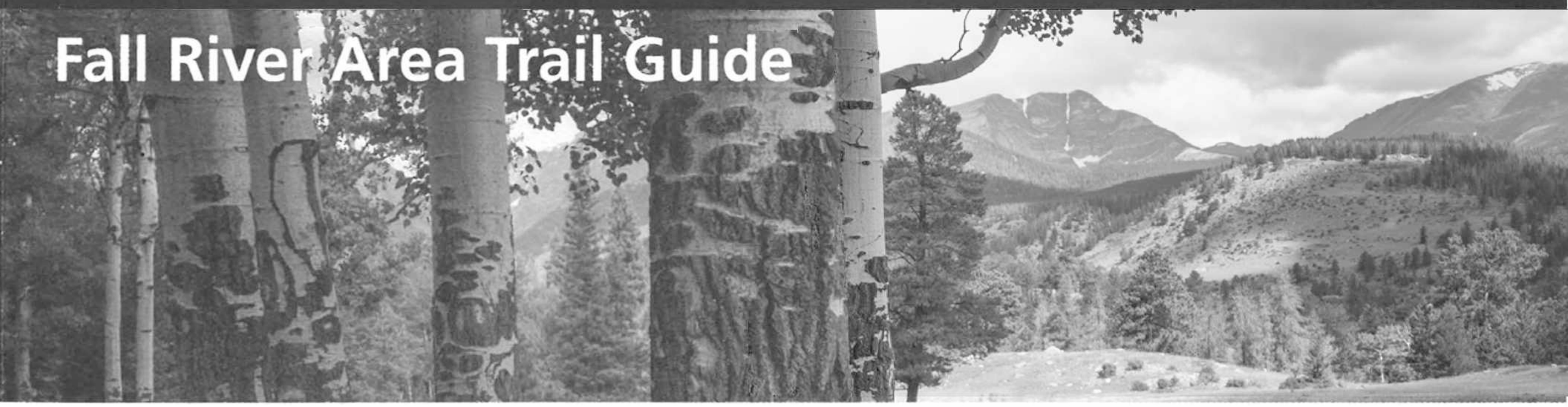
Rocky Mountain

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Rocky Mountain National Park

Fall River Area Trail Guide



NPS PHOTO / PETER BIDDLE

Deep valleys and towering alpine mountaintops, beautiful lakes and rushing rivers, historic roads, rocky trails, and stunning wilderness: all are part of the Fall River Area of Rocky Mountain National Park.

Bighorn Sheep and Elk are Frequently Seen in This Area

Horseshoe Park including the Sheep Lakes area can have abundant wildlife. When viewing any wildlife:

- 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.
- Do not approach wildlife. Wildlife are unpredictable and can hurt you, and approaching them can cause them stress, leading to disease or illness. If an animal changes its behavior because of you: you are too close! Enjoy and photograph them from a distance.
- Never feed wildlife, including birds and chipmunks

What's That Scar on the Hillside?

Two significant floods greatly impacted the Roaring River that plunges down the mountainside in the Fall River area.

The Lawn Lake Dam was built in 1903. On July 15, 1982, a section of the dam failed, releasing 220 million gallons of water that surged down the Roaring River with incredible, catastrophic force.

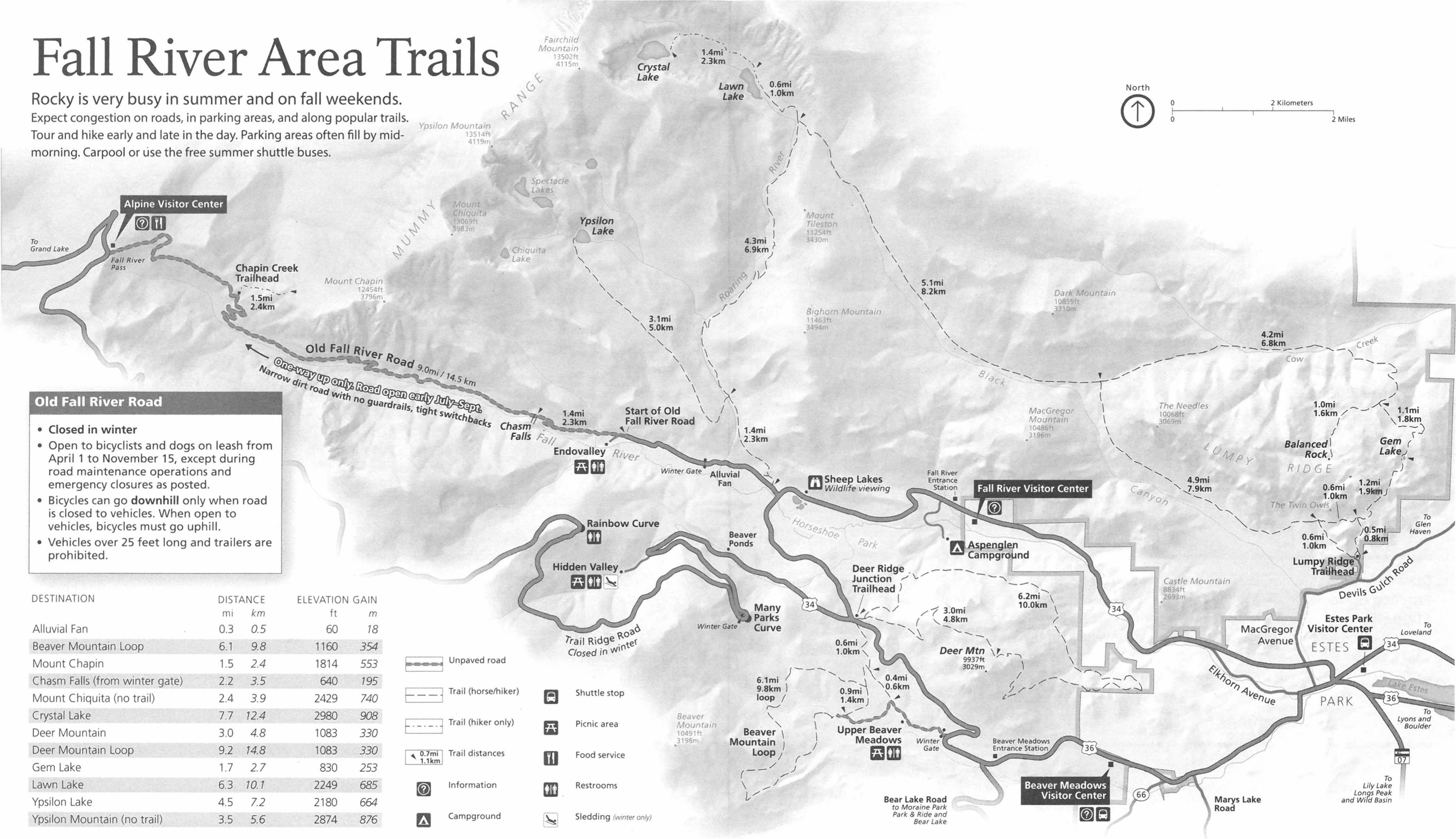
In mid-September 2013, days of heavy rain soaked the Front Range of Colorado, including Rocky Mountain National Park. Many areas gave way in landslides. Others, including the Roaring River, flooded.

