prohibited on trails. They are permitted on all roads open to motor vehicles, paved and dirt, unless otherwise posted. There are no designated bicycle lanes in the park. Roads are narrow with few or no shoulders—ride with care. By law, you must ride single file. Shuttle buses do not accept bicycles. Visit go.nps.gov/RockyBicycling.

Campfires are permitted only in campgrounds and picnic areas with fire grates. During high fire danger, campfires may be prohibited. You can purchase firewood at campgrounds in summer. Collecting vegetation, dead or alive, is prohibited.

Cell Service is unavailable in much of the park. Don’t depend on a cell phone for emergency help.

Falling Trees are an ever-present hazard and can fall without warning. Be extra careful around dead trees when it’s windy or following a snowstorm.

Firearm Possession in the park is permitted for those legally authorized to possess firearms under federal, Colorado, or local laws. However, hunting, recreational shooting, and target practice are illegal. Federal law prohibits firearms in park buildings and facilities. Those legally allowed to carry firearms must comply with all applicable state and federal firearm laws.

Fishing requires a Colorado state fishing license. Trout in the park include brown, brook, rainbow, and cutthroat (including the protected Colorado River and greenback). Not all park lakes have reproducing fish populations. For more information, visit go.nps.gov/RockyFishing.

Hypothermia can happen any time of year. Watch for drowsiness, impaired judgment, excessive shivering, and skinned speech. To prevent, wear insulated, wind-proof layers and drink plenty of fluids. Marijuana possession and use is illegal in Rocky Mountain National Park and all federal lands, even though small amounts of recreational marijuana are legal in Colorado.

Parks are prohibited on ALL park trails, tundra, and meadow areas. Leashed pets are only allowed in picnic areas, parking lots, campgrounds, and along roadways. Never leave pets in vehicles if it puts them in danger or they become a public nuisance. When outside vehicles, pets must be on leashes no longer than six feet. Service animals have been individually trained to perform specific tasks for the benefit of persons with disabilities are allowed in the park. Emotional support (“therapy animals”) and service-animals-in-training are not service animals under the Americans with Disabilities Act and may not access trails or other non-motorized areas.

Rivers and Streams can be deadly. Park waters are frigid. Powerful currents can knock you over and pull you downstream or underwater, where you may become trapped. Streamside rocks are often slippery, and nearby water may be deep. Always closely supervise children around all water but especially near rivers and streams.

Take only pictures. It is illegal to take any natural features including pinecones, rocks, antlers, and artifacts or to disturb soil, rocks, or vegetation (including flowers). Metal detector use is prohibited.

Ticks are out in spring. In areas with plants, particularly tall grasses, regularly check yourself for ticks. Wear long sleeves, pants, and repellent with DEET. If you find an embedded tick, slowly pull it straight out with tweezers. Ticks can carry disease, including Colorado Tick Fever.

Many animals call Rocky home. To keep them and you safe and comfortable:

• Obey wildlife closure areas and “no stopping” traffic zones.
• Use parking areas along the road. If not available, pull your vehicle completely off the road and do not park on vegetation.
• Keep a safe distance. If you cause an animal to move or change behavior, you are too close! Approaching an animal puts you at risk and may cause it stress, leading to disease and illness.
• Never feed wildlife, including birds and chipmunks.

Bears and Mountain Lions Seeing a bear or mountain lion is rare, and interactions are even more rare. However, keep the following in mind:

• Travel in groups and make noise as you hike closely together. Keep children close! A predator does not distinguish a running child from running prey.
• If you see a bear or mountain lion, stop, stay calm, and back away slowly. Never approach wildlife or turn your back and run. Stand tall and look large. Raise your arms. Protect small children by picking them up.
• If approached, make loud noises, shout, clap hands, bang pots or pans, and fight back if attacked. See Camping (page 5) to learn how to properly store food and other scented items.

Hiking in Spring

Want a chance to hike all four seasons in a day? Try hiking in spring!

Weather

• Be prepared for a wide range of temperatures. Some days are warm and sunny. Others are cold and snowy. Others still switch back and forth between both!
• In Rocky, spring means SNOW! March and April are the snowiest months of the year, and new snow isn’t uncommon in May or even early June.

Trails

• Trail conditions vary from day to day. Before going on a hike, check recent trail conditions at go.nps.gov/RockyTrailConditions or visit a visitor center and check with a ranger.

Carry the Essentials

• Lots of water and high-energy food
• First aid kit and Topographic map and compass/GPS
• Layers of clothing including storm gear, hat, gloves
• Flashlight or headlamp
• Sunglasses with UV protection
• Waterproof matches, pocket knife, whistle
• Sunscreen
• Sturdy footwear and extra socks

Interested in a longer hike? Ask for a hiking brochure at entrance stations, visitor centers, or at staffed trailheads.

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## Notes and Tips

- All children must be accompanied by an adult.
- Programs may be canceled due to weather.
- Accessible programs are marked with a blue icon.
- Programs and hours vary. Please double-check the schedule, including specific days listed, before heading out.
- For outdoor programs, be sure to bring the essentials to wear and carry (see left).
- Our calendar is now online! Visit go.nps.gov/RockyCal for a full list of all upcoming events, including ranger programs.

