



Rocky
Mountain
Conservancy

QUARTERLY

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100 YEARS LATER: ENOS MILLS REFLECTS ON A DREAM

From the ether of history, we summoned Enos Mills to give perspective on a most recent milestone.

Time travel is a wondrous thing.

On September 4, 1915, addressing an enthusiastic crowd at the dedication of Rocky Mountain National Park, I declared that the greatest dream of my lifetime had come true. Though exhausted from the six-year campaign for its creation, I was equally exhilarated in that glorious moment when the world celebrated the new park that encompassed magnificent and unsurpassed scenery, gardens of wild plants and majestic animals, all to be preserved in their primeval state for the generations of tomorrow.

How truly extraordinary, then, that I should be here to witness the 100th anniversary of that great moment in history.

And how extraordinary, too, that I should be a messenger of a new dream to all of you. More about that in a moment.

In 2015, much like 1915, I find myself reflecting. I think back to the very first time I beheld Colorado as a lad of 14. I think back to that same boy, one year later, standing on the

summit of 14,259-foot Longs Peak. I think back to over 300 more ascents up that same mountain, 257 of those spent guiding others on their thrilling summits into towering splendor. I think of my time as Colorado's official state snow observer, traversing up and down the Continental Divide, marveling at snowfields, open skies and curious grizzly bears. I think of my time operating Longs Peak Inn and the excited guests whose spirits were restored by days spent in nature's

grandeur. I think of the many courageous people who began to champion the idea of a national park, despite legions of opposition. I think of those six years of writing, lecturing, traveling and pleading the case across the nation. I think of weary days when I considered abandoning a seemingly doomed cause,

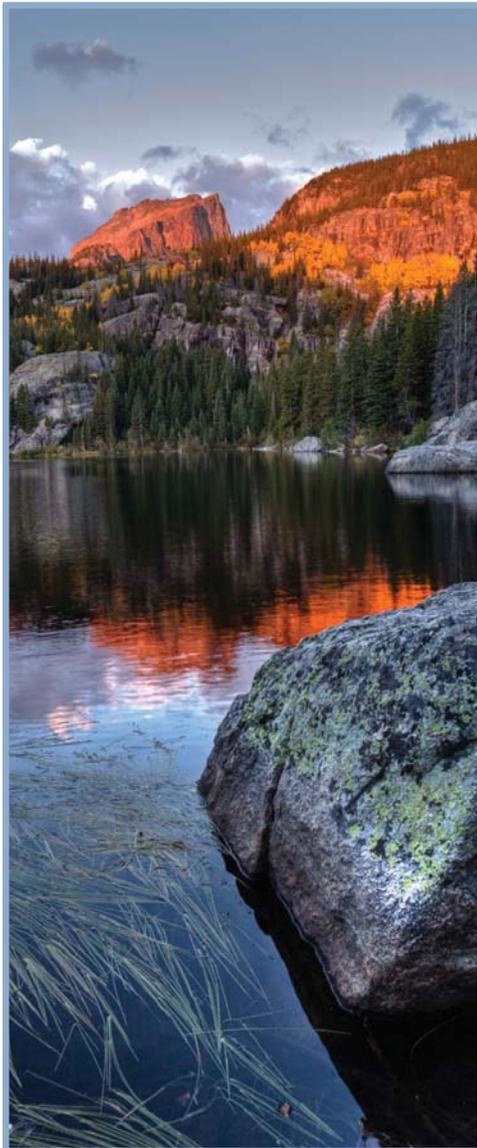
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and how, at the right moment, I would receive an encouraging letter from the likes of John Muir, whose hopeful spirit revitalized my own.

And I recall that September day in 1915 when, against all odds, one moment might serve as a rallying cry to us all. In our lives, let us each be inspired to dream our dreams as big as a national park.

For me, 2014 and 2015 were truly

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the reliving of my greatest dream. Throughout the yearlong festivities of Rocky Mountain National Park's 100th anniversary, I was summoned forth from my repose. I appeared at many special occasions, an ambassador of sorts to this grand centennial — the commemoration of an idea and a place that I discovered remains revered by millions today.

And what an honor, upon the anniversary year finale, to have been among the invited dignitaries on September 4, 2015, when Rocky Mountain National Park was officially rededicated.

In my own time, I reminded my contemporaries that the actions that good people had taken to preserve our greatest natural treasures in the form of national parks was nothing short of epoch-making. In 1915, we did not have the span of time nor the scope of history to appreciate or understand fully the profound magnitude of the great deeds that had been done. Perhaps, I marveled, our civiliza-



tion would begin to have that span of understanding in 25 or 50 years.

Or perhaps in one hundred.

