

ROCKY MOUNTAIN OUTDOORS

A Newsletter for Rocky Mountain Outdoor Writers and Photographers

Upcoming Events

Election Results

RMOWP president Linda Haehnle and vice president Steve Cochrane were both re-elected to their second two-year terms. Our new Board members are Ron Belak and Jimmy Smith. We welcome our new officers and give a special thanks to Frank Zurey and Richard Youngblood for serving as Board members these past three years.

Next RMOWP Conference Scheduled in Taos

Mark your calendars for our 2025 RMOWP conference! This year's conference will be held in Taos, New Mexico, from Sunday, September 14, through Wednesday, September 17. We hope you'll join us!

Looking for a place to stay in Taos?

Check out our March/April newsletter for more info about a place to stay in Taos or click here: [Taos Lodging](#).

Conference Update

text and photo by Don Laine

Ready for RMOWP's 2025 conference? It's happening in Taos, New Mexico, September 14-17. Our headquarters will be at Taos Tennis, next to Quail Ridge Resort on New Mexico 150 (Taos Ski Valley Road), just under a mile north from its intersection with U.S. 64/NM 522.

There's a board meeting Sunday afternoon and the opening reception and presentation of contest submissions Sunday evening. We'll have a busy schedule of workshops, programs, field trips, and meals. See the tentative schedule in this newsletter, but remember it's still tentative. We hope to have final costs nailed down soon and email registration forms in the next few weeks.

Highlights include a half-day float trip on the Rio Grande and a guided walk to see petroglyphs (plus great views and maybe wildlife) in the Orilla Verde Recreation Area, part of the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument, where we'll also have a picnic supper along the river. There's good fishing, but anglers need a New Mexico fishing license.

We'll see Taos Plaza and several downtown historic museums — Kit Carson's home plus the homes and studios of two founders of the Taos Society of Artists, from the early 20th century. From there we'll head to Taos Pueblo, a definite must-see, for a guided tour (included in the pueblo group admission fee of \$22 per person), although we will ask for donations to tip the photo guides, who are not paid. Photography at Taos Pueblo is technically for "personal use," and you cannot take photos of tribal members without their permission.

Other historic sites well worth your time include the Martinez Hacienda and San Francisco de Asis Church, both a few miles from Taos Plaza.



*Girl photographing
Taos Petroglyphs*

President's Column



RMOWP President, Linda Haehnle

Greetings!
 Summer has arrived - no matter where you live! HOT temperatures, thunderstorms.... Picnics, grilling, fresh peaches and cherries, and days outside in nature with our favorite activities. Certainly the fun and change of

pace are welcome!

I hope you all are making plans to attend the upcoming Conference in Taos, NM. It looks to be another action packed few days as Don and his committee finalize the last of the details. It will be fun to see familiar faces again and enjoy the camaraderie that we all have come to look forward to.

In the meantime, have a safe and wonderful 4th of July as we celebrate our country's birthday! See you in Taos! ~Linda

Writers Forum Guidelines

CALLING ALL WRITERS!!! We encourage all aspiring authors to bring a written piece to the Taos conference to share during the **Anne Sullivan Writers Forum**.

Sharing our writing can sometimes be stressful, but we strive to make the Forum experience extremely safe and supportive. Each participant will read their story aloud. Listeners will then offer suggestions or praise for a job well done! If you're interested in joining us, here's what you need to know:

- The subject matter must be the outdoors.
- Unpublished non-fiction, fiction, and poetry are all welcome.
- This should be a piece either you are having difficulty with or have some specific concerns you wish help with — not a published work.
- Maximum word count: 1,200.
- You are welcome to include up to two photos.
- Bring eight copies to share among listeners.

We do hope you will share your wonderful writings with us!

Nature hates calculators.
 ~Ralph Waldo Emerson

Rocky Mountain Outdoors
 Published bi-monthly by
Rocky Mountain Outdoor Writers and Photographers, Inc.
 Editor: Don Laine

Send editorial materials to Don Laine, info@rmowp.org, or snail mail to 76 Eototo Road, El Prado, NM 87529.

Opinions expressed in articles in Rocky Mountain Outdoors are those of the articles' authors and do not necessarily represent the views of Rocky Mountain Outdoor Writers and Photographers, its officers, board of directors, and staff.

