

# ROCKY MOUNTAIN OUTDOORS

THE NEWSLETTER OF ROCKY MOUNTAIN OUTDOOR WRITERS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS

*Jack's Jaunts*

MAY - JUNE 2010

## Yellowstone: The rest of the story

Story & photos by Jack Olson

There's no way around it, Yellowstone is humongous. The park sprawls over 3,468 square miles of geysers, rivers, lakes, waterfalls, wildlife, forests, canyons, and just pure, awesome nature. Compare that to a few of our other well-known parks. Grand Canyon encompasses 1,904 square miles, Rocky Mountain 416, Zion 229, and Arches 119. If you were to join Rhode Island and Delaware, no small feat, they would be about the same size as Yellowstone.

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recommend getting there early in the day. Also, at that time, early light will paint the falls and cliffs with warmer colors. Artist Point, from which you can view the Lower Falls, presents a ragged, colorful face that looks for all the world like "yellow stone". There are viewpoints on both sides of the river.

Mammoth Hot Springs is another excellent, and quite different, choice. A trail will lead you up into the terraced formations; there's also a loop drive to take. It's possible that you might even run into some elk up there. I have driven a one-way dirt road from Mammoth up toward Gardiner, Montana, and was rewarded with close proximity to pronghorn drinking from a pond.

Yellowstone Lake occupies a large central area of the park. Some of our members have opted to take the scheduled pre-conference boat trip for a unique perspective of Yellowstone's attractions. The Yellowstone Lake Hotel has been renovated, and taking lunch in the old dining room could be a real treat. We had a memorable meal there at the RMOWP Pahaska Tepee conference in 1984.

By the way, that is the only previous conference where we went into Yellowstone.

There's no telling for sure where you'll find Yellowstone's abundant wildlife. Sometimes, unfortunately, you'll



Clepsydra Geyser erupting along Fountain Paint Pots trail. This geyser erupts almost continuously ~ we'll be handing out a trail guide for this at the conference

At our upcoming conference, we'll be based at the Old Faithful area. It's a great location, with the famous geyser, Firehole River, and numerous other thermal features. Fully a fourth of all the world's geysers are right where we will be headquartered, in the Upper Geyser Basin. But with the sheer size of Yellowstone confronting us, it will be impossible to build a schedule which would take us to all regions of the park. Many of you will want to visit some of these features and some of you may have never even set foot in Yellowstone. So I'll mention a few exciting and interesting locations that you may wish to visit on your own, before or after the conference. For additional information, you can look online at [www.nps.gov/yell](http://www.nps.gov/yell), and there are visitor centers and information stations throughout the park.

Upper and Lower Yellowstone Falls is one of the most popular sites in the park, with good reason. The Lower Falls, especially, are not to be missed, if you have the time. September should be less crowded in the park, but I'd still



Yellowstone River in Hayden Valley



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find them near a gaggle of cars. But that's especially around bears, which are not sighted nearly as often as in the old days. My old days. Elk and buffalo are much more common, and perhaps you'll be lucky to spot a moose or two, and just maybe some trumpeter swans. There's an interesting website which could give you some general ideas where wildlife might be sighted: [www.yellowstone.net/wildlife](http://www.yellowstone.net/wildlife). Binoculars would be a plus, and unlimber the long lens.

Speaking of wildlife, Hayden Valley, south of the two Yellowstone Falls, is often a good location to look for wild creatures. The Yellowstone River, serenely flowing through this peaceful grassland, makes for a gentle counterpoint to the park's more dramatic and tumultuous features. I've seen many anglers along the river, one of several prime fishing sites in the park. A fishing permit is required in Yellowstone. And take note, there is no fishing from Fishing Bridge. Go figure. Cutthroat trout spawn in that area.

Old Faithful is situated in the Upper Geyser Basin. It's possible that we will venture into at least some of the Midway and Lower Geyser Basins during the conference. But we're not likely to spend as much time there as some of you would like, so this is another

possible side trip. There are steaming pools, periodic geysers, gurgling mud pots, all accessible by boardwalks and trails. I especially recommend the Fountain Paint Pot Nature Trail in the Lower Geyser Basin. Among many features, you'll encounter Clepsydra Geyser, which erupts almost continuously.



