

# ROCKY MOUNTAIN OUTDOORS

THE NEWSLETTER OF ROCKY MOUNTAIN OUTDOOR WRITERS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS  
JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2015

## Jack's Jaunts

### The Best Place in the World

Article & photos by Jack Olson

OK. Before we go further, think of your favorite place in the world. I doubt you will have to think very long. Think about the reasons it's your favorite, the adventures you've had there, who you've been with. Time's up.

I've experienced magnificent places: Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, the Alps, Mt. Everest. But my own favorite place is no more than a hundred miles from home in the Denver area. It's Shrine Ridge in the White River National Forest. I'd rather be here than any other place in the world. Well, as I write this Colorado has suffered record low temperatures. Why don't we say July and August?

Start on Shrine Pass at about 11,000 feet, west of the Continental Divide. You drop down through a marshy area, boots slightly sloshing, with those water-loving flowers and plants that tower over me and some of you. Then you begin an unrelenting, but initially gentle, ascent. There are sloping meadows so full of wildflowers it's as if a giant gardener has strewn magical seeds everywhere.

You come upon a tiny stream that doesn't even take a jump to cross. But stop to admire the Parry primroses dipping

their toes in the rippling water. Then off through the woods, but soon the trail sharp

bends, climbs, and you can feel you are now breathing 12,000-foot air. Columbine appear, popping from outcrops above. Most years you will encounter a snow bank right before the top of the ridge. Get past it, and quickly.

When you take that very last step to the top of the ridge, and not one step before, the most stunning view hits you right in the heart. Until that very time, the only thing you've seen ahead of you to the west is the trail. Now all you see is the entire north end of the Sawatch Range, and sky. The first time I made that final step my breath wasn't taken away. It was ripped away.

You can do several things at that point. Stand and try to keep your mouth closed. Sit and cry. You can hike maybe a mile to the left. You're at about 12,000 rolling feet. But at the end of the ridge, what's this? It's all blue. The entire south end of the ridge is immersed in lupine. And looming behind them is the magnificent Mount of the Holy Cross.

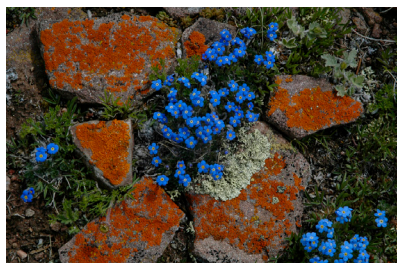
But I want to tell you what makes my heart go pitter-patter in anticipation. Take a right when you hit the top of the ridge and you will cross through broad meadows of Indian paintbrush. Gasp. You'll begin to climb up the trail to the north. At a certain point you'll leave the trail and soon enter the Secret Garden. Within this natural sanctuary is every color of Indian paintbrush imaginable. There are hues Crayola has never used. Sit there, lie there, dream there. And to find the Secret Garden you will need to-----just a minute, it's secret.



Lunch below the ridge



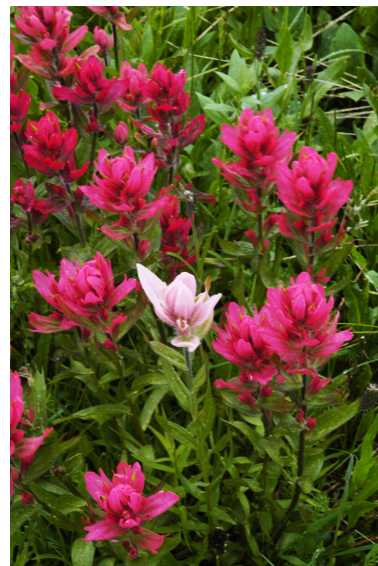
Parry Primroses stand tall



Alpine forget-me-nots atop the Ridge



Lupine with Mount of the Holy Cross standing guard



"What am I doing here?!"

## Destination 2015: Ouray, Colorado

RMOWP heads to Ouray, Colorado for a rare fall conference this year, with hopes of catching southwestern Colorado's splendid fall colors at their peak. Dates are **September 21-24** (that's Monday through Thursday), with the banquet and awards ceremony concluding the conference Thursday evening.

Workshops, meetings, and most meals will take place at the **Ouray Community Center**, 340 6th Avenue, and we'll also have field trips throughout the area, including a full-day four-wheel-drive tour into the high country. Nothing



Autumn in the San Juans © Jon Sheppard

is very far away in Ouray, and you'll find several lodging opportunities within walking distance of the community center. However, be aware that Ouray fills up, especially on weekends, during September, so if you are going to want extra nights that include Friday and/or Saturday, you should start planning soon.

Our primary lodging facility will be the **Ouray Chalet Inn**, 510 Main Street. We've reserved 20 rooms from Sunday through Thursday, September 20-24, with a group rate of \$86 plus tax single or double. Pets are not accepted and rates do not include breakfast, but there are several restaurants nearby. Make your own reservations by calling 800-924-2538 or 970-325-4331, or going online to [ouraychaletinn.com](http://ouraychaletinn.com), and use promo code RMWP15.