During my remarks at the 1915 dedication of Rocky Mountain National Park, I caused a provocation when I challenged the attendees to dream even bigger. "This park should be expanded!" I declared. I had originally lobbied for Rocky to span 1000 square miles. While I was profoundly grateful for every one of the 350 square miles preserved within those original park boundaries, I never stopped dreaming.

That is why I find myself so grateful for today's Rocky Mountain

Conservancy. The good men and women who support this organization are working not only toward my cherished goals of nature education, but also for the expansion of the national park. In 2015, I learned of a most unique and extraordinary opportunity: the acquisition of Cascade Cottages will secure for Rocky Mountain National Park the largest remaining private in-holding. I am most hopeful and enthusiastic that this

challenge will be realized.

I will soon be summoned back into the legends of history, but before I go, I invite you to join this great cause. May this new dream be fulfilled for new generations.

Conjuring Enos Mills from the past is no easy feat, but these words were delivered to us by Kurtis Kelly, a history storyteller and reenactor based in Estes Park. Kelly's recent performance as Enos Mills on the prestigious TEDxFrontRange stage can be seen on YouTube online.

Happy Birthday Rocky!!

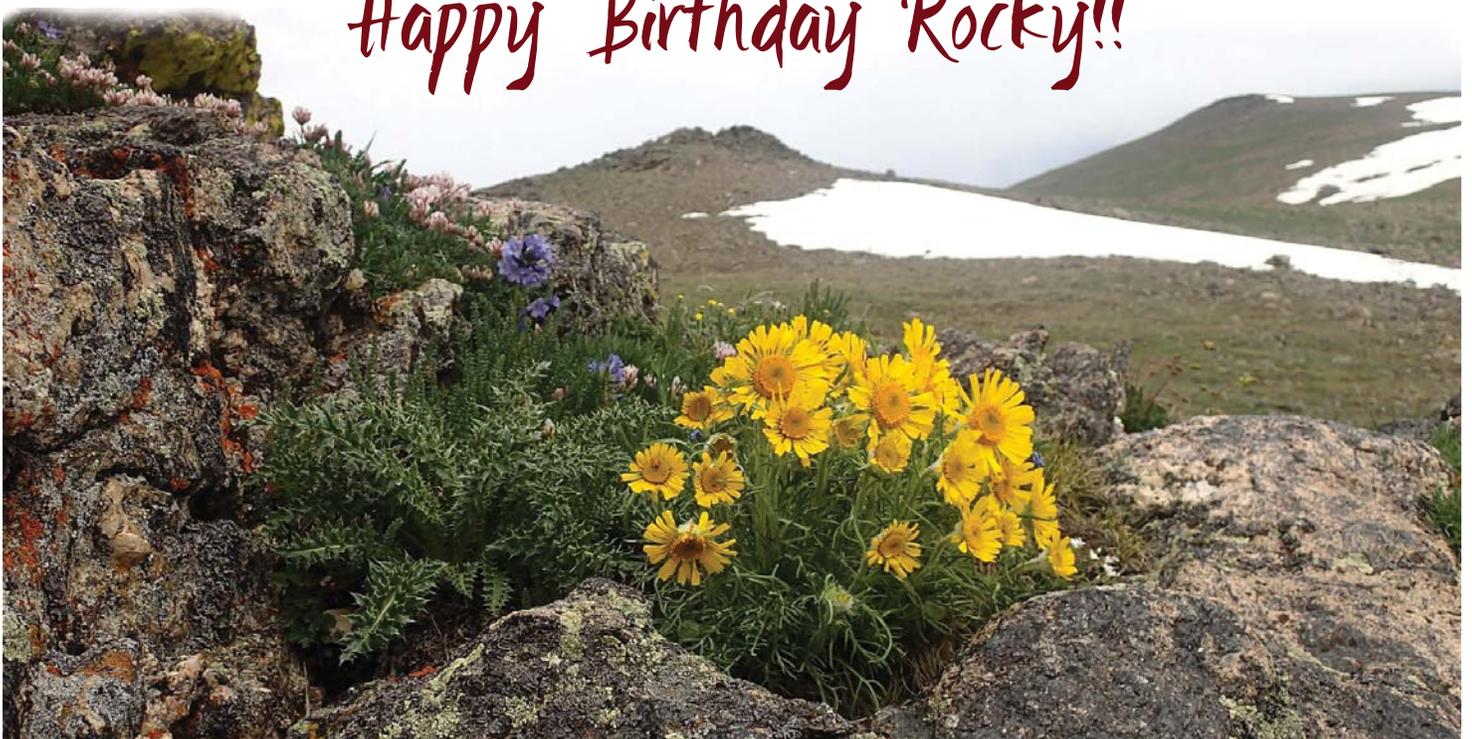


Photo: Marlene Borneman