

ROCKY MOUNTAIN OUTDOORS

THE NEWSLETTER OF ROCKY MOUNTAIN OUTDOOR WRITERS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2012

Conference 2013

Should Colorado National Monument, on Colorado's western slope, become America's newest national park? Find out for yourself next May when Rocky Mountain Outdoor Writers & Photographers sets up camp outside this splendid national monument.

The 2013 RMOWP conference takes place May 15 to 19 in Fruita, Colorado, along the Colorado River just west of Grand Junction. We'll explore the national monument and talk with some of the locals about the movement to elevate it to national park status, dip our toes in the cool Colorado River, and hunt for ancient rock art and dinosaur bones.

Still in the planning stages, but here's what we're looking at:

Exploring Colorado National Monument's Lower Monument Canyon, a must-see for any visitor

Learning how to create award-winning photos

Discovering the art of altered photo images

Swapping tips with the area's outdoor writers

Finding prehistoric petroglyphs and pictographs in McDonald Creek Cultural Area

Jack Olson's famous sunrise photo shoot

Leading the life of a paleontologist with experts from the Museum of Western Colorado

Picnicking along the Colorado River

Writing & photo critiques

Showcase of selected members' photography

And more!

Conference headquarters will be the Fruita La Quinta Inn, which is giving us group lodging rates of \$79 per night for one or two people. This rate will be available until April 15. Based on availability, the La Quinta will also offer these rates for a day or two before and after the conference.

Our rooms have fridges and microwaves, rates include a continental breakfast with a do-it-yourself waffle bar, and the Fruita La Quinta accepts pets.

We have reserved 25 rooms - 10 kings and 15 doubles - and suites and other upgraded rooms are also available at discounted rates. Those making reservations should call the motel directly at 970-858-8850 and tell the reservations clerk that you are with the Rocky Mountain Outdoor Group.

2013 PHOTO & WRITING CONTEST ALERT

Contest organizer Frank Zurey tells us that there will be some changes to the contest guidelines for 2013.

Details will be highlighted in upcoming newsletters.

Deadline for the 2013 Contest is February 19.



© Jack Olson

Majestic mountain goat on Mt Evans
(See Jack's Jaunts on p. 4)



Western Meadow Lark © Linda Bundren
Honorable Mention, Fauna 2012



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Civilized Wildlife Photography

Article and photo by Richard Holmes

The animals are up at dawn. I'm up too, to photograph them while they're active in the early morning light. Moose tromping around, birds chirping and squawking, they all noisily begin their day. If I'm in a blind, I await the rising sun, often in frigid weather. So I'm cold, probably hungry, and a little tired of the routine.

However, I've now discovered a more civilized wildlife subject to photograph. It's butterflies. They are more cultured. They don't start their day at dawn, but like to warm up first. They don't noisily bustle about early, awakening folks still trying to sleep. They are more refined. Butterflies take their time in the mornings waiting for the day to get warmer. They have their latte, read their paper, and tend to other lepidoptera matters. Only when it becomes warm, the sun high, do they venture out from their cloister to begin

their outdoor activities.

I find this suits my preferred schedule quite well--the morning coffee, the newspaper, the day becoming warmer. It's a more reasonable time of day to begin one's activities.

So, unconcerned with my presence, ignoring my noises, butterflies gently land on a flower near me, leisurely sipping their nectar.



Giant Swallowtail Butterfly

And I leisurely move the lens a few feet in front of them. I don't have to track them through the trees, across the fields, through the mud. They come to me.

This then, is wildlife photography in its more civilized form.

Photo Ops in the Fruita/Grand Junction Area



Photos © Jon Sheppard



President's Column

PPI and DPI

Al Perry

A question that I often hear is: “How many PPI (pixels per inch) do you want?” Electronic devices do not respond to PPI (pixels per inch) or DPI (dots per inch). You can display an image, which you may incorrectly describe as 300 PPI, but it will be displayed on your computer monitor, iPad, or smart phone at a fixed resolution, which is usually about 100 pixels per inch.

The proper question is: “How many pixels do you want?” If you are talking about most computer monitors, the answer is about 1500 pixels wide and 1000 pixels high (assuming a horizontal image). This will result in a reasonable file size to give you a good-sized screen photo. Web images can vary in size. 600 pixels wide and 400 pixels high are in the ballpark.

Projected images are generally 1280 to 1920 pixels wide and 720 to 1080 pixels high.

When is PPI relevant? Only when printing. You can create varying resolution prints such as 200, 300, or 360 PPI. PPI in printing refers to how many pixels are used to fill one linear inch on the print. Keep in mind that PPI is not interchangeable with DPI. For example, native printing on most high-end Epson printers is 360 PPI, but you can also specify 720, 1440 or 2880 DPI printing. DPI tells the printer how many dots of ink to put down to create one linear inch of print. High-end printers can use more than one small droplet of ink to create a pixel of information on the printed surface.

