



CMC CONSERVATION HAS DEEP ROOTS—GOING ALL THE WAY BACK TO THE DEDICATION OF ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK IN SEPTEMBER 1915. PHOTO COURTESY OF CMC ARCHIVES

Wanted: YOU! To Carry On CMC's Legacy of Conservation

By Julie Mach, Conservation Director

For CMC's founders and earliest members, "conservation" of wild landscapes was not a duty or assignment but rather a lifestyle of engagement in mountain activities born of passion and necessity. The Club's early leaders were not paid to advocate for Wilderness, nor did they receive accolades on Facebook and Instagram for clearing trees and building trails. Rather, the intrinsic naturalness and solitude and beauty of the mountains resonated within them and they recognized the threats of development and overuse and human disruption of the fragile values possessed within these landscapes. Protection was an attempt to preserve those values.

CMC's legacy of conservation work runs deep. In 1912, charter members Enos Mills and James Grafton Rogers worked tirelessly to designate the Estes Park Valley and beyond as Rocky Mountain National Park. Their success in 1915 marked the beginning of CMC's conservation legacy and changed millions of lives. This is the very heart

of the Club—action initiated by experience and passion. In 1921, the Club played an important role in defeating proposed legislation that threatened the national parks. Over the years, CMC also worked to oppose dam and water projects while supporting the 1964 Wilderness Act and Colorado Open Space Council.

As hiking and mountaineering became popular in the early twentieth century, stewardship was a precursor to recreation, not an afterthought. Access to the backcountry was limited and trailblazers co-opted logging roads and game trails to create a network of routes to reach peaks and lakes and vistas across the state. These were not all the most sustainably designed trails, but they set the stage for access to unparalleled recreation opportunities in the West. Route maintenance was the responsibility of each individual as part of a collective recreation community long before it coalesced into structured volunteer events. In the early years, the Club placed signs in scenic areas warn-

ing campers to be tidy and protect the birds and flowers. In 1946, the Club began hosting an annual tree planting weekend, and in 1974, formal trail maintenance outings began.

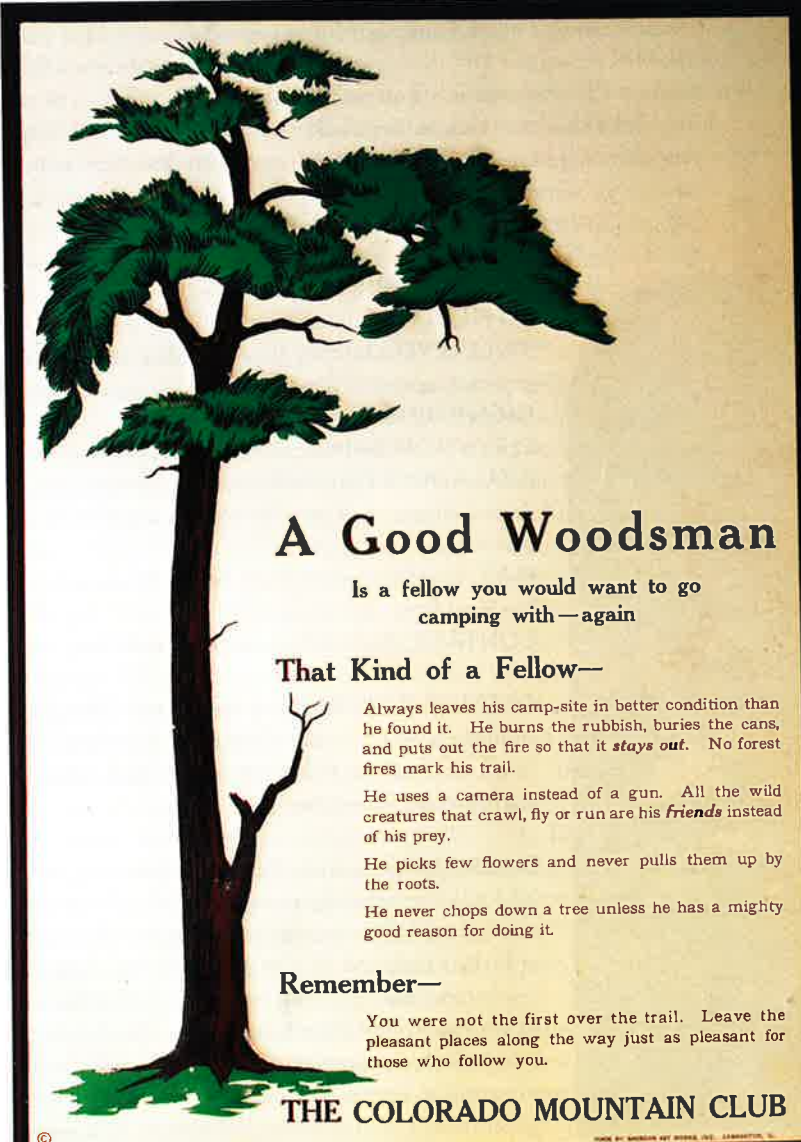
By 1981, CMC began to professionalize its conservation work with the hiring of a part-time staff director to represent the Club in environmental issues. Over the last thirty-five-plus years, the Club has weighed in on forest planning, litigated on oil and gas development, dabbled in climate change policy, and focused its environmental engagement on the passions of members and through a series of Conservation Department staff.

