



Rocky Mountain National Park

The official newspaper
of Rocky Mountain National Park

Winter 2008-09
October 26 - March 28

The Winter at Rocky

Reflected sunlight sparkles in the snow. Tracks of tiny mice and great elk cross your trail. Frozen alpine lakes ringed by massive peaks can be reached by snowshoe, ski, and even on foot. For those who are prepared, winter in Rocky Mountain National Park is a beautiful time full of crisp adventures.

Winter is dramatic with rapidly changing conditions. Park roads exemplify winter in the mountains, with snow, ice, and gusty winds frequent companions. Trails may be good for snowshoeing or skiing one day, but poor the next. Stop at a visitor center (Beaver Meadows and Kawuneeche are open year-round) for information and suggestions tailored to your interests, and current conditions.

If you enter the park from the west (Grand Lake), you're in for a winter treat. Cross-country skiing can be excellent through most of the winter. Easy trails head toward Lulu City or Sun Valley, and many more challenging options are also available. On the east side of the park (Estes Park area), snowshoeing is more reliable than cross-country skiing. The lofty peaks in Rocky Mountain National Park tend to catch and hold more snow on their western slopes than on the east, allowing some east-side park trails to be hikeable through much of the winter. The Bear Lake area usually has excellent snowshoeing from January through late winter, as does the Glacier Gorge area. Dream Lake, Mills Lake, and the Loch are spectacular winter snowshoe destinations. Easy trails circle Sprague and Lily Lakes.

Rocky Mountain is the loftiest national park in the contiguous forty-eight states. When winter gives way to summer, you can travel on the nation's highest paved through-road – Trail Ridge (12,183'). Winter comes early to Trail Ridge Road, typically closing the road for the winter by mid-October. During winter, powerful winds, often gusting to hurricane-force velocities, create frequent blizzard conditions above tree-line. Because of the winds and resultant deep drifts, Trail Ridge Road is too dangerous to keep open through the winter. Much of the rest of the park is still open year-round. You can drive to magnificent overlooks like Many Parks Curve and Bear Lake on the east, and through the spectacular Kawuneeche Valley on the west.

You will drive by many trails that can provide a real taste of wild mountains in their longest season. A snowshoe or ski tour will reveal some of the beauty unique to winter. Here are ice-filled cascades and waterfalls, and massive peaks sparkling with snow against dark rock. Elk, coyotes, deer, snowshoe hares, and many other mammals remain active in the park through the winter, covered in dense winter coats. Hardy birds stay north for the season, ranging in color from that of winter (the ptarmigan), to that of night (the raven), to a combination that includes both those hues and more (the magpie).

Enjoy this long, quiet season in Rocky Mountain National Park.

- INSIDE
- 2 You Need to Know
- 3 Survival
- 4 Ranger-led Programs
- 5 Camping
- 6-7 Winter Tours
- 8 Resources & Extras



Notchtop in winter.



The tiny pika stays active during the winter, eating plants it dries during the summer.



The ptarmigan changes from mottled brown-grey plumage in summer to the color of winter.

NEW MEDIA A-U

RMNP Podcasts

Check out Rocky's new and improved website for info and downloads! Whether it's the Longs Peak webcam, the latest podcast, blogging a great park story, or just checking out the best hikes to go on...

log on to nps.gov/romo and click on PHOTOS & MULTIMEDIA

You Need to Know

Visitor Centers



Park visitor centers are the places to find out what you need to know. All have knowledgeable staff, printed information on many topics, and great bookstores stocked with all the best books for finding that perfect trail and learning what makes Rocky Mountain such an awesome national park. Each visitor center has its own special features.

East of the Divide – Estes Park Area

Beaver Meadows Visitor Center

Open daily 8-4:30 except Dec. 25. Features free movie, bookstore, 3-D park orientation map, backcountry camping permits in nearby building.