When resizing an image, consider the end use and think in terms of minimum number of pixels required. Most images can be viewed fine on electronic devices with a file size under .250 megabytes.

Tundra Travels on Mount Evans, Colorado

Article & photos by Jack Olson

Looming about fifty miles west of Denver, Mount Evans is one of the most spectacular and diverse natural locations anywhere in the West and so close to a major metropolitan area. There is an unmatched combination of wildlife, highest altitude trees, wildflowers galore, endless tundra, a frigid lake, jagged rock formations and cliffs, and a view to take your breath away. Literally.



Bristlecone pines at timberline on Mt. Evans



Nature trail from Mt. Goliath Visitor Center

Zip up Interstate 70 to Idaho Springs, where you take the Mount Evans exit. You have begun your climb up the Mt. Evans Scenic Byway, the highest paved road in the United States. Winding, curving, and ascending fourteen miles you'll briefly top out at Echo Lake. Turn up Colorado 5 where you'll stop to pay a fee or show your federal access card, and then the excitement begins.

For a short distance you'll loop through dense woodland, but soon the forest drops away and the views expand. Wildflowers sprinkle the roadside, signaling the approach to timberline. Timberline: one of my favorite words in the dictionary. I'd rather hike at and above timberline in Colorado in summer than any other place in the world. And guess what? There's a visitor center right at timberline where you can pull into a small lot. Do it.

The Mount Goliath Visitor Center is run by the Forest Service and Denver Botanic Gardens. They boast that they feature the highest altitude alpine garden in the world. Paths meander



A boy and mountain goat size each other up

behind the visitor center and little signs identify which alpine wildflowers are blooming at the time. Maybe you'll be lucky to have someone at the center go out into the garden and answer questions for you. Ask them. Hint: sidle over to the west side, stoop down low, and look for the miniature columbine. Surrounding the alpine garden bristlecone pines, among the oldest trees in the country, twisted by incessant winds, struggle to rise above the mountainside and hang on to life itself.

Head on up the road. Now you're in tundra country. Tundra: another of my favorite words. After about a mile there's a parking area on the left. A trail here leads back down to the visitor center. The Botanic Gardens leads wildflower hikes down this trail in the summer. If you really want to learn your flowers, try to take one of these hikes.

On and on, the drive rewards your excitement with sweeping expanses of tundra and rock. My niece's family and I saw a big herd

QUIET YET TOUGH
Whenever I ascend to Summit Lake I recall an experience from the 1970s. I was a leader in a program called "Hike Out", for disadvantaged boys and those from troubled homes. There was a group of rough and tumble 10 to 12 year old boys from poorer families and one boy, obviously from better circumstances, a quiet child. The others kept apart and didn't show much respect for him. We were hiking around the lake when we spied a bird flying up and then falling back into the water, over and over. Tangled in fishing line, it was tiring in the effort. The "tough" kids were startled, scared, and shied away from the spectacle. Without hesitation, the quiet boy waded into the shallow water, picked up the bird, unwound the line, and set the bird flying free. The other boys were stunned, and he became a hero for the rest of the program.
Jack Olson



12,000 foot Summit Lake, a Denver City Park

of elk on the run, thrilling us. You may spot bighorn sheep in this area or even mountain goats. If you go up in June, you might just get a close look at the wobbly little baby goats, unbelievably fuzzy and cute. In a few miles, you'll reach Summit Lake, at 12,800 feet, where you can park. The lake is often partially frozen well into summer.

Take time to wander on trails down to the lake and on a trail to the north beside the lake. Sneak your head over and glimpse the Chicago Lakes, thousands of dizzying feet below. There should be carpets of wildflowers and stunning scenes of the cliffs ascending to the top of Mount Evans. Usually rangers or naturalists stationed here with spotting scopes can aid you in finding creatures on the slopes. Many different wildflowers frame the lake, but hunt for the huge rose crowns back along the road.

Now for the final push. A few pulloffs are spaced along the road to the top. This is the area where you are most likely to encounter mountain goats. Driver, keep your eyes on the road and everyone else look for goats. You're in a magical mixed land of tundra, rocks, and ponds. More and more of the surrounding, almost limitless landscape opens before you. Driver, keep your eyes on the road!

Finally, you hit the top. The parking area isn't too



Looking forever from atop Mt. Evans

big, so let's hope you started early or luck out. To reach the actual top of the peak you must hike a short, rocky trail to the summit, 14,264 feet. Once on top, there's plenty of room for many people

to scatter, sit, and marvel at the views. Fourteen thousand foot Grays and Torreys peaks poke into the sky to the northwest, Longs Peak and Rocky Mountain National Park occupy the north horizon, Pikes Peak stands tall and isolated to the south, and jumbles of ranges spread in all directions. You may just catch the glint of the sun off the State Capitol dome in downtown Denver.