In 2018, the department narrowed its focus to protect the places that sustain the Club's deepest passion: human-powered outdoor recreation. Through advocacy and stewardship (which are sometimes one and the same), CMC Conservation promotes solution-oriented planning and implementation of projects on public lands that benefit hiking, climbing, mountaineering, and backcountry skiing. We are not experts on wildlife, or forest health, or water law (there are plenty

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of conservation groups in Colorado that are), but we are absolutely experts on the recreation experience, user impacts, and sustainable access in Colorado's mountains. Our work is unique in that it is bipartisan, specific to Colorado, and leverages advocacy with results on the ground.

Although much of this work is spearheaded by paid staff in the CMC Conservation Department, the Club's true power still comes from our members as grassroots advocates and stewards of Colorado's public lands. Over the last year, CMC activists generated over 2,800 comment letters to legislators and land managers on pressing conservation issues including national monument protection, forest planning, wilderness legislation, and winter recreation issues. Similarly, hundreds of volunteers contribute several thousand hours each year to trail maintenance and stewardship projects across the state. But while the numbers sound good and have been increasing in recent years, CMC Conservation is only reaching a fraction of CMC members and an even smaller percentage of the overall recreation community in Colorado. For the 100,000+ miles that CMCers hike annually, we maintain only about 150 miles through our Stewardship Crew Program. Of our 6,500 members across the state, less than 15 percent wrote letters and less than 2 percent volunteered for a stewardship project in the last year. Where and when did we lose that inherent commitment to conservation? As recreationists who seek adventure and exploration on public lands, why are we falling short when it comes to protection and stewardship of these places? Conservation should not be an obligation but an opportunity: a chance to enhance our assets as a recreation community and support our land managers in preserving the naturalness and solitude we seek in the mountains. We implore you to adopt the ethos of CMC's founders and generations of Club members by living conservation and taking action through whatever means fit your lifestyle. Stay up to date with our Conservation e-newsletter, respond to our Action Alerts, attend public meetings, or dig in the dirt! CMC Conservation needs you more than ever as the power behind our policy to protect public lands and recreation. Please get involved today: www.cmc.org/conservation. ▲



A Good Woodsman

Is a fellow you would want to go camping with—again

That Kind of a Fellow—

Always leaves his camp-site in better condition than he found it. He burns the rubbish, buries the cans, and puts out the fire so that it *stays out*. No forest fires mark his trail.

He uses a camera instead of a gun. All the wild creatures that crawl, fly or run are his *friends* instead of his prey.

He picks few flowers and never pulls them up by the roots.

He never chops down a tree unless he has a mighty good reason for doing it.

Remember—

You were not the first over the trail. Leave the pleasant places along the way just as pleasant for those who follow you.

THE COLORADO MOUNTAIN CLUB

MADE BY SHERRILL ART DESIGN, INC., JARVISVILLE, VA.

RESPONSIBLE RECREATION HAS ALWAYS BEEN ESSENTIAL TO THE CMC—READ UP ON WHAT THAT MEANT IN THE EARLY YEARS OF THE CLUB. PHOTO COURTESY OF CMC ARCHIVES