Mammoth Hot Springs

Even farther north from Old Faithful, there are additional fascinating features at Norris Geyser Basin. One beautiful thermal attraction along the trail is deep green Emerald Spring. Predicted eruptions of a few major geysers in the various geyser basins are posted at the Old Faithful Visitor Education Center. Other eruptions are a complete and delightful surprise.

Any way you look at it, Yellowstone is one of the most spectacular and varied conference locations that RMOWP has ever visited. Yellowstone is America's first national park, the world's first national park. Take it in, experience it, enjoy it.





# 2010 CALENDAR

June 4 ~ RMOWP awards entries deadline  
(forms available online at [www.rmowp.org](http://www.rmowp.org))

June 16-13 ~ OWAA conference in Rochester,  
Minnesota

June 22-26 ~ RMOWP Photography  
Workshop in Rocky Mountain National Park

July 16-18 ~ NMOWPA conference in Chama,  
New Mexico

August 1-7 ~ OWAA Writing Workshop in  
Missoula, Montana

September 8-12 ~ RMOWP conference in  
Yellowstone National Park

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## Member News

by Barb Laine

RMOWP welcomes five more members.

Photographers **Christopher and Louella Bensabat** of Clear Lake Shore, Texas joined in mid-March. Some of us remember Chris from our 2008 conference in Estes Park, Colorado, which he attended along with his friend, member Glen Cullinane. I had several enjoyable chats with Chris during our forays into Rocky Mountain National Park and look forward to renewing our acquaintance and meeting Louella in Yellowstone this year.

An author of epic fantasies, **David B. Coe** of Sewanee, Tennessee is also a photographer who enjoys bird and butterfly watching. Visit his website at [www.DavidBCoe.com](http://www.DavidBCoe.com).

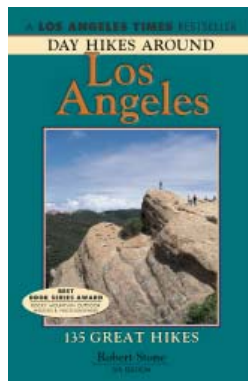
Photographer **Frank Stepanski** of Feasterville, Pennsylvania is a new member planning to attend the Yellowstone conference.

Former member **Kent Taylor** has rejoined our ranks. A photographer from Richardson, Texas, Kent attended the Photo Workshop in 2007 and is planning to attend the Yellowstone conference.

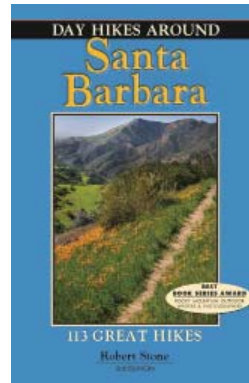
Welcome to all -- we look forward to meeting in person those of you coming to the conference in September.

In other member news, **Robert Stone** announces the release of two of his hiking guides: *Day Hikes Around Los Angeles* (5th ed.) and *Day Hikes Around Santa Barbara* (3rd ed.) Both are available from all the usual book stores and outdoor shops, with a list price of \$17.95.

Around the sprawling metropolis of Los Angeles, there are thousands of acres of natural, undeveloped land with hundreds of miles of trails. Robert's book tells us where to experi-



ence year-round waterfalls, wildlife preserves, lighthouses, the famous "HOLLYWOOD" sign, boardwalk beach strolls, intriguing metropolitan walks such as Sunken City, panoramic overlooks of Los Angeles and the coastline, shady canyon trails, and the rugged terrain of the San Gabriel Mountains.



Located along California's Pacific coast, the landscape around Santa Barbara includes mountainous terrain, preserved forests, wilderness areas, and stretches of undeveloped coast, boasting miles of quiet, secluded trails. Some of the area's best day hikes here include oceanside bluffs, beaches, tidepools, wetland preserves, sculpted gorges, rock outcroppings with caves, waterfalls, secluded pools in mossy canyons, mountain ridge trails, historical sites, and stunning overlooks of the Pacific Ocean.

Straight forward directions and clear maps accompany each hike.

