

ROCKY MOUNTAIN OUTDOORS

A Newsletter for Rocky Mountain Outdoor Writers and Photographers

Upcoming Events

Membership Renewal Time

RMOWP Treasurer Maryann Gaug reminds everyone to renew their membership by March 31, 2025. For more information, see Page 2 of this newsletter.

Contest Deadline Announced

Mark your calendars for the RMOWP Photo and Writing Contest entry due date! This year's deadline is June 9, 2025. For more information, please see Page 2 of this newsletter or visit rmowp.org.

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!

Taos Conference Planning in the Works

photo and text by Don Laine

The 2025 annual conference of Rocky Mountain Outdoor Writers and Photographers will be in Taos, New Mexico, September 14-17, with headquarters 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.

That's Sunday afternoon through Wednesday evening, with the board meeting Sunday afternoon and an opening reception and presentation of contest submissions Sunday evening. We'll have a busy schedule of workshops, programs, field trips, meals, and maybe even some free time to explore the area on your own.

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 hope to have a picnic supper.

See the tentative schedule (Page 5), keeping in mind that it is very tentative. We'll also be suggesting visits to Taos Pueblo, the historic Martinez Hacienda, and San Francisco de Asis Church.



Rafting on the Rio Grande

President's Column



RMOWP President, Linda Haehnle

Greetings!!
 What a crazy time of the year!!! The calendar says it is technically still winter, but there are many signs of Springtime all around us..... the days are getting longer with more sunshine coercing us out of hibernation. Packets of seeds are on display, encouraging us to think gardens and digging in the dirt. Daylight Savings Time is around the corner, and plans to enjoy 'spring break' are in the works... and of course, our wildlife will soon be bringing their young into the world.

I hope you're all healthy and looking forward to the new season... even if we get another snowstorm, Spring is not far behind!

The annual conference in Taos is coming together nicely, and Don and his team are planning great activities for us to enjoy!

Stay tuned as more info is forthcoming....
 Blessings, Linda

Membership Renewal Time!

RMOWP treasurer Maryann Gaug emailed membership renewal reminders around February 15 to those she had not yet received renewals from.

If you don't intend to renew, please let her know at megaug@earthlink.net or else she will call you in March for a status report (in case your email was lost in the bit bucket somewhere). Anyone not renewing by March 31 will be dropped from membership on April 1, 2025.

2025 Photo & Writing Contest

RMOWP's 2025 Photo and Writing Contest deadline has been set for June 9, 2025. We look forward to members sharing their writing and photography work through the competition. You must be a member of RMOWP to submit work to the contest, however, you are welcome to join RMOWP with your contest entry.

Entries must be postmarked or drop boxed no later than Monday, June 9, 2025. Entry fee is \$20 for all entries. For rules and entry forms, please see www.rmowp.org.

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RMOWP Officers:

President: Linda Haehnle, Aurora, CO
 Vice President: Steve Cochrane, Rangely, CO
 Secretary: Kent Taylor, Richardson, TX
 Treasurer: Maryann Gaug, Silverthorne, CO
 Past President: Virginia Staat, The Woodlands, TX

Board of Directors:

Frank Zurey, Golden, CO (2025)
 Richard Youngblood, Katy, TX (2025)
 Dan Bernskoetter, Lohman, MO (2026)
 Al Perry, Herriman, UT (2026)
 June Wolfe, Mesa, AZ (2027)
 David Staat, The Woodlands, TX (2027)

Conference Update and Member News

Where to Stay in Taos

The closest lodging to our meeting room is **Quail Ridge Resort** (www.quailridgetaos.com; 575-776-8833), part of the Taos Tennis complex, a condominium resort and possible lodging choice, with handsomely-appointed studios, one-bedroom, and two bedroom units. Some units have kitchens, some allow pets, and some have fireplaces. Rates start at \$132 plus tax with a one-time cleaning fee.

A few blocks north of Taos Plaza is **El Pueblo Lodge** (www.elpueblolodge.com; 575-758-8700), an attractive motel with all the amenities you would expect and rates starting at under \$200 per night. Just a few blocks closer to Taos Plaza, but still on the north side of town, is **Taos Inn** (www.taosinn.com; 575-758-2233), an historic hotel that boasts that it's "The Living Room of Taos." Rates start at a little over \$200 per night.