Caveats: This narrow road has sheer dropoffs and no guardrails. If this scares you, maybe just drive to timberline, or possibly Summit Lake. If you have problems with breathing at high elevations, you shouldn't take this drive. I had a girl become faint just driving up in the car. It might be 90 degrees in Denver and 40 on top. Bring warm clothing. The road has indeterminate dates to be open.



Rose crowns at Summit Lake

The Department of Transportation opens the road in May, certainly by Memorial Day. Snows in October finally close it for the season. You might want to go early in the day. The road has become very popular and there are many cars and bikes.

I have often said that everyone should make a visit to the Grand Canyon once in their lifetime. Everyone who reads this should make at least one ascent up Mount Evans. If you've been before, make another.

CALENDAR

Sep. 4 - 6, 2012 ~ OWAA conference in Fairbanks, Alaska (see www.owaa.com)

Sep. 28 - 29, 2012 ~ NMOWPA conference in Clovis, NM

Feb. 19, 2013 ~ RMOWP Contest deadline

Feb. 22 - 24, 2012 ~ Winter Words, A Writer's Workshop with Mary Taylor Young in Estes Park, CO (see www.MaryTaylorYoung.com)

May 15 - 19, 2013 ~ RMOWP conference Colorado National Monument, Fruita, Colorado

May 30, 2013 ~ Scott-McKenna Scholarship application deadline (see www.rmowp.org)



Emily and Katee Harrington honing their photographic skills

Member News

by Barb & Don Laine

Next year's calendars are starting to invade our mailboxes, and it's always fun to look through them in hopes of seeing the work of our RMOWP members. We struck gold when one of the first calendars we received – from The Nature Conservancy – included a superb shot of a mother bear and her two cubs by **Kathy Turner** of Fairplay, Colorado. The shot, which accompanies the May calendar page, won Kathy first runner-up honors in The Nature Conservancy's sixth annual digital photo contest. It was taken at Hallo Bay in Alaska's Katmai National Park. About the shot, she told The Nature Conservancy, "We came upon this bear napping with one cub on her back and another curled by her head and watched them sleep for nearly a half hour."

Mary Peachin of Tucson has more guts than we do, as evidenced by one of her recent books, *Sharks: The Sleek and the Savage*, an update of her 2003 book, *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Sharks*. The book focuses on the conversation of sharks, new species, and endangered sharks, and also contains excellent photography and details on what Mary calls her "underwater encounters" with sharks (if you don't mind, Mary, we'll stay in the boat). Her two other recent books, also well worth a look, are *Sport Fishing in the Caribbean* and *Scuba Caribbean*. For details on the books and Mary's other adventures, check out her website, www.peachin.com.



The *Alpharetta/Milton Herald*, the hometown newspaper of **Terry Guthrie** of Alpharetta, Georgia, recently did a nice piece on Terry and his photography. In addition to praising Terry for his awards in this year's RMOWP contest, the newspaper lauded his recent book, *Fall Images of North Georgia*, calling

Terry's photos "breathtaking." Through September, Terry has a photo exhibit at the Georgia Heritage Center for the Arts in Helen, Georgia, and on Saturday, October 6, Terry will have his photos on display at the Foxfire/Mountaineer Festival at the Civic Center in Clayton, Georgia. He will be leading fall color photo shoots in Rabun County, Georgia, October 26 and 27, and those interested can contact Terry through his website, www.mostlynature-photo.com, which is also a great place to see some of his wonderful nature shots.

Randy Williams, of Choteau, Montana, wrote that he is one of three authors of *Fort Clark and its Indian Neighbors: A Trading Post on the Upper Missouri*. Located in what is today western North Dakota, Fort Clark was a thriving fur trading post between 1830 and 1860 and a way station for anyone traveling along the Upper Missouri River. These included the German prince-explorer Maximilian of Wied, Swiss artist Karl Bodmer and American painter/author George Catlin. Written by two anthropologists and an archaeologist, this book offers a thorough account of and new insights into the fur trade at Fort Clark and the cultures of the Mandan and Hidatsa Indians, the first people to welcome the fur traders to the area. Check out Randy's range of great photography at www.RandyWilliamsPhotography.com.

This year's RMOWP sponsored Photo Workshop in Rocky Mountain National Park garnered nine participants coming from as far afield as North Carolina and New York. Attendees included two from the Denver (Colorado) area: **Grant Barnes** and **Linda Haehnle**, plus **Pablo Garcia** from Albuquerque (New Mexico), **Donald Jackson** of Topeka, Kansas, **Harold Barnett** of Austin, Texas, **Ken Brodeur** of Plattsburgh, New York, **Diane Deming** of Clarklake, Michigan, **Harry Snelson** of Burgaw, North Carolina, and Canadians **Carol Hindle** and **Christina Mullin** from Ontario. All receive one year free membership in RMOWP. Welcome all.



Amish buggy on covered bridge ©Al Perry
1st place, Cultural category 2012