Fall River Visitor Center

Open Saturdays & Sundays 9-4. Also Nov. 28, Dec. 22-24, Dec. 26, Dec. 29 - Jan. 2 and Feb. 16. Features life-sized wildlife displays, a discovery room where kids can touch objects and dress up as rangers, Native Americans and pioneers, and a bookstore.



West of the Divide – Grand Lake Area

Kawuneeche Visitor Center

Open daily 8-4:30 except Dec. 25. Features free movie and slide shows, exhibits on how to plan your visit, bookstore, backcountry camping permits.



Can I take antlers?

No. Dropped antlers provide valuable minerals for other park animals. It is illegal to collect or possess antlers or any other animal parts in Rocky Mountain National Park.



International Sister Parks



Rocky Mountain National Park and the Tatra National Parks (Slovakia and Poland) have formally become sister parks. Sharing rugged, beautiful mountain terrain and similar ecosystems, three parks are exchanging information and expertise to better manage these great preserves for the benefit of all who may enjoy them.

Heart of the Rockies

Teachers, Parents, Students!

Rocky Mountain National Park's "Heart of the Rockies" education program provides an outdoor classroom to children throughout this region. Interested teachers may contact the park's Education Specialist at (970) 586-3777, or on-line at heartoftherockies.net



70K

Park Phone Numbers and Website



Call Park Information (970) 586-1206 with your questions. We are available to assist you from 8 to 4:30, daily.



Hearing impaired persons may call the TTY at (970) 586-1319 from 8 to 5 daily.

Dial 911 or (970) 586-1203 to report emergencies.

The Official Park Website is <http://www.nps.gov/romo>

Pets



Pets are not allowed on park trails or in the backcountry. Please observe signs; some winter-closed gravel roads are managed as backcountry trails during this season.

Pets are allowed in campgrounds, picnic areas and along roadsides. They must be on a leash (6' or less) and attended at all times. Never leave pets unattended in your vehicle. Kennels are available locally.

Fishing



Obtain specific park regulations at visitor centers or park entrance stations. To fish in Rocky Mountain National Park, you must have a valid Colorado state fishing license.

Hunting is not allowed in Rocky Mountain National Park.

All firearms and weapons are prohibited unless they are being transported through the park in a vehicle. In such cases, firearms must be unloaded and rendered temporarily inoperable or packed, cased, or stored in a manner that will prevent their ready use. By definition, "unloaded" means there is no unexpended shell, cartridge, or projectile in any chamber or cylinder or in a clip or magazine. Concealed weapon permits are not valid in Rocky Mountain National Park.

Lost and Found

Please turn found items in at any park visitor center. To inquire about lost items, call the Backcountry Office at (970) 586-1242.



Rocky Mountain National Park has over 13 snow moving machines.

Weather and Road Conditions

Winter driving conditions can change rapidly. For Rocky Mountain National Park daily road and driving conditions, stop in at a visitor center or call (970) 586-1206. Snow tires or chains may be recommended during periods of heavy snow. After hours, a recorded message at (970) 586-1333 provides daily updates on park road and weather conditions.

During winter, lower elevation park roads remain open. The high central portion of Trail Ridge Road is closed between Many Parks Curve and the Colorado River Trailhead. The treeless, open central section of Trail Ridge Road experiences strong winds and blizzard conditions, making it unsafe to maintain through the winter. For Colorado state road conditions, call (877) 315-ROAD or (303) 639-1111.

Bear Lake Road

Bear Lake Road is kept open during the winter. The road is plowed, but may be closed for clearing after any significant snowfall. Please call (970) 586-1206 for current conditions.

This Park Paper

High Country Headlines is produced by the staff of Rocky Mountain National Park in cooperation with, and funding provided by, the Rocky Mountain Nature Association. <http://www.rmna.org>

High Country Survival

Stay Together!

Avoid traveling alone in the backcountry and always stay together as a group. Detailed information regarding your trip itinerary should be left with a responsible person so park authorities can be notified if you fail to return. Safety is your responsibility!