The closest camping is at **Monte Bello RV Park** (www.taosmontebellosrvpark.com; 575-751-0774), 3.2 miles west of our meeting room along U.S. 64, with all the commercial campground amenities you would expect and great mountain views. Rates start at \$50 per night. There are also campsites in the Questa Ranger District of the **Carson National Forest** (www.fs.usda.gov/carson; 575-758-0520) along the road to Taos Ski Valley, although it's a steep, winding road that we don't recommend for a home base during the conference.

There are numerous Air B&Bs and other lodging and camping possibilities, including in the town of Taos. Most of the chain motels plus the historic and attractive Sagebrush Inn are on the south side of Taos.

For more information on where to bed down, see the lodging section at the Visit Taos New Mexico website, www.taos.org. Phone 800-732-8267.

Great photography is about depth of feeling, not depth of field.
~Peter Adams

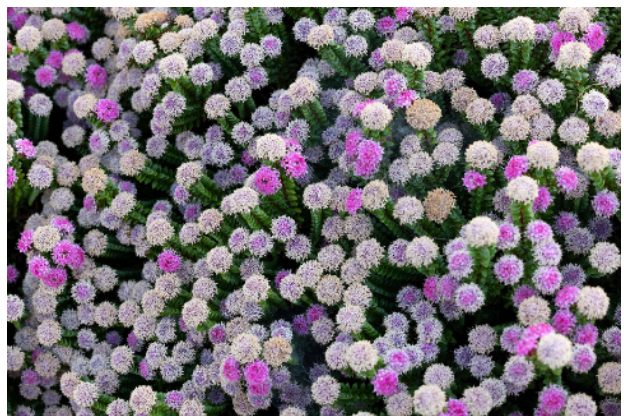
Member News

RMOWP gained three new members in recent months.

Many of you met **Frank Zurey, IV**, son of longtime member and award-winning photographer Frank Zurey, at the Fort Davis, Texas, conference in October. A resident of Fort Collins, Colorado, Frank is a photographer and writer.

Thornton, Colorado, resident **Ada Andrews** also recently joined RMOWP after discovering us while Web browsing. Ada tells us she is a photographer, interested in networking with other photographers and learning more about the journalism/writing component of photography and building community. Her photography interests focus mostly on wildlife, adventure travel, and landscapes. You can learn about Ada on her website, www.myadventuremaven.com, and see some of her photography through her Instagram link.

Also from Thornton, Colorado, **Joe Casias** recently joined RMOWP and tells us that he learned about RMOWP from Ada. He says he is interested in growing his skills in publishing and writing, and enjoys photographing landscapes, nightscapes, lifestyle, action sports, and wildlife.



3rd Place Flora, Steve Cochrane, Field of Flowers

New Name for Colorado's Mount Evans

New Name for Colorado's Mount Evans

by Don Laine

Heading to Colorado? Make sure you have the newest maps available so you know where you are.

The U.S. Department of the Interior's Board on Geographic Names (BGN) has announced the re-naming of Mount Evans, the 14th highest peak in Colorado at 14,258 feet. Located in Clear Creek County, it's bounded by several national forests and a wilderness area. Some attendees of RMOWP's Golden, Colorado, conference in 2022 drove to Mount Evans via what was then called the Mount Evans Scenic Byway.

The new name is Mount Blue Sky, decided after several years of consultations with various governments and tribal representatives.

Jack Olson, now living in Florida but a Coloradan at heart and an expert on Colorado travel, told us that the name Mount Blue Sky is the translation of the Arapahoe name for the mountain.

"The mountain was originally named after John Evans, territorial governor who was forced to resign after the Sand Creek Massacre by U.S. troops in 1864," Jack tells us. He adds, "About 230 people were killed, most of them women and children. The Arapahoe and Cheyenne people were camped on the southeast Colorado plains in order to broker peace."

Visitors to the area today will want to explore the newly-named Mount Blue Sky Scenic Byway, the highest paved road in North America. It climbs more than 7,000 feet in 28 miles, reaching an altitude of 14,130 feet. At the summit you can see Colorado's entire Front Range, alpine lakes, wildflowers, and wildlife including mountain goats and bighorn sheep.

Timed tickets are required for entry and are available through the federal government website [recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov). Search "Mount Blue Sky."