**Kenita Gibbins** informs us that one of her photos of a hummingbird appeared on the cover of *Creative Transformation*, Spring 2009 issue.

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## Oh, Those Funky Birds...

Birds are sometimes funnier than people, and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology is helping to prove that point by bringing back its "Funky Nests in Funky Places" contest. Last year participants sent in more than 600 entries, ranging from nests in hanging flower baskets, an old boot, a teacup, a coffee can, and even on top of a clothespin where a hummingbird built its tiny nest.

The contest is part of the Celebrate Urban Birds project, a free, year-round citizen-science project from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, focused on birds in neighborhood settings.

For the 2010 Funky Nests in Funky Places Challenge, participants may take photos, do a painting, write a story, or shoot a video showing a bird's nest built in some out-of-the-way or out-of-this-world place.

"We've had such fun with this challenge," says project leader Karen Purcell. "The theme really struck a chord with people. You wouldn't believe how many people showed us bird nests in barbecue grills, bathrooms, garden tools, and signs. We even had Tree Swallows nesting in a cannon!"

Prizes include Kaytee bird feeders and seed, sound CDs, books, Cornell Lab gift baskets, and nest boxes. Selected images and videos will be posted on the Celebrate Urban Birds website, and there will also be a 2011 calendar using some of the best entries.

**Entries should be submitted by email by July 1.** See the Celebrate Urban Birds website ([www.birds.cornell.edu/celebration](http://www.birds.cornell.edu/celebration)) for details.

## Conference Update

Members of RMOWP have been registering for the 2010 conference and booking lodging in record numbers since our first mailing to you last September. The conference, to take place inside Yellowstone National Park September 8 - 12, will headquarter in the Old Faithful area, and as we write this only three budget cabins (no private bathrooms)



© SherryZurey  
nice little grizzly bear...

were available. To reserve one or to check on any cancellations, call Xanterra, the company that manages the Yellowstone lodges, at 307-344-5437, and talk with Karen Kerr. Karen can also reserve lodging and camping for you in other areas of the park.

The conference schedule includes early morning field trips with internation-

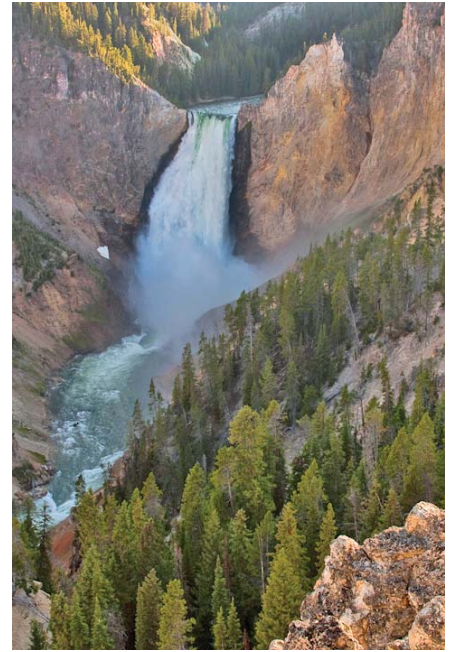
ally-known photographer Tom Ulrich (Thursday morning is booked but there are spots available Wednesday and Friday mornings). All boats for the pre-conference boat trip are now full, but those interested can be put on a waiting list in case of cancellations.

The conference also features hikes and walks to some of Yellowstone's most spectacular natural wonders, craft improvement sessions for photographers and writers, a multimedia presentation on polar bears, and the ever-popular sunrise photo shoot and photo and writing critiques.

You'll find details in the conference registration form

and schedule that were mailed to you in early March and in previous mailings. Information can also be found online at [www.rmowp.org](http://www.rmowp.org).

Important deadlines: **RMOWP's remaining cabins are being held until June 8** (earlier than previously announced - sorry about that!) and you can cancel by August 8 and get your full deposit back. For additional information on the lodging and camping choices, see [www.travelyellowstone.com](http://www.travelyellowstone.com).



© Frank Zurey  
Lower Yellowstone Falls

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

SEPTEMBER 8-12, 2010

BE THERE!

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