

# ROCKY MOUNTAIN OUTDOORS

A Newsletter for Rocky Mountain Outdoor Writers and Photographers

## Upcoming Events

### Election Time!

It's time to elect two new RMOWP officers (president and vice president) and two new Board members. Ballots will be emailed the first week in May and must be returned by May 31. The newly elected will take office on June 1. Please vote!

### 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 3 of this newsletter or visit [rmowp.org](http://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!

## Conference Planning Inches Forward

*by Don Laine*

Plans for the 2025 conference of Rocky Mountain Outdoor Writers and Photographers are slowly but surely moving ahead, with the usual games of phone tag, unanswered calls, "Oh, she doesn't work here anymore," comments, and computer and software glitches to keep life interesting.

The conference is scheduled 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. The board meeting is 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.

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 will need a New Mexico fishing license.

At this point we're debating what to do about visiting Taos Pueblo, a definite must-see, although if you've been to Taos anytime in the last 500 years or so you've probably seen it, and it hasn't changed much. Let me know if this is something you would like to do on your own or on a guided group tour, or if you've already been there-done that? Tours, often led by college students, are 20-to-30 minutes.

See tentative schedule 2 (page 5), keeping in mind that it is tentative - we often have six-to-10 tentative schedules before we come up with a final one, and that's even subject to last-minute revisions. We'll also be suggesting visits to the historic Martinez Hacienda and San Francisco de Asis Church, both a few miles from Taos Plaza.

## President's Column

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*RMOWP President, Linda Haehnle*

**G**reetings!  
It sure looks like spring flowering is in process — even without the famous April showers! Do hope you all are getting out and starting to enjoy the nicer weather.

With Spring now here — do you know what else that means??? Time to put the annual RMOWP conference dates on your calendar! Please reserve September 14-17, 2025, in beautiful Taos, NM, for this year's conference.

Don and his committee are planning lots of enjoyable activities — so stayed tuned for more updates.

Hope to see you all there! Linda

## Membership Directory Update

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**R**MOWP treasurer Maryann Gaug will be emailing each member for any changes they may have to their RMOWP Directory information. Please note that we are only mailing snail mail directories every two years, but Maryann would like to make sure RMOWP has the latest information about each member. Updates will be due by May 15.

If you need member information before the next directory comes out, email Don Laine at [info@rmowp.org](mailto:info@rmowp.org).



*2025, 2nd Place Novice, Katee Harrington, Rabbit and Cardinal*

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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)

## Member News and More

### Member News

**R**MOWP has a new member, **Eric Glassco**, from Centerville, Utah. Eric tells us he is a freelance photographer, writer, artist, and guide/outfitter. Interests include science/art collaborations, art, wildlife, Chihuahua Desert ecology, and the Uinta Mountains. He is a former U.S. Army Special Forces soldier with more than 25 years of experience in backcountry mobility, survival, and navigation.

Those of you who attended the Los Alamos, NM, conference will remember Ilana Lapid, who presented the workshop "A Filmmaker's Journey: Visual Storytelling for Social and Environmental Impact." Ilana and Eric were recently married, and they work on some projects together.

Eric's professional credits include work for the *New York Times* article "150 years of Change: How Old Photos, Recaptured, Reveal a Shifting Climate," by Kim Bell; Uinta Mountains photography of a research group that appeared in a German-language documentary; and his landscape photography prints from Idaho, Utah, Wyoming, and New Mexico have sold to collectors across the United States.

To see some of Eric's photos and learn more about him, see <https://maxexodus.com/>.

### 2025 Photo & Writing Contest

**R**MOWP'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](http://www.rmowp.org).

### Rare Galapagos Tortoises Born in Philadelphia

by Don Laine

Going to be in the Philadelphia area? Stop at the Philadelphia Zoo to meet four Western Santa Cruz Galapagos tortoise hatchlings, an endangered species recently born there, that brings the total number of the species in the U.S. to 48.

Many long-time RMOWP members remember member Tom Ulrich, an award-winning nature photographer who passed away in 2017. Tom conducted photography seminars and workshops for RMOWP and other groups, and also led tours to remote parts of the world. One of his favorite destinations was the Galapagos Islands, off the coast of Ecuador, and if you were fortunate enough to have been on one of his tours there you very likely saw Western Santa Cruz Galapagos tortoises.

Zoo officials said that the hatchlings' mother, coincidentally named Mommy, arrived at the zoo in 1932 from the Galapagos. She is about 97 years old, and the oldest known first-time mother of her species. The father is Abrazzo, about the same age, who came to Philadelphia from a Texas zoo. Mommy and Abrazzo are the oldest animals at the zoo.

The hatchlings, all female, are the size of a tennis ball and weigh about as much as a chicken egg, according to the zoo. Their mother weighs about 280 pounds and their father about 410 pounds. The hatchlings made their first public appearance on April 23, the 93rd anniversary of Mommy's arrival at the zoo. The zoo said they are still monitoring eggs that could hatch in the coming weeks.



2024, 2nd Place Scenics, David Staat, Dempster in the Fall

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## Keep Safety in the Picture

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*Article courtesy National Park Service*

**W**e want your trip to a national park to be a fun and memorable experience for the whole family! When capturing precious moments, be a smart photographer and follow these picture-perfect tips.

**Keep Your Distance From Wildlife** — Going to a national park is not like going to the zoo. There are very few safety barriers or fences that separate you from real wild animals. These animals are in their natural habitats---[you are a guest in their home](#).

Animals may appear to be calm and docile but are unpredictable and can easily be startled. Remember that you, the visitor, are responsible for your safety and for the safety of the animals, too.

