
ROCKY MOUNTAIN OUTDOORS

A Newsletter for Rocky Mountain Outdoor Writers and Photographers

Best of Show 2025

Best of Show Photography: Joe Casias, “Zebra Dazzle”



The Best of Show photograph of the Plains Zebras drinking was a slam dunk for the choice this year. It ticks all the boxes for composition, subject interest, processing, and choice of monochrome. It is an outstanding image in so many ways. From the way the animals are positioned to the wonderful reflection in the waterhole, it is a great photograph. — Fred Lord, Photography Judge

Best of Show Writing: Michael Salomone, “Success Not Measured in Inches”

This piece is perfect for its audience, persuasively turning table on the usual quest for “the largest fish.” — Mary Taylor Young, Writing Judge

Photography Judge - Fred Lord

Fred Lord is a long-time resident of Colorado. From the age of twelve he developed an early love of photography, mostly of landscapes and nature, packing along a 35mm rangefinder camera during parts of his youth. Now retired, Fred is still looking for that perfect, scenic, wildlife, and/or nature photograph.

Writing Judge - Mary Taylor Young

Author and naturalist Mary Taylor Young has been writing about the landscape and heritage of Colorado and the American West for 35 years. Her 22nd book—Bluebird Seasons: Witnessing Climate Change In My Piece of the Wild—was published in May 2023 by Chicago Review Press. Mary's honors include the 2018 Frank Waters Award for exemplary literary achievement and a canon of writing that communicates a deep understanding, celebration and love of the West; 2019 induction into the Colorado Authors Hall of Fame; 2020 Lifetime Achievement Award from the Colorado Authors' League. She has been a RMOWP contest judge and convention presenter for many years. Mary contributed to and was managing editor of her latest project, At Home In Nature: The History of Colorado's State Parks.

Video Judge - Ann Lukacs

Ann fell in love with photography at an early age. She has been working in the camera department in the motion picture industry for over 40 years. Her industry experience coupled with her knowledge of living in the mountains has unwittingly realigned some of her work to location scouting. In addition to working on major studio feature films and national commercials, she works as an independent filmmaker. Working as a filmmaker has given her the experience of storytelling and how to combine all the various elements of production to create the final film. Ann is the President/CEO of the "Park County Creative Alliance", a newly formed nonprofit with the vision to "Unite Park County Through the Arts." In addition, Ann has been involved with promoting film production to Colorado.

Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better.
~ Albert Einstein

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President's Column



RMOWP President, Linda Haehnle

Greetings! As we say 'so long' to Taos, New Mexico, and another incredible annual conference, this newsletter recaps moments of fun and participation by all.

Congratulations go out to all the contest winners, along with a big Thank You to everyone who submitted entries.

With the leadership of Vice President Steve Cochrane, and the awesome workshop leaders, inspiration was a key takeaway for all. Conference organizer Don Laine planned activities to highlight the rich history of Taos and New Mexico, and, of course, the camaraderie of everyone — including our new members — made for a fun-filled event.

Plans are already underway for the 2026 Conference in Fruita, Colorado — exact dates coming soon!

The closing out of 2025 and upcoming holidays are fast approaching. I wish you all a happy, healthy, joyous season with your loved ones. Warmly, Linda

2025 Membership Meeting

by Kent Taylor

Vice president Steve Cochrane called the meeting to order at 8:45 a.m. There were 22 people present.

Steve summarized various matters of business that had been addressed by the board:

- Next year's conference will be at Fruita, CO. Steve and his wife Megan will be the point persons for the planning. Some initial conference features include the Colorado National Monument, area wildlife and birding opportunities, wineries, Grand Mesa, and fall colors.

- We are considering offering credit card payment options for the RMOWP website.
- A new page on the website has been created to advertise your own site. Steve encouraged members to include the RMOWP link on their websites. The RMOWP site is averaging 180 unique visitors monthly. A png file of the RMOWP logo is available for members.
- Steve suggested members make use of the RMOWP business cards as a useful tool when out in the field and promoting the RMOWP with visitors.
- We plan to continue the zoom calls; anyone can be a presenter.
- Two questions/suggestions were raised:
 - David Zurey asked if there was a way to record the zoom meetings for those unable to attend the zoom when initially offered? Steve indicated yes that was possible and there are plans to create a dedicated RMOWP you-tube channel.
 - Frankie Zurey asked if there was a way to showcase the photo critique to give guests an idea of what the photo critique is like.
- The RMOWP Flickr account was mentioned and the decision to keep images of past contest winners on both the Flickr and RMOWP sites for now (some individuals may find their way into RMOWP through the Flickr RMOWP page).
- Steve invited those in attendance to consider taking on needed roles in the organization and to offer ideas of new ways to promote RMOWP.



1st Flora, David Zurey, Paper Flower

Conference and Member News

Member News



Bill & Merrie Winkler (couple on right) talking with Lee & Dottie Carr at Carrizozo conference of New Mexico Outdoor Writers & Photographers in 2005.