Backcountry Travel

Be prepared for all types of weather, no matter what activity you are enjoying in the national park. Unforeseen weather conditions can change a short afternoon hike, ski, or snowshoe trip into an unpleasant experience.

Severe storms can impose life threatening hazards only one or two miles from your car. Carry a stormproof outer shell and extra clothing. Be equipped with detailed topographic maps and a compass. Obtain a required backcountry permit for any overnight trip.

Don't depend upon a cell phone for emergency help; many locations in this rugged park are not serviced.

Avalanches

Colorado has more known avalanches than any other state. Avoid skiing or snowshoeing in steep gullies where avalanches could occur. Open slopes of 30 to 45 degrees can be loaded with dangerous masses of snow, easily triggered by backcountry travelers. Wear an electronic transceiver when traversing avalanche terrain. If you are caught in an avalanche, make swimming motions and try to stay on top of the snow.

For current avalanche conditions, check at a visitor center or call (970)586-1206.

Keep Wildlife Wild

Never feed wildlife. A fine may be issued to violators. Animals can kick, bite or gore you. They can become dependent on human food and lose the ability to feed naturally. Wildlife also carry diseases which can be transmitted to humans, like rabies and plague. Photograph animals from the roadside.



Snowshoeing in the Kawuneeche valley



High Elevation

The high elevations of Rocky Mountain National Park, combined with dry air, may bring on symptoms of high altitude sickness. These include nausea, dizziness, headache, insomnia, rapid heartbeat, and shortness of breath. If you experience these symptoms, descend to a lower elevation. To minimize altitude effects, increase water intake, avoid alcohol and caffeine, eat lightly and frequently, and get plenty of rest.

Ultraviolet radiation is also strong at high elevations, even during winter. Wear sunglasses, a hat, and use sunscreen.



Hypothermia

Hypothermia is a serious and sometimes fatal condition brought on by exposure to wet and cold. The core body temperature drops to a level that impairs normal muscle and brain activities. Symptoms include drowsiness, loss of judgment or coordination, slurred speech, and uncontrolled shivering. If these symptoms occur, warm the chilled person with dry clothing and warm, nonalcoholic liquids. Get back to your car and seek medical attention.

Carry a windproof/snowproof outer shell and extra layers of clothing. Drink plenty of water; high elevation, wind, and cold dry us out and chill us. Most importantly, stay dry!



Sledding and Snow Play

There is only one place in Rocky Mountain National Park open to sledding and downhill sliding on snow: Hidden Valley. Snow conditions are sometimes poor to marginal. Check at a visitor center or call (970) 586-1206 for current information. Be aware of cold weather, chilling wind, and the effects of hypothermia. At Hidden Valley the fenced snowplay hill is for the use of sleds, tubes, and saucers. Skiers, snow boarders, and snowshoers must exercise caution when passing through sledding-snowplay areas. Slow down and yield the right of way when descending. On weekends and holidays, skilled park staff, often volunteers, are on duty. For your safety and enjoyment, please follow their guidance.



Winter fun at Hidden Valley

Ranger Led Programs



Wheelchair Accessible
Programs

East of the Divide - Estes Park area

Short Talks

Time/Program	Days Offered	Description
Skins and Skulls 3 PM 20-30 minute talk	Sa Su 	Want to pet an elk or cuddle up to a bear? Come to Beaver Meadows Visitor Center to <u>safely</u> feel skins and skulls while learning about park wildlife.

Snowshoe Tours –by reservation only*–

Snowshoe Ecology Walk* 12:30 PM 2 hours	Sa Su M W January 3 – March 28	Take a beginner-level snowshoe tour with a ranger and explore the natural world of a subalpine forest. No previous experience needed.
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*Making Reservations– Snowshoe Tours

Reservations are necessary and may be made no more than seven days in advance.
Call (970) 586-1223 from 8 AM – 4 PM daily.