When photographing or [watching wildlife in a park](#):

- Follow park rules and regulations on how far away you should stay from wildlife.
- Stay on the safe side of barriers and railings.
- If you want to take a picture of the animals, use a zoom lens on your camera. If you are close enough to take a selfie, you are wayyyy too close.
- If you see an animal, you are responsible for backing up to a safe distance, even if the animal moves toward you.

**Location, Location, Location** — We get it---national parks have some pretty photogenic scenery. The views are truly magnificent. While we want you to capture all of the splendor of our amazing parks, do not put your life at risk for a picture.

Check [park alerts](#) for information on closures and other hazards in the park. Obey park rules and safety signs. They provide important information about potential hazards that you may encounter.

To avoid slips, trips, and falls:

- Stick to the trails and boardwalks.
- Use extra caution and watch your step. Keep your eyes on the trail and not your camera while walking.
- Wear hiking shoes or boots with sturdy, rubber soles for stability and traction for the different terrains and walking surfaces you might encounter in a park.
- Stay on the safe side of barriers and safety railings.

### Take Your Time and Share the View

Our parks are pretty popular, especially during the summertime. High visitation means that you may encounter traffic, and trails and scenic views could get crowded. You might have to wait to get an unobstructed photo.

Consider leaving earlier in the day and avoiding the afternoons when it may be busy. Check the [park's website](#) for guidance on when to plan your visit and how to best avoid the crowds. Don't take any unnecessary risks for that photo -- it is not worth your life!

If a photo opportunity catches your eye while driving, pull over to a safe location to capture the shot. Distracted driving puts you and others at risk. Remember to look both ways for oncoming traffic before crossing the road.

When you arrive at your location, and find that it is crowded:

- Step to the side to avoid blocking the pathway for others when waiting or while taking a photo.
- When you are moving out of the way for others, take your time, and watch your step.
- Don't walk too close to the edge or walk backwards to get that perfect shot. Be careful around steep drop-offs and stay aware of your surroundings.
- Be patient and courteous towards other visitors taking pictures.

Come and capture your experience in our national parks. Check out the [NPS Trip Planning Guide](#) to help you have a picture-perfect adventure!

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## RMOWP 2025 Conference – Schedule Two

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

Meals 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	What in the World am I doing in Taos, New Mexico?
9:30am	Workshop -
10:30am	Break
10:45am	Workshop -
12:00pm	Lunch
1:00pm	The Art & Architecture of Taos - Guided Walk in Downtown Taos
3:00pm	Possible Guided tour of Taos Pueblo. OR San Francisco de Asis Church, Martinez Hacienda, etc. 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	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	RMOWP Website & Newsletter Updates
1:30pm	Workshop -
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

### When the Bloom is Gone

by Virginia Parker Staat

*"I am neither especially clever nor especially gifted. I am only very, very curious."*

~Albert Einstein

A flat of eggs sits on my kitchen counter. It has been there for over two weeks while I whittle down the number, using them for breakfast, salads, and various recipes. I don't worry about them spoiling because these eggs have never been washed.

When a chicken lays an egg, it is encased in a cuticle known as egg bloom. Bloom is a natural protective coating that forms on the egg's shell just before it is laid. The thin bloom seals the egg's pores, preventing bacteria from entering the egg, maintaining its freshness for up to two months without refrigeration.

When I was growing up, we raised chickens. It was my job to gather the eggs each day. We never put our eggs in the refrigerator. These days, however, all grocery-store eggs are refrigerated. It wasn't until David and I traveled to Australia and discovered that their eggs were never refrigerated that I began to wonder why the United States insisted that commercial eggs be placed in the refrigerator section.

I soon learned that commercial egg producers in the U.S. began refrigerating eggs in the 1970s in response to a salmonella outbreak traced to raw eggs. Today, commercial eggs in the U.S. go through a rigorous washing process with soap and hot water and then are rinsed with a sanitizer. While the washing process produces squeaky clean eggs, it also removes the bloom, making the shell more porous and open to contamination. Refrigeration deters bacterial growth, particularly the risk of salmonella

growth within the egg. Interestingly, countries in Europe and Australia don't wash their eggs because they fear contamination if the bloom is removed via washing. Such is the world we live in these days.

It is trivia like this — why some countries refrigerate their eggs and others do not — that triggers my curiosity. I feel compelled to discover the answer to my many silly questions. It's what writers do. Marshall Krantz, in his book *Ideas & Research*, explains, "Writers are a restless bunch, mentally. Their curiosity demands the freedom to roam where it will."

And so writers research. One of the pitfalls to doing such research, however, is knowing when to stop. We may follow many rabbit trails in pursuit of answers to our questions. As a result, we often must limit the scope of our writing. For example, should an article on egg bloom include practical information like a method to tell if an egg is still fresh? (*The float test is the standard method to discover if an egg is fresh. Simply take an egg and drop it in a glass of water. If the egg sinks and lays on its side, the egg is fresh. Older eggs will stand upright or float. Floating eggs need to be discarded, as they are likely spoiled.*)

[LiteraryReflections.com](http://LiteraryReflections.com) in their blog *The Curious Writer: How Intellectual Curiosity Fuels Creativity and Depth in Writing* states, "Curiosity is a writer's lifeblood. The spark ignites creativity, fuels research, and drives the pursuit of deeper understanding. Without curiosity, writing can become stagnant, lacking the depth and richness that captivate readers."

We live in a world replete with an abundance of questions that need answering. Writing about those questions and answers leads to exploration, increased knowledge, and richer storytelling. I am happy to report that after my research on egg bloom, my curiosity is currently satisfied. Now it is time to determine if my new knowledge is worthy to include in an article.

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