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President: Linda Haehnle, Aurora, CO
 Vice President: Steve Cochrane, Rangely, CO
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 June Wolfe, Mesa, AZ (2027)
 David Staat, The Woodlands, TX (2027)
 Ron Belak, Kittridge, CO (2028)
 Jimmy Smith, Richmond, TX (2028)

Member News, Conference News, and More

Member News

RMOWP has another new member, **Janet Warner** of Evergreen, Colorado. Longtime RMOWP member Ron Belak told her about RMOWP — Thanks Ron! — and she is familiar with the group after attending the Sierra Vista, Arizona, conference in 2017. Janet is a photographer who also lists her interests as cross-country skiing, hiking, reading, miscellaneous crafts, travel, and gardening. Welcome Janet!

Oppie in the News Again

by Don Laine

Those of you who attended RMOWP's 2023 conference in Los Alamos, New Mexico, will remember Todd Nickols, executive director of the Los Alamos Historical Society. Nickols led us on a walking tour of downtown Los Alamos, including the home of J. Robert Oppenheimer, known as "Oppie" to his friends, which is rarely open to the public.

The historical society has announced a fundraising campaign to renovate and restore the Oppenheimer home so it can be open for public tours. The goal is \$5 million. Not quite \$2 million has been raised so far, and work has begun on the roof.

The more challenging part of the project will be shoring up the underside of the house, Nickols said, because the house doesn't have a foundation - floor joists just sit on the ground - so the flooring will have to be removed so a concrete foundation can be poured. The project also includes removing asbestos, repainting, plumbing and electrical work, adding a fire suppression system, and making the house accessible to people with disabilities.

Nickols said that interest in Oppenheimer, and the house where he lived with his family during World War II, increased dramatically after the release of the 2024 Academy Award winning film "Oppenheimer," by Christopher Nolan, which included a number of scenes shot at the house.

See losalamoshistory.org for more information. And if you're like me and want to see the movie again, buy the DVD with special features including "The Making of Oppenheimer."

Conference Writing Workshop Leader Named



Rick Kempa

RMOWP is honored to welcome **Rick Kempa** to our upcoming September conference in Taos. His writing workshop will be held Wednesday, September 17, at 1:00 pm.

Rick is the founding editor of the literary journal *Deep Wild: Writing from the Backcountry*. A poet and essayist, his latest books are *Too Vast for Sleep*, a volume of poetry, and *Truths of the Trail*, a collection of short prose pieces about the backpacking life. Rick edited two collections of writing about the Grand Canyon, *ON FOOT: Grand Canyon Backpacking Stories* and, with Peter Anderson, *Going Down Grand: Poems from the Canyon*. He has served as artist-in-residence at Grand Canyon National Park, North and South Rims, Mesa Verde National Park, and Hubbell Trading Post. He lives in Grand Junction, Colorado.

Rick offers this synopsis of his upcoming workshop *Words from Wild Places*: "We go to wild places to hone our city-dulled senses and to reconnect with the animal in ourselves. At the same time, our thoughts, feelings, and insights — our humanness — come into clearer focus in the wild. Through a close consideration of some well-made nature-inspired poems, we will gain an appreciation for how our animal and human selves come together to create memorable poems. Participants will each receive a copy of a recent issue of the literary journal *Deep Wild: Writing from the Backcountry*."

Damage Control

by David Staat



Damage at Rob Roy Reservoir, WY

Mountains. We had been camping in the remote areas of our national forests, away from major population areas. As we drove around the reservoir, we came to a beautiful meadow with an established road and camping area near the lake.

We set up our camp and headed towards the water. As we walked closer to the shore, I was shocked to see the shoreline, a pristine area of grass, reeds, and small trees, had been completely torn up by what appeared to be a four-wheeler. It was sickening.

This scene, although one of the worst I have observed in recent years, appears to be part of a growing trend of people's carelessness when visiting or camping on our public lands. So often there is little to no regard for those who come after or for the wildlife and their nesting and feeding grounds... for the health of the vegetation and water ways... or for the visual damage this careless behavior causes.

I have been hiking, camping and backpacking through our public lands in North America for over 65 years, and it appears that this trend of disregard continues to increase. Many of you have seen the same thing: trees defaced, trash on the ground, graffiti on the rocks, and the list goes on.

With the increase of the U.S. population, I expect our public lands to be more worn than in the past. I also recognize that many don't realize how their behavior can negatively impact the flora and fauna, which makes the challenge of maintaining our lands even more daunting.