There is a limit of 6 people per reservation for this 2 hour program. For safety reasons, children under 8 years old are not allowed on this activity. Sleds, skis, hikers, and children in backpacks are not permitted. You must provide your own snowshoes. They can be rented in Estes Park sporting goods stores.

Groups

Part of an organized group? Please call (970) 586-3777.

Evening Programs - East

Beaver Meadows Evening Program 7 PM 1 hour	Every Sa 	Enjoy a wide variety of informative and entertaining programs. Meet in the downstairs auditorium at Beaver Meadows Visitor Center. No program is offered 12/20 or 12/27.
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Visitor Centers

Check at a visitor center for the latest road, trail, weather, and ranger-led program information. Two visitor centers, Beaver Meadows (east side) and Kawuneeche (west side) are open daily from 8 AM through 4:30 PM, except December 25.

More detail on these visitor centers, and the Fall River Visitor Center (primarily open weekends, 9-4), is on page 2 of this paper.

Free Park Movie

See the stunning 23 minute park movie at the Beaver Meadows and Kawuneeche Visitor Centers during normal business hours. This movie features spectacular aerial footage of the park's rugged high country, as well as of wildlife and other park resources. Available upon request.

Junior Rangers



Free junior ranger books are available at park visitor centers. A successfully completed book earns a badge!

You are an important part of this park. Stay in touch.
Contact us anytime at:
romo_junior_ranger@nps.gov

West of the Divide - Grand Lake area

Ski and Snowshoe Tours –by reservation only–

Reservations are required for West-side winter tours, and may be made no more than seven days in advance.
Park Pass required for all programs.

Call (970) 627-3471 from 8 AM–4:30 PM to make reservations.

Time/Program	Days Offered	Description
Ski the Wilderness in Winter 9:30 AM 1.5 hours	Sa December 27 – January 31	Ski a snow-draped landscape and learn about the Kawuneeche Valley. Join a park ranger at the Kawuneeche Visitor Center at 9:30 AM for this 1.5-hour cross-country ski tour. Children under 8 years of age are not allowed on this activity. You must provide your own skis and poles with large baskets.
Snowshoe in the Kawuneeche 9:00 AM & 1:00 PM 2 hours	Sa - 9:00 AM December 13 & 20, February 7 - March 21 Sa - 1:00 PM December 13 – March 21	Join a beginner level 2-hour snowshoe tour with a ranger. Meet at the Kawuneeche Visitor Center. Please bring your own snowshoes and ski poles with large baskets. Children under 8 years of age are not allowed on this activity.
Snowshoe in the Kawuneeche 1:00 PM 2 hours	Su December 14 – March 15	Take an intermediate level 2-hour snowshoe tour with a ranger. This is a more rigorous tour with altitude gains of up to 500', and requires the ability to maintain a good pace on uneven terrain. Meet at the Kawuneeche Visitor Center. Please bring your own snowshoes and ski poles with large baskets. Children under 8 years of age are not allowed on this activity.



Park Book Stores

At RMNA Bookstores, Your Purchase Makes A Difference

The best Rocky Mountain National Park books, maps and other interesting items are right here, at one of the Rocky Mountain Nature Association (RMNA) bookstores located around the park. And when you make a purchase from our non-profit organization, proceeds are returned to the park, supporting important educational, interpretive and research programs. Drop by today.

Visit the Rocky Mountain Nature Association bookstores at:
Beaver Meadows Visitor Center
Fall River Visitor Center • Kawuneeche Visitor Center

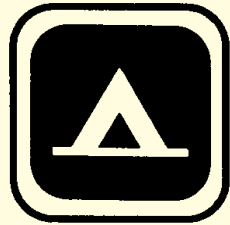

Rocky Mountain Nature Association • P.O. Box 3100, Estes Park, CO 80517 • (970) 586-0108 • rmna.org



Camping

Campgrounds

Reservations for summer camping at Moraine Park and Aspenglen* campgrounds may be made up to six months in advance. Call 877-444-6777 for further information. Longs Peak and designated sections of Moraine Park campgrounds are open all winter. Water and dump station facilities are not available during the winter.