Photo by Maryann Gaug



Photo by Maryann Gaug

Tentative 2025 Conference Schedule

RMOWP Conference

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

Meals and workshops at Tennis Ranch 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 What in the World am I doing in Taos, New Mexico? - Barbara Brenner
- 9:30am Workshop -
- 10:30am Break
- 10:45am Workshop -
- 12:00pm Lunch
- 1:00pm Workshop -
- 2:15pm Break
- 2:30pm The Art & Architecture of Taos - If it's Good Enough for Ansel Adams and Georgia O'Keeffe it's Good Enough for Me - Guided Tour
- 6:00pm 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
- 9:00am Anne Sullivan Writers' Forum (spectators encouraged to attend & comment)
- 10:45am Break
- 11:00am Workshop -
- 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, photography, fishing
- 6:00pm Picnic Supper Along the Rio Grande (included in registration fee)
- 8:00pm Wrap Up and Announcements

Wednesday, September 17

- 8:00am-noon Float Trip on the Rio Grande (\$)
 - 12:30 Lunch
 - 1:00pm Workshop -
 - 2:00pm RMOWP Website & Newsletter Updates
 - 2:30-5:00pm 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
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Writer's Corner

A Gift to Share

photo and text by Virginia Parker Staat

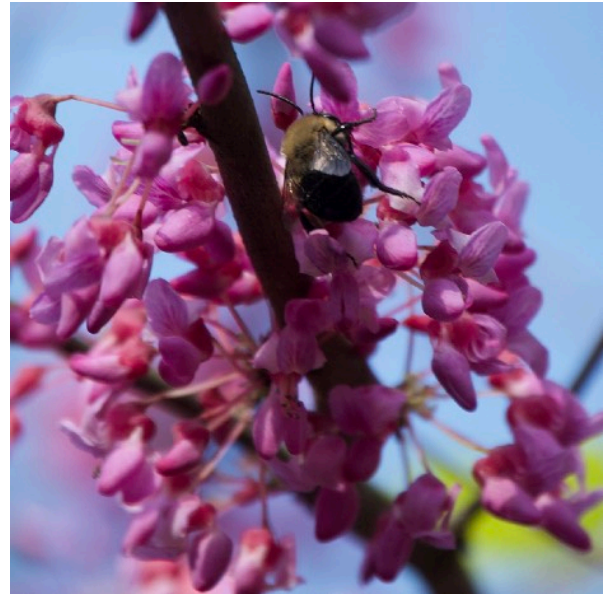
"I think I cannot preserve my health and spirits unless I spend four hours a day at least — and it is commonly more than that — sauntering through the woods and fields absolutely free from all worldly engagements."

-Henry David Thoreau, Walking

Nature deficit disorder is on the rise. Recent studies by the EPA indicate that most people, especially children, spend less than half an hour a day outside. After pandemic lockdowns, the majority of those spending less than half an hour outside report they actually spend less than fifteen minutes outdoors per day. Richard Louv in his ground-breaking book *Last Child in the Woods* indicates that this trend accounts for the rise in obesity, attention disorders, and depression. National Health Service statistics indicate that Vitamin D deficiency has increased 490 percent since 2020. In short, the less time we spend outdoors, the less healthy we become.

As I write this, it's an early spring morning in Texas. I'm sitting on the deck with my laptop. It's a perfect day... temperatures in the 60s with a light breeze. The redbud tree above my head is in full blossom with bees buzzing around the fuchsia pink flowers. A brazen chickadee drinks water at the birdbath not ten feet from me. A cardinal sings in the back of the yard. His mate answers his call.

I believe that moments like these are a true gift. As outdoor writers, we are particularly



Bumblebee on Redbud

blessed because these gifts are ones we can share with others. We can use our words to entice people outdoors. We can use our experiences to encourage others to embark on their own adventures. We can unlock natural mysteries and offer ways to live in wonder. As outdoor writers, we are blessed to live an imaginative life encircled by nature and infused with a desire to express her beauty.

Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., recently said, "Go outside! Breathe the wild air, feel the earth under your feet, and let the sun remind you of what's real."

Words like these inspire. When we write about the outdoors, we encourage people to spend time in nature. And in so doing, we can have a direct impact on the health and wellbeing of our readers. It is a noble endeavor, indeed.

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In society you will not find health, but in nature.
~Henry David Thoreau