Former Member Bill Winkler Dies at 98

RMOWP recently learned that **William "Bill" Winkler**, who had been a member of RMOWP from its second year in existence, died last year at the age of 98. A resident of Cortez, Colorado, Bill was a filmmaker and videographer, known for his films of Mesa Verde National Park and the narrow gauge railroads of Colorado. He and his wife Merrie were active in RMOWP for many years and organized or helped organize several conferences, including the 1986 conference in Durango, Colorado, and the 1993 conference in Farmington, New Mexico.

Bill received a degree in biological sciences from Colorado State University, was a park ranger in Yosemite and Mesa Verde, and ran the business end of Mesa Verde for 26 years. Merrie, whom Bill married in 1949, died in 2020. Bill is survived by the couple's five children, their children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. For his obituary, the family wrote, "He was a spirited man who had the drive and passion for adventure while always being a great father with his love for his wife and family as his sole goal."

Membership Renewal Due Soon

Membership renewals are due in January. About mid-January, treasurer Maryann Gaug will email membership renewals to everyone whose membership expired at the end of 2025.

Please remember to pay your dues promptly. If you have decided not to renew your membership, please let Maryann know so that she won't bug you in February and March. If you have a financial issue with dues, please contact Maryann. We have ways to help.

Emails will also be sent to members who paid for multiple years and to life members stating their membership is in good standing.

If you need more information, please email Maryann at megaug@earthlink.net

Join Us for our Next Zoom

Vice President Steve Cochrane is planning a RMOWP Zoom meeting on Sunday, November 2nd, at 6 PM MST. This month's focus will be on our members sharing up to five of their favorite photographs taken in the months of September and October 2025.

If you'd like to showcase your photographs, please send Steve an email or a Dropbox link with your images. If you are familiar with Zoom, you can share your screen instead of emailing your pictures. Otherwise, feel free to sit back and enjoy everyone else's photos.

If you send Steve your pictures, he will put them into a PowerPoint presentation and you will have the opportunity to talk about your images with the group. Another option will be to create a PowerPoint presentation and send the file to Steve. If you choose to share your screen, it's best to format your images into a presentation, as we've found that sharing single images does not display clearly for everyone because of screen resolutions.

If you have any questions, please contact Steve at (steve@stevecochranephotography.com). To join the Zoom meeting, click this link:

<https://zoom.us/j/93032947915?pwd=9K1UZ1IGs2ujvoPqcXJpWBXEJ4S3SL.1>

Contest Winners 2025

See www.rmowp.org for judges' comments, images, and other details.

Photography Winners:

01 Images from Last Conference

- 1st Kent Taylor - Milky Way Over CCC Shelter
- 2nd Kent Taylor - Davis Mountain Sunset
- 3rd Buddy Green - Acorn Woodpecker
- HM Buddy Green - Mule Deer Fawns

02 Scenics

- 1st Steve Cochrane - Winter Sunset
- 2nd Deanna Zurey - Maroon Bells
- 3rd Joe Casias - Namibia Coastal Dunes
- HM Joe Casias - Sossusviel Dune Aerial
- HM Judy Lehmkuhl - Harbor by Moonlight

03 Flora

- 1st David Zurey - Paper Flower
- 2nd Kent Taylor - Hydrangea Bloom
- 3rd Joe Casias - Swirly Dune Tree
- HM Ad Andrews - Painting or Photograph
- HM Kent Taylor - Magnolia Magic

04 Fauna

- 1st Ada Andrews - Fresh Picked
- 2nd Beto Gutierrez - Morning Bath
- 3rd Tie Frank Zurey - Black-crested Titmouse
- 3rd Tie Steve Cochrane - A Bear's Life
- HM Buddy Green - Great Kiskadee
- HM Beto Gutierrez - Raccoon for Breakfast
- HM Beto Gutierrez - Caracara

05 People in Nature

- 1st Joe Casias - Almost There
- 2nd Joe Casias - Welcome to Half Dome
- 3rd Joe Casias - Killimanjaro Porter Clouds
- HM Maryann Gaug - Backpackers in Needles
- HM Beto Gutierrez - Jumping the Waves

07 Cultural

- 1st Ron Belak - Piping Away
- 2nd Judy Lehmkuhl - Native Dancer Golden Rodeo
- 3rd Ron Belak - The Queen's Chamber Maid

06 Historical

- 1st Ron Belak - Fog Lifting at Canterbury Castle
- 2nd Joe Casias - Namibia Ghost Mine Town
- 3rd Maryann Gaug - Pictographs Jones Hole UT
- HM Ron Belak - Final Rest at St. Oswalds
- HM Beto Gutierrez - Port Isabel Lighthouse 1852