	Fee per night	Elevation—ft.	Stay limit (nights)	Public phone
Longs Peak 26 campsites Open all year - tents only	\$14	9,400	14	no
Moraine Park 77 campsites Open all year. 	\$14	8,150	14	yes

* Normally Glacier Basin Campground is part of the reservation system, but due to pine beetle mitigation throughout 2008 and 2009, reservations will not be available in 2009.

Backcountry Camping Permits

Permits are required for all backcountry overnight camping. Camping is allowed only in designated areas. Winter-season permits may be obtained at the Backcountry Office (east) or Kawuneeche Visitor Center (west), or by self-registration at some park locations. For further information call (970) 586-1242 or write to: Backcountry Office, Rocky Mountain National Park, 1000 Hwy 36 West, Estes Park, Colorado 80517.



Leave No Trace

With 2.9 million visitors every year, the wild lands of Rocky Mountain National Park are being heavily used. In snowshoeing, camping, and all your park activities, do your part to preserve this national treasure by following these seven easy principles:

Plan ahead and prepare

Travel and camp on durable surfaces

Dispose of waste properly

Leave what you find

Minimize campfire impacts

Respect Wildlife

Be considerate of other visitors



West Side Wonders

What makes a perfect Rocky Mountain winter experience? Dramatic snow-covered peaks? Gliding on skis through a silent forest? Moose lounging in pristine meadows blanketed white? A family on snowshoes enjoying a trek to a frozen waterfall? These dreams and more can be enjoyed on the west side of Rocky Mountain National Park, by visiting the park via its Grand Lake entrance.

Skiing/Snowshoeing

Heavy snowfall on the west side of the park results in outstanding cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. Visitors strapping on skis or snowshoes for the first time may want to explore Sun Valley Trail, a loop that meanders through woods and open meadows along the Colorado River and offers breathtaking views of the Never Summer Range.



Another short jaunt leads to ice-shrouded Adams Falls. This 0.6 mile round trip includes a short hill that can sometimes be icy. Beyond the falls, more than a mile of level trail offers spectacular mountain vistas. Experienced skiers and snowshoers can continue up into the mountains on this or other trails.

Many routes are appropriate for both skis and snowshoes, with snowshoers being careful to keep to the side of ski tracks. Stop by the Kawuneeche Visitor Center for information on a variety of suggested routes for all skill levels.



Skiers enjoy touring up Trail Ridge Road.

Sightseeing

Prefer to experience the charm of winter from the comfort of a vehicle? Ten miles of road through the Kawuneeche Valley are plowed for travel. Take the time to enjoy spectacular views of the snow-clad Never Summer Range. Watch for wildlife along the banks of the Colorado River.



Ranger-Guided Activities

Interested in learning more about the winter wilderness while you explore? Rangers on the west side of the park offer guided ski and snowshoe tours on weekends during the winter. See page 4 for details or call 970-627-3471. Reservations are required.



Winter Trails by Snowshoe, Ski and Foot



With over 350 miles of trails, the park offers a vast array of choices. A small sampling of trails are described below. When properly equipped, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing at Rocky Mountain National Park are often inspiring and invigorating. Cross-country skiing is typically better on the west side of the park (Grand Lake entrance), as snow depths are greater, and terrain gentler than on the eastern slope.

Trail Tips: Even for short day tours, be sure to pack gear for all types of weather (sun, snow, wind). Strong winds are quite common, and it is essential to wear or carry windproof clothing .