Now that summer is here and our outdoor activities are in full swing, let's help educate others about the dangers facing our public lands. Talk to fellow outdoor lovers, our friends, children, and grandchildren to help bring awareness to the damage our behavior can bring to our public lands. Social media is another way to spread the word. It is good to know where the National Forest, BLM, and other public land field offices are for the areas where you will be visiting so that you can report any blatant abuse you may see. They will know how to handle the situation. Everyone can be part of the solution, and hopefully we can turn the tide.



Damage at Rob Roy Reservoir, WY



Tree Damage, near Valdez, AK



Tree Damage, Yukon

RMOWP 2025 Conference – Schedule Three

Sunday-Wednesday, September 14-17, 2025, Taos, New Mexico

Meals, meetings, and workshops at Taos Tennis unless noted otherwise

Sunday, September 14

2:00pm	Board of Directors Meeting (open to all members)
5:00-7:00pm	Registration & Opening Reception, Happy Hour and Light Buffet (included in registration)
7:30-9:00pm	Presentation of Contest Submissions
9:00pm	Wrap Up and Announcements

Monday, September 15

8:30am	Welcome, Handouts & Announcements — President Linda Haehnle
9:00am	<i>Scotland to Svalbard</i> with Peter Kummerfeldt
10:00am	Break
10:15am	<i>Three RMOWPers on Safari</i> with Peter Kummerfeldt, Steve Cochrane, and Ron Belak
12:00pm	Lunch (\$)
1:00pm	The Art & Architecture of Taos — Guided Walk in Downtown Taos - Meet at Taos Plaza.
3:00pm	Guided tour of Taos Pueblo (\$), or explore area on your own.
6:00pm	Happy Hour
6:30pm	Dinner (\$)
7:30pm	Members' Showcase with a Twist — Favorite Photos from All Attendees
9:00pm	Wrap Up and Announcements

Tuesday, September 16

8:30am	General Membership Meeting
9:30am	<i>Anne Sullivan Writers' Forum</i> (spectators encouraged to attend & comment)
10:45am	Break
11:00am	<i>Photography Workshop</i> with Eric Glassco
12:00pm	Lunch (\$)
1:00pm	Photo Critique (spectators welcome)
2:30pm	Carpool to Orilla Verde Recreation Area (BLM site along the Rio Grande, about 16 miles SW), for guided walk & talk, photography, fishing
6:00pm	Picnic Supper Along the Rio Grande (\$)
8:00pm	Wrap Up and Announcements

Wednesday, September 17

8:00am-noon	Float Trip on the Rio Grande (\$)
12:30	Lunch (\$)
1:00pm	<i>Words from Wild Places</i> with Rick Kempa
2:00pm	Break
2:15-5:00pm	Auction with David Staat
6:30-7:00pm	Happy Hour
7:00-10:00pm	Banquet (\$) and Awards Ceremony
10:00pm	Wrap Up and Farewell Until Next Year

Writer's Corner



Sam in the driver's seat.

In the Driver's Seat

text and photo by Virginia Parker Staat

"In the driver's seat, you have the power to steer your life in any direction you choose."

~Author Unknown

David and I recently purchased an old 1961 Jeep Willys. Four-wheel drive. Standard transmission. No power steering. A raucous, rowdy, and bumpy ride.

For some unknown reason, Golden Retriever Sam is obsessed with the Jeep. She sits in the driver's

seat like a queen on her throne, forsaking other, more comfortable places to rest. If we try to take the Jeep for a ride without her, Sam goes nuts, barking and howling like a wild banshee. To put it mildly, Sam rules the roost, particularly when it comes to the Jeep.

As humorous as Sam's obsession is with the Jeep, it reminds me that when we writers have a project, we share the same goal as Sam does. Being in the driver's seat is the place every writer begins. We survey the potential possibilities and begin our writing journey. Some of us begin with a roadmap. Others of us plunge right in with no particular

destination in sight, only a desire for cooler climes or mountains or sandy shores. But always the possibilities drive us onward.

My favorite college writing professor, David Jauss, published a book about those possibilities some years ago. In *Alone with All that Could Happen*, Jauss writes in his introduction that writing is ultimately the process of making choices among a panorama of techniques and strategies.

When we sit in the driver's seat with a new writing project, most often we begin at the beginning. What will our approach be? Will we write for personal connection or environmental awareness? Do we combine research with our emotions? Will it be an essay, memoir, or guide? Who do we wish to experience our writing? What do we want our readers to know or feel?

Roy Peter Clark in *Writing Tools* says, "Good questions drive good stories." He suggests that stories need an engine, a question that the action answers for the reader. What will your driving question be?

It's your story to write. Like Sam, you're in the driver's seat. The choices are yours. Choose wisely.

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