Other lodging and camping options and additional information can be found at [rmowp.org](http://rmowp.org) and in last month's newsletter, and look for further details and registration forms in the March-April RMOWP newsletter.

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## President's Column

### Are You 4k Ready?

by Al Perry

A few years ago, most photographers made the transition from standard definition to high definition in the presentation of still and motion photography. We may now want to consider 4K, or ultrahigh definition, devices including computer displays, projectors and TV's. The good news is that our still cameras are already 4K ready. With 4K displays, projectors and TV's now becoming available, we can choose to show our work in ultra-high definition.

Without getting into the math, high definition is about 4 times the resolution of standard definition. 4K, or ultrahigh definition, is 4 times the resolution of high definition. Just as digital cameras have become higher resolution, so too have computer displays, projectors and TV's.

To prepare our slides for high definition, we size the images 1080 pixels high. If we want to show our work in 4K, or ultrahigh definition, we simply size them to 4000 or 3840 pixels wide and 2160 pixels high. Resizing for video clips is the same. Of course, to view the ultra-high resolution images, we need a 4K computer monitor, projector or TV.

As an example, in December 2014, I made presentations of still and motion photography in 4K. Viewers were favorably impressed with the look of 4K content on a 4K viewing device. Also, I recently retired a 5 year high definition slide show running 24/7 at a regional airport. The high definition slide show has been replaced with 4K stills and video clips on a ultra-high definition, 78 inch, curved surface, calibrated monitor.

I forecast higher resolution recording and presentation will grow over the next few years.

## Rocky Mountain Outdoors

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# Checking on Your Homework

by Virginia Parker Staat

*As long as I live, I'll hear waterfalls and birds and winds sing.  
I'll interpret the rocks, learn the language of flood, storm, and the avalanche.  
I'll acquaint myself with the glaciers and wild gardens, and get as near the heart  
of the world as I can.* ~ John Muir (journal fragment, c. 1871)

During the 2014 RMOWP conference, our writing workshop ended with a homework assignment. I'm checking up on you. How's it going?

Our homework assignment was to begin keeping a field journal. Perhaps now is a good time to revisit that assignment and look a little deeper into understanding why journaling can be such a powerful tool for outdoor writers.

Like a photographer soon learns the necessity of using a tripod, outdoor writers find great benefits in keeping a field journal. A field journal sharpens a writer's awareness and observation skills. Keeping a journal helps a writer to observe levels in a landscape, from the smallest organisms to the greater ecosystem. We recognize the symbiotic relationships between creatures and the places they inhabit and how those relationships change during cycles and seasons. Done well, field journaling heightens our personal awareness, enabling us to better interpret and understand our feelings about the natural world. Most importantly, field journaling helps us to remember our experiences and the details we witness.

Field journaling has a long history of famous followers. Henry David Thoreau, John Muir, Edward Abbey, and Peter Matthiessen kept meticulous journals, using them as the basis for their writings. These journals are now treasured, revealing as much about their keepers as the places they cherished.

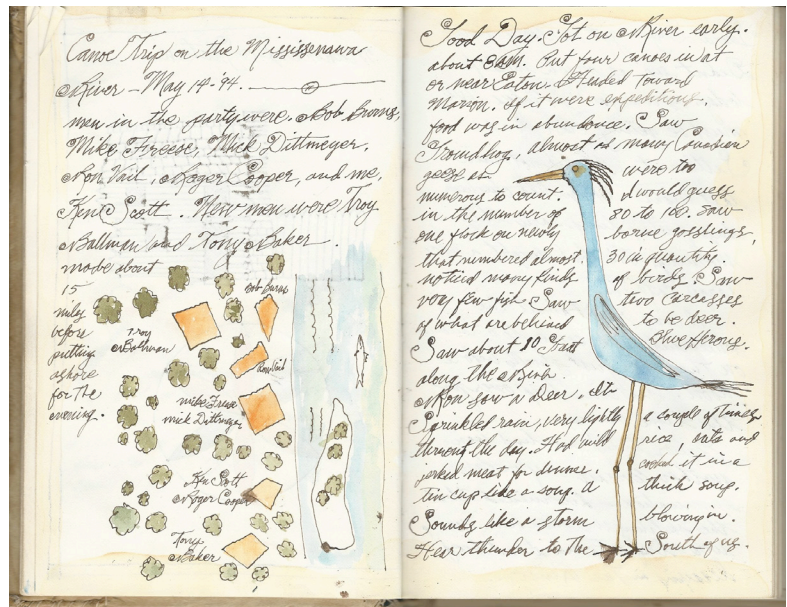
Because our journals express much about who we are and how we see the world, their focus is largely a personal preference. Someone who writes scientifically will have a different journal focus than someone who writes from an environmental perspective. In the image provided by American frontier artist Ken Scott, his artistic emphasis is evident in his journaling pages (<http://americanfrontierart.blogspot.com>).

We keep field journals to learn more about a place. They are meant to be working notebooks rather than personal diaries or records of elevated thought. We fill them with jumbled, fragmented sentences, scribbles, and hasty sketches. Journal types may include the chronology of a trip, seasonal changes to a particular landscape, natural history observations, or a journal of a special location or species. To find examples of journaling techniques, check your local library for *How to Keep a Naturalist's Notebook* by Susan Leigh Tomlinson and *Keeping a Nature Journal* by C.W. Leslie and C.E. Roth.