Be prepared for the rigors of high elevation - drink plenty of water, and travel at a pace where you can still talk and breathe easily. If you feel poorly, descend to a lower elevation. Know park regulations. Pack it in, pack it out - including remains of all your food (pits, peels, etc.), as well as facial tissues. Leave rocks, plants and other natural objects where you find them. Let nature’s sounds prevail; avoid loud voices and noises. No pets are allowed on park trails.



Falling trees are an ever-present hazard when traveling or camping in the forest. Be aware of your surroundings. Dead trees can fall without warning.

Trails on the East Side of the Park

Trail	Trailhead Location	Round Trip Distance	Elevation Gain	Cool Stuff
Upper Beaver Meadows	Upper Beaver Meadows Road (gated) off Trail Ridge Road, 2 miles from Beaver Meadows Visitor Center	3-4 miles	140 feet	A fine winter hike along a gated dirt road, with an option for making a 3.5 mile loop by taking a trail just inside the barricade, which joins the end of the road in 1.5 miles.
Sprague Lake	Sprague Lake on Bear Lake Road	.5 mile		A good place for a short winter walk, or to try those cross-country skis on a frozen lake. Good views of the Continental Divide.
Chasm Falls	West Alluvial Fan at gated end of Endovalley Road off Hwy 34	5.8 miles	400 feet	Follows summer roads which are closed to winter traffic. At 1.5 miles, take the right fork up Old Fall River Road to beautiful Chasm Falls.
Lily Lake	Lily Lake on Highway 7, south of Estes Park	.7 mile	5 feet	The trail around the lake is often suitable for walking in boots, or as a short snowshoe or ski. Beautiful views of high park peaks.
Dream Lake	Bear Lake on Bear Lake Road, 10 miles from Beaver Meadows Visitor Center	2.2 miles	425 feet	A good snowshoe tour to one of the most photographed lakes in the park.
Emerald Lake	Bear Lake on Bear Lake Road, 10 miles from Beaver Meadows Visitor Center	3.6 miles	605 feet	An excellent intermediate snowshoe tour. Tour ascends to an alpine lake. Check at a visitor center for route details.
Bierstadt Lake	Bear Lake on Bear Lake Road, 10 miles from Beaver Meadows Visitor Center	3.2 miles	235 feet	A nice snowshoe or ski tour, if started at Bear Lake. Also possible as a steeper snowshoe/hiking tour from the Bierstadt Lake Trailhead.
Mills Lake	Glacier Gorge on Bear Lake Road	5.6 miles	730 feet	An excellent winter snowshoe trail to a spectacular peak-rimmed lake. Magnificent views abound. Check at a visitor center for route details.
The Loch	Glacier Gorge on Bear Lake Road	6.2 miles	970 feet	An excellent winter snowshoe trail to a spectacular peak-rimmed lake. Magnificent views abound. Check at a visitor center for route details.
Mill Creek	Hollowell Park on Bear Lake Road	3.2 miles	600 feet	A quiet winter snowshoe on a lesser-used trail. Check at a visitor center for details and current conditions.

Trail	Trailhead Location	Round Trip Distance	Elevation Gain	Cool Stuff
Cub Lake	Cub Lake in Moraine Park off the Bear Lake Road	4.6 miles	540 feet	A moderate hike/snowshoe; lower sections are often hikeable. The last mile often has ice or snow. Bring snowshoes, even if it looks open at the beginning.
The Pool	Fern Lake on Cub Lake Road near Moraine Park Campground	3.4 miles	245 feet	Meadows, aspen groves, ponds and conifer forests highlight this easy, nearly level trail. A snowshoe or hike, depending upon snow conditions.
Sandbeach Lake	Wild Basin off Highway 7, south of Estes Park	8.4 miles	1970 feet	Trail ascends steeply through sunny forest; a steady uphill hike. Snowshoes often are not needed for the lower trail sections.
Ouzel Falls	Wild Basin off Highway 7, south of Estes Park	5.4 miles	950 feet	Frozen waterfalls and beautiful views await on this snowshoe tour. Often some icy patches on the trail.
Trail Ridge Road	The gated winter closure at Many Parks Curve on Trail Ridge Road	2+ miles	200+ feet	Follows the summer road which is closed to winter traffic. Beautiful views; often windy. Snowshoes usually best.
Deer Mountain	Deer Ridge Junction 4.5 miles from Beaver Meadows Visitor Center along Trail Ridge Road	6 miles	1075 feet	A strenuous snowshoe or hike to the windblown top of Deer Mountain. The lower portion tends to be open and hikeable; upper switchbacks snowy.
Lawn Lake	Lawn Lake Trailhead on Fall River Road	12.4 miles	2250 feet	A strenuous snowshoe to a high mountain lake. After a mile, the trail follows scenic Roaring River.