08 Natural Phenomena

- 1st Joe Casias - Killimanjaro Milky Way
- 2nd June Wolfe - Milky Way
- 3rd Virginia Staat - Diamond Ring
- HM Frank Zurey - The Milky Way
- HM Kent Taylor - Storm Clouds Over Wheat Field

09 Altered Composite

- 1st Steve Cochrane - Highway To The Buttes
- 2nd Frank Zurey - Black Bear Cubs at Play
- 3rd Frank Zurey - The Big Stretch
- HM Steve Cochrane - Faith Under the Stars
- HM - Frank Zurey - Northern Cardinal

10 Black & White

- 1st Joe Casias - Zebra Dazzle
- 2nd Frank Zurey - Mexican Ground Squirrel
- 3rd Joe Casias - The Queen
- HM Frank Zurey - The Belly Flop
- HM Ron Belak - Fishing the Storm

11 Novice

- 1st Deanna Zurey - Elusive Bobcat
- 2nd Deanna Zurey - Harris Hawk
- 3rd June Wolfe - Bobcat
- HM June Wolfe - Mexican Ground Squirrel
- HM Janet Warner - Wood Ducks in a Row
- HM June Wolfe - Caracara

Contest Winners 2025 (continued)

12 Published Images

- 1st Dan Bernskoetter - Three Turtles
- 2nd Frank Zurey - Grizzly Cubs Wrestling
- 3rd Ron Belak - Competition for Bonehead
- HM Frank Zurey - Green Jay
- HM Frank Zurey - Crested Caracara in Flight

Writing, Video, Art, Member's Choice and Humorous Photo Winners

24 Newspaper, Magazine or other publications - articles/columns/editorials

- 1st Michael Salomone - Success Not Measured in Inches
- 2nd Ron Belak - Beautiful Butterflies & Mysterious Moths
- 3rd Ron Belak - Advice from the Sages for the Ages

26 Newsletter and Web Writing - Articles/Columns/Editorials/Short Stories

- 1st Virginia Staat - Too Small a Box
- 2nd Virginia Staat - When the Bloom is Gone
- 3rd Maryann Gaug - When a Three-Mile Hike Turns into Five

28 Unpublished Written Works

- 1st Judy Lehmkuhl - Arachne
- 2nd Jan Barnes - Bear Camp Alaska

31 Video Clips

- 1st Ron Belak - In for a Landing
- 2nd Ron Belak - Leopard Cub's Breakfast
- 2nd Tie Ron Belak - Kudus Sparring
- 3rd Frank Zurey - Grizzly Looking for Salmon
- HM Frank Zurey - Humpback Whale Doing the Back Stroke
- HM - Frank Zurey - Humpback Whales Cruising

40 Art Works with an Outdoor Theme

- 1st Michael Salomone - Copper Embossing

Member's Choice

- 1st Beto Gutierrez - Mouse for a Snack
- 2nd Tie Fred Lord - Rock Cut on Trail Ridge Road
- 2nd Tie Buddy Green - Wily Weasel



1st Place Scenic, Steve Cochrane, Winter Sunset

Humorous Photo Challenge

- 1st Deanna Zurey - Floating Hare
- 2nd Buddy Greene - America's Dirtiest Job
- 3rd Frank Zurey - Bad Hair Day

Taos Conference Has Come and Gone

by Don Laine

RMOWP's annual conference took place September 14-17 in Taos, New Mexico, with 28 members and guests participating. The weather mostly cooperated, with only a few sprinkles as we started a guided hike in the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument.

Highlights included the hike along the Rio Grande with a Bureau of Land Management ranger, where we saw petroglyphs and scenics, plus a raft trip, burger and chicken sausage barbecue (where I forgot the ketchup!), visits to several museums, and some attendees explored historic Taos Pueblo. Several others sought out the grave of famed pioneer and explorer Kit Carson, and quite a few attendees saw bighorn sheep, which we'll likely see in next year's photo contest.

We had excellent writing and photography workshops, including one from three RMOWP members on their photo safari to South Africa. We had a program titled "Words from Wild Places" by Grand Junction, Colorado, resident Rick Kempa, an editor, essayist, and poet, plus another on remote landscape photography with photographer and new member Eric Glassco. There was also the writers' forum, photo critique, members' showcase, and the always popular auction, which raised \$677, including donations.

Conference Photos



*C*onference
photographers
include Dan
Bernskoetter, Maryann
Gaug, and Don Laine.



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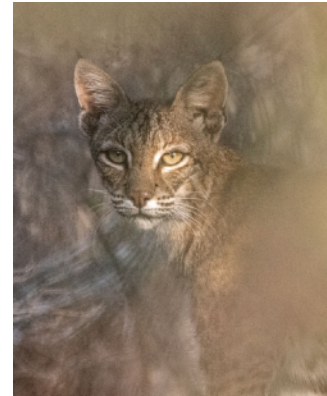
More Winning Contest Photos



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Kent Taylor, Milky Way over CCC*



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