The journal itself can also take many forms. Some prefer a loose-leaf notebook or hardbound, lined journal. Others prefer a sketchbook with blank pages and a lay-flat design. I prefer a pocket-sized spiral notebook.

My field journals have evolved over the years from diary-like entries of trip highlights to emphasizing the power of a specific place. I prefer a simple journaling approach, focusing on the sensual, searching for meaningful metaphors, and trying to capture the essence of a landscape through words. In the artistic department, stick figures are a challenge for me, so I often photograph the details of the landscape. Within the last few years, however, I have found it extremely beneficial to attempt to sketch at least one thing with each journal entry, normally an animal. This art exercise always enhances my experience. Focusing on the one thing that I am sketching allows me to discover nuances and connect to the landscape in a way that would have otherwise been impossible without the deliberate intention to incorporate art into the journal.

I hope you, too, discover how keeping a field journal can become a tremendous tool for your writing. Field journaling can help us to become keen observers of our environment. Their combination of words and art record what we see and how we see the world. Most importantly, our field journals offer us the opportunity to recall the depth of our experiences in a particular place, to share our passion for the outdoors, and to inspire others to develop their own observation skills. I look forward to hearing from you about your journaling homework.



© Ken Scott

## REMINDER

We recently added a member's area to the website, where you can click on links to fellow-member's websites or facebook pages. If you'd like us to add your link, please send it to [info@rmowp.org](mailto:info@rmowp.org). And with the proper credentials, you can view the password-protected membership directory.

## Buck Knives Announces New Products

Buck Knives, a longtime corporate friend of RMOWP, has announced new products for 2015, including an entirely new line of signature hunting knives and additions to the survival, tactical, everyday, and recreational categories.

Field needs for hunters of both large and small game are covered with the new **Open Season Series**, consisting of a folder, Skinner, boning, caping, and small game knife. Each knife design is offered in S30V or 420HC blade steel, as well as a choice of a rosewood handle with metal inlay or thermoplastic handle. Also new for hunters is the **135 Pak-Lite® Elite**, which includes a lightweight caper and boning knife constructed of S30V steel in a convenient compact sheath. The boning knife's durable, narrow blade is perfect for maintaining control in tasks such as deboning and skinning, while the caper's modified blade allows for precise, detailed work, with ultimate control.



Designed with mountaineering in mind, the new **818 Apex** is a lightweight, easily opened knife complete with a carabiner attachment for easy access. Weighing less than 2 ounces, this knife is easy to

carry and offers smooth, one-hand opening, a wicked-sharp blade, and stylish aluminum handle. The sturdy, locking design ensures safe use and the blade is easily deployed with the thumb hole.

A popular Legacy Series knife in 2014, the new **017 Thorn** appeals to the outdoor recreationalist as a small and efficient fixed blade for general tasks. Crafted from 420HC stainless steel with a Zirblast finish and beautiful green/black handles, this lightweight knife can be taken anywhere and is easily stored in a distressed black leather sheath.

Additions to Buck's tactical line of knives include the company's first automatic. The **898 Impact** springs open with the slide of a button, readying the S30V steel blade for

quick action. The button lock keeps the knife locked open or closed to prevent accidental deployment.

The **877 Maverik** features an ergonomic design that makes it an easily accessible, lightweight, high performance knife. The handle has a curved, contoured slope to sit more naturally in the user's hand and the black oxide 420HC steel blade with stonewash finish is both rugged and non-reflective.

Named after the rugged Selkirk Mountain range beginning in the Northern Panhandle of Idaho, the **863 Selkirk** is a midsized survival knife with added features to help maximize survival in rugged and tough conditions. In addition to the 420HC steel blade, the Selkirk features a Micarta handle with steel bolsters (rear bolster can be used as an improvised hammer), and a heavy duty belt sheath that can be configured for horizontal or vertical carry. Included with the sheath is a fire starter and whistle.



New in Buck's everyday lineup are the **294 Momentum** and **293 Inertia**, both designed for rapid one-hand deployment and with liner locks for safety. The anodized aluminum handles offer excellent grip.

As a game changer for Buck's line of fishing tools, the Splizzors have been re-invented to include a saltwater version. The corrosion-resistant multi-function **031 Saltwater Splizzors** combines the use of scissors and pliers to create a versatile tool designed for many fishing tasks. Its unique design allows for efficient cutting, trimming, shearing, bending, crimping, and hook removal, and the durable rubberized handle provides comfort and a dependable non-slip grip.



The tool you never want to need but might save your life, the **299 PakLite Strap Cutter**, is the perfect safety tool to keep in a vehicle. A combination strap cutter and glass breaker, it has a compact, ergonomic shape and comes with a heavy duty nylon sheath.

For more information see [buckknives.com](http://buckknives.com).



## CONTEST 2015

Deadline: June 22, 2015

Complete details in the next newsletter -  
including a new category!