## Ranger-Led Programs

### East Side

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Walks, Hikes, and Activities</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Sun</th>
<th>Mon</th>
<th>Tue</th>
<th>Wed</th>
<th>Thu</th>
<th>Fri</th>
<th>Sat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bear Necessities</strong></td>
<td>20 to 30 minutes talk</td>
<td>Beaver Meadows Visitor Center</td>
<td>10:30 am</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10:30 am</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Beaver Meadows Evening Programs</strong></td>
<td>45 minutes program</td>
<td>Beaver Meadows Visitor Center Auditorium</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7 pm</td>
<td>5/19 only</td>
<td>7 pm</td>
<td>5/27, 6/3, 6/10, 6/17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bighorn Basics</strong></td>
<td>30 minutes talk</td>
<td>Sheep Lakes Information Station (see front page)</td>
<td>10:30 am</td>
<td>10:30 am</td>
<td>10:30 am</td>
<td>10:30 am</td>
<td>10:30 am</td>
<td>10:30 am</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Spring Bird Walk</strong></td>
<td>1.5 hour walk</td>
<td>Cub Lake Trailhead in Moraine Park</td>
<td>8 am</td>
<td>8 am</td>
<td>8 am</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Wild in Winter!</strong></td>
<td>Drop in 10–11 am</td>
<td>Beaver Meadows Visitor Center</td>
<td>10–11 am</td>
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<td>10–11 am</td>
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### West Side

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programs and Activities</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Sun</th>
<th>Mon</th>
<th>Tue</th>
<th>Wed</th>
<th>Thu</th>
<th>Fri</th>
<th>Sat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beyond the Falls</strong></td>
<td>1.5 hour 1 mile hike</td>
<td>East Inlet Trailhead</td>
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<td></td>
<td>9:30 am</td>
<td>5/6-6/10</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Coyote Valley River Walk</strong></td>
<td>1 hour 1 mile hike</td>
<td>Coyote Valley Trailhead</td>
<td>10 am</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>5/28 only</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Saturday Night in the Park</strong></td>
<td>1 hour program</td>
<td>Kawuneeche Visitor Center</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7 pm</td>
<td>5/27 only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Skins and Things</strong></td>
<td>40 minute talk</td>
<td>Kawuneeche Visitor Center</td>
<td>3 pm</td>
<td>3 pm</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3 pm</td>
<td>5/6-6/10</td>
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</tbody>
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### Special Programs and Events (East and West)

**Become a Junior Ranger**

- Get started at any visitor contact station.
- Start and finish on your own schedule.
- Complete your Junior Ranger booklet and earn a badge!

**Party with the Stars**

- Upper Beaver Meadows Trailhead
- Starts at 8:30 pm Friday, June 16
- Watch as night descends on Rocky Mountain National Park. Volunteers will be available with telescopes to help you experience the magic of the night sky.

**International Migratory Bird Day**

- Meet at Beaver Meadows Visitor Center
- 8 am to 12 pm Saturday, June 10
- Bring binoculars and a field guide for a ranger-led birding excursion. Come for part or all of this multi-location event.
- Call 970 586-1206 for more information.
Free Shuttle Service at a Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROUTE</th>
<th>SCHEDULE</th>
<th>DATES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hiker Shuttle</td>
<td>Hourly 7:30 am to 11 pm</td>
<td>Daily May 27–Sep 10</td>
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<td></td>
<td>30 min 11 am to 6 pm</td>
<td>Weekends Sep 16–Oct 9</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Hourly 6 pm to 8 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bear Lake Route</td>
<td>10-15 min 7 am to 7:30 pm</td>
<td>Daily May 27–Oct 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moraine Park Route</td>
<td>30 min 7 am to 7:30 pm</td>
<td>Daily May 27–Oct 9</td>
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There are no shuttle bus services on the west side of the park or across Trail Ridge Road. There are several commercial shuttle tours in the Estes area. Contact the Estes Park Visitor Center for information:

800 443-7837 or visitestespark.com

Most shuttle buses are accessible and can accommodate wheelchairs. Contact shuttle staff or rangers if accommodation is needed.

Dogs are not allowed on shuttle buses. Except service animals that have been individually trained to perform specific tasks for the benefit of persons with disabilities (see page 2 for more).

There are no bike racks on shuttle buses.

All shuttles begin May 27

At Rocky Mountain Conservancy Nature Stores, Your Purchase Makes a Difference

The best Rocky Mountain National Park t-shirts, games, toys, books, maps and other interesting items are here, at any of the Rocky Mountain Conservancy Nature Stores located in park visitor centers. When you make a purchase from our nonprofit organization, proceeds are returned to the park, supporting important educational and research programs. Drop by today.

Visit Conservancy Nature Stores at:

- Alpine Visitor Center
- Beaver Meadows Visitor Center
- Fall River Visitor Center
- Kawuneeche Visitor Center
- Moraine Park Visitor Center

www.RMConservancy.org

Rocky Mountain Field Institute

Educational Bus Tours in Rocky!

Grand Lake Safari Adventure
Tuesdays, June 9 - August 25
Journey to the Top! Trail Ridge Rd Adventure
Wednesdays & Thursdays, June 10 - Sept. 3
Trail Ridge Sunset Safari Adventure
Fridays, June 13 - September 5
Elk Expeditions
Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays & Mondays Sept. 10 - October 17

Call 970-586-3262 or register at park visitor centers!

www.RMConservancy.org

The Rocky Mountain National Park license plate from the Rocky Mountain Conservancy. Proceeds benefit Rocky Mountain National Park!

www.RMConservancy.org

This newspaper is funded by the Rocky Mountain Conservancy. For more information visit RMConservancy.org

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