Trails on the West Side of the Park -
 Where snow conditions are generally better

Trail	Trailhead Location	Round Trip Distance	Elevation Gain	Cool Stuff
Tonahutu Creek Trail	The Kawuneeche Visitor Center, north of Grand Lake	4 miles	300 feet	From the visitor center, an easy 2 mile ski to Grand Lake. A longer option is an 8 mile round trip to Big Meadows (700' elevation gain).
Adams Falls	East Inlet, on West Portal Road, at the far east end of Grand Lake village	.6 miles	80 feet	A beautiful snowshoe or intermediate-level ski tour. The trail continues to First Meadows (2 mile round trip), with a great view of Mt. Craig.
Sun Valley Trail	Harbison Picnic Area 1 mile north of the Kawuneeche Visitor Center	2.5 miles	50 feet	An easy ski or snowshoe loop through woods and open meadows. Be sure to look for orange trail markers at trail junctions.
Green Mountain Trail	Green Mountain Trailhead 3 miles north of the Kawuneeche Visitor Center	4 miles	600 feet	An intermediate ski or snowshoe to Big Meadows. A longer, more difficult loop is also possible.
Coyote Valley Trail	Coyote Valley Trailhead in the Kawuneeche Valley	1 mile	10 feet	A level trail adjacent to the Colorado River. An easy choice to test those skis or showshoes.
Colorado River Trail (Lulu City)	The end of the plowed road in the Kawuneeche Valley 10 miles north of the Kawuneeche Visitor Center	7.4 miles	350 feet	A gentle ski tour with some views of the Colorado River. Historic sites of Shipler Cabins and Lulu City add to the natural attractions of this tour.

Park Resources and Extras

Climate Friendly Park

Change has always been one of the inevitable forces of nature. It is just one of the stories told in our national parks. Recently we have been hearing about climate change and this too is a story that must be shared and understood.

In March of 2007, Rocky Mountain National Park became the newest Climate Friendly Park. This means that park management has made a commitment to greater sustainability in all our practices which include fuel efficiency, recycling, energy conservation and education as well as focusing research on the impacts of climate change on the park's natural resources.

In the summer of 2007, a "Green Team" of park staff and members of the local community was formed. This group is instrumental in making recommendations to park management that can further the goals of the Climate Friendly Parks Program which is a national initiative.

Climate change is a concern to all and will require sound science and strong citizen involvement. By making informed changes in our lifestyles we can reduce and begin to reverse the effects of human activities on the atmosphere and ecosystems of our planet. We have succeeded before. Our water and air are cleaner, the damage to the ozone layer has been reduced and we have restored populations of endangered species. We can succeed with the climate as well. For more about the Climate Friendly parks initiative visit: <http://www.nps.gov/climatefriendlyparks/>