Both floods left scars, including the Alluvial Fan. The word alluvial means debris moved by water, so the name is quite apt!

Fall River Area Trails

Rocky is very busy in summer and on fall weekends.

Expect congestion on roads, in parking areas, and along popular trails. Tour and hike early and late in the day. Parking areas often fill by mid-morning. Carpool or use the free summer shuttle buses.



Old Fall River Road

- **Closed in winter**
- Open to bicyclists and dogs on leash from April 1 to November 15, except during road maintenance operations and emergency closures as posted.
- Bicycles can go **downhill** only when road is closed to vehicles. When open to vehicles, bicycles must go uphill.
- Vehicles over 25 feet long and trailers are prohibited.

DESTINATION	DISTANCE mi	DISTANCE *km*	ELEVATION GAIN ft	ELEVATION GAIN *m*
Alluvial Fan	0.3	*0.5*	60	*18*
Beaver Mountain Loop	6.1	*9.8*	1160	*354*
Mount Chapin	1.5	*2.4*	1814	*553*
Chasm Falls (from winter gate)	2.2	*3.5*	640	*195*
Mount Chiquita (no trail)	2.4	*3.9*	2429	*740*
Crystal Lake	7.7	*12.4*	2980	*908*
Deer Mountain	3.0	*4.8*	1083	*330*
Deer Mountain Loop	9.2	*14.8*	1083	*330*
Gem Lake	1.7	*2.7*	830	*253*
Lawn Lake	6.3	*10.1*	2249	*685*
Ypsilon Lake	4.5	*7.2*	2180	*664*
Ypsilon Mountain (no trail)	3.5	*5.6*	2874	*876*

All distances are one way from nearest trailhead.

Pay Attention to Altitude

High elevations can cause altitude sickness and may aggravate existing health conditions. Use caution. Take time to acclimatize to the park's high altitude before attempting strenuous hikes. Rest, drink lots of fluids, eat salty snacks, and start with easy hikes.

Even on cloudy days, ultraviolet radiation can be intense at altitude. Protect yourself by wearing a hat, sunglasses with UV protection, and sunscreen.

Watch the Weather

Weather here changes quickly.

Thunderstorms are common in summer and are dangerous. Plan your day to be below treeline by early afternoon. If you see building storm clouds, head back to the trailhead. If caught in a lightning storm, get below treeline.

Always carry storm gear, even if the sky is clear when you start your hike.

It might be summer, but expect snow, gusty winds, and cold temperatures at any time. Carry layers of windproof clothing. If the weather turns, you'll be glad to have them.

Bring the Right Gear

- ✓ Bring waterproof outer layers and extra layers for warmth.
- ✓ Wear a hat, sunglasses, and sunscreen. Sunlight can damage your eyes and skin, even on cloudy days.
- ✓ Pack extra water and snacks. Don't drink from streams or lakes without treating the water.
- ✓ Carry a map and compass or GPS. Know how to use them.
- ✓ Wear sturdy footwear with good ankle support and a treaded sole.
- ✓ Don't rely on cell phones. Many areas have no service.

Stay Safe and Practice Good Etiquette

- **Pets are prohibited on all Rocky Mountain National Park trails, tundra, and meadows areas.** There are pet-friendly hikes outside the park, and nearby communities have boarding facilities and veterinary clinics. To learn more, visit go.nps.gov/**RockyPets.**
- Stay together! Keep everyone, including children, with the group.
- Stay on the trail. Shortcutting causes erosion.
- In the Fall River Corridor, strollers are allowed only on the nature trails around Hidden Valley.

For More Information

Park Information	(970) 586-1206 or www.nps.gov/**romo**
Trail Ridge Road Status.....	(970) 586-1222
Emergencies	**911.** Tell the dispatcher you are in Rocky Mountain National Park, Colorado