Implementation of Elk and Vegetation Plan

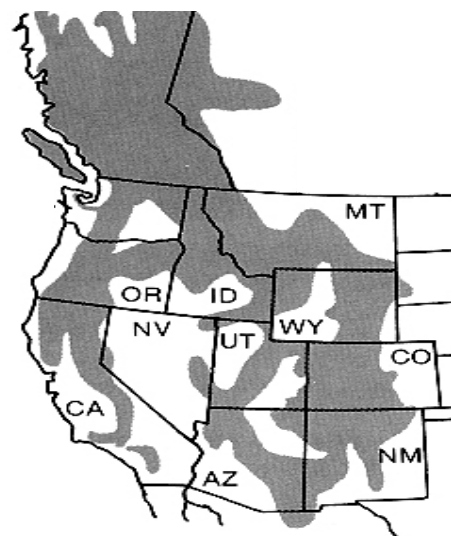
After years of research, public input and planning Rocky Mountain National Park is implementing a plan to manage the elk population that resides within the park and protect park vegetation. The plan relies on a variety of conservation tools including fencing, elk redistribution, vegetation restoration and culling. Elk research continues in the park and you may see elk with colored neck collars.

For more information on elk management and research, please stop by a park visitor center or visit the park's website at: <http://www.nps.gov/romo/parkmgmt/elkvegetation.htm>



Pine Beetles Kill Trees Throughout the West

Throughout western conifer forests, trees are slowly being eaten alive. From Canada through New Mexico, pine, spruce & fir forests are being impacted by wood-eating beetles. When you see western forests, especially lodgepole pine, with many reddish or gray trees, you may be seeing the effect of beetles and other stresses such as drought. Seventeen species of native bark beetles are known in Rocky Mountain National Park and surrounding national



Western forests affected by beetle outbreak.

forests; all have evolved with local forests. Burrowing through the outer bark of conifers, these bark beetles lay eggs which hatch into hungry beetle larvae which consume the living inner bark of trees.

Recent warm winters and prolonged low precipitation have combined to favor beetles and weaken many evergreen trees. Hard winters with cold low temperatures can kill beetle eggs and larvae under a tree's outer bark. Perhaps due to general climate warming, average winter temperatures in the Rocky Mountains have been higher than normal over the past ten years. These milder temperatures have aided an outbreak of beetles during a time when trees were weakened by drought.

Locally, bark beetles have been a significant factor in the death of most of the larger lodgepole pines in Grand County. Bark beetles are spreading throughout the pine forests of the park on both sides of the Continental Divide.

Much has been done in Rocky Mountain National Park, surrounding national forests, and on private lands to mitigate the effect of bark beetles. In developed areas, high-risk trees are being treated with insecticide to protect them from infestation. Where numerous trees in busy frontcountry sites have already been killed by insects, hazardous dead trees are being removed for visitor safety.

Bark beetle outbreaks are part of a much larger concern, showing effects of regional warming throughout the Rockies. Scientists suspect that earlier snowmelt, prolonged drought, and standing beetle-killed trees are related to human-influenced climate change. All may increase the risk of wildfire throughout this region. Just cutting down insect-infested trees will not change the causes of this outbreak.

In a very real sense, the air we breathe and the lifestyles we live are related to the health of our forests. For more information see <http://www.nps.gov/romo/naturescience/diseasesandpests.htm>

THE NEXT GENERATION FUND IT'S YOUR KIDS WE'RE TALKING ABOUT

Peeling kids away from television and computer screens certainly is a challenge in today's technological age. The Next Generation Fund is one solution. Through experiences in the park and other natural areas, kids make lasting memories that fuel their commitment to preserving and protecting public lands as adults.

The Next Generation Fund is a campaign of the Rocky Mountain Nature Association in partnership with Rocky Mountain National Park. The goal of the campaign is to raise \$10-million by 2011 to endow eight different education programs for kids in the park. It will support: the Junior Ranger program, Internships and Fellowships, the Heart of the Rockies Environmental Education program, Visitor Center Exhibits and Facilities, the American Conservation Corps, Rocky Mountain Field Seminars, Publications, and Innovation. Here's how you can help—visit nextgenerationfund.org or call 970-586-0108 for more information.



Nature. Pass It On.