

**THE MISSION 66 PROGRAM  
AT ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK:  
1947-1973**

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The United States Congress established Rocky Mountain National Park in north-central Colorado in 1915 to protect a biologically diverse and scenic portion of the Front Range of the Southern Rockies. More than half of the 415-square-mile park is above tree line in the alpine tundra—the remainder is in the subalpine forest, montane forest, and grassland zones. The Continental Divide divides the park into two distinct climates; the west side receives more rainfall than the east, is more heavily forested, and has a lower average altitude. A UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, Rocky contains spectacular glacial topography and mountain meadows. The park also includes the remnants of a rich human history, from 10,000-year-old archaeological sites to mining, ranching, and homesteading structures from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Like many national parks, Rocky's built environment reveals decades of shifting National Park Service (NPS) policy that includes significant examples of both building removal and construction. In nearly a century of management, the NPS has reshaped Rocky's landscape to provide controlled public access to its fragile ecosystems. Preservation and use of the park's cultural and natural resources historically reflects changing public expectations about unspoiled wilderness. In addition to obliterating old roads, stumps, miles of fencing, corrals, mine sites, and borrow pits, the NPS has razed or moved more than 600 buildings within the park boundaries as it transferred private tracts of land to federal ownership. At the same time, the agency has constructed, upgraded, and replaced visitor and staff facilities, campgrounds, roads, and trails to facilitate and control activities and access within the park. These ongoing activities are a necessity of park management but are subject to budgetary constraints. The most significant periods of adequate

funding and related development activity at Rocky were the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) era (1932-1941) and the Mission 66 era (1950-1973).

This report provides a general history of Mission 66 development in Rocky Mountain National Park and includes a survey of the extant resources from this period. The report only briefly mentions the related Mission 66 program at the Shadow Mountain National Recreation Area. The NPS managed this 29-square-mile parcel at the southwest corner of the park from 1952 to 1979, when Congress transferred it to the U.S. Forest Service as part of the Arapaho National Recreation Area.<sup>1</sup> The information in this report establishes a context for management of the park's structures built between 1950 and 1973—a period that transformed Rocky Mountain National Park for visitors and staff alike.

In addition to the Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (RM-CESU), many individuals and institutions contributed to the successful completion of this report. At Rocky, Cheri Yost, Tim Burchett, Karen Waddell, Sybil Barnes, and Joe Arnold provided helpful advice and access to research materials. Staff at the Denver Service Center's Technical Information Center, the Rocky Mountain Region of the National Archives and Records Administration, and the Estes Park Library facilitated additional research. Finally, a group of graduate and undergraduate students from Colorado State University conducted surveys and produced papers that informed

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<sup>1</sup> Public Law 95-450, October 11, 1978, created the Indian Peaks Wilderness and the Arapaho National Recreation Area.

this larger report. Those students are Larry Beidle, Jason Biggins, Brannon Epling, Josh Haney, Michelle Hansen, Alexandra Hernandez, Rachel Kline, Cori Knudten, Becca McCarty, Cashel McGloin, Catherine Moore, Blake Stewart, Alexandra Wallace, Josh Weinberg, and Tyler Welch.

### **Mission 66 and the National Park Service**

Launched with Congressional funding in 1956, Mission 66 was a service-wide effort to update the national parks in anticipation of the fiftieth anniversary of the Park Service in 1966. Conrad Wirth, director of the NPS from 1951 to 1964, conceived the comprehensive plan for funding and convinced President Eisenhower and Congress to support it. A landscape architect, Wirth was a New Deal veteran who had managed the National Park Service's CCC program for the state parks in the 1930s. This experience fostered his belief that modern planning and technology could solve preservation issues resulting from intensive public use of the parks. When he took charge of the NPS, Wirth inherited an agency suffering from lack of funding and inadequate facilities due to World War II shortages. At the same time, visitation had grown rapidly. In the postwar economic recovery, automobile ownership per family climbed to 80 percent by 1960. Increased mobility, expanded affluence and greater leisure time continued to fuel visitation in the national parks. At Rocky Mountain National Park, yearly visitation jumped from 339,928 in 1945 to 808,115 in 1946 and passed the one-million mark in 1948. Visitation continued to mount—it grew by 29 percent between FY 1962 and FY 1963, from 1.3 million to 1.7 million visitors. Rocky's managers expected visitor

numbers to escalate to two million annually by 1966.<sup>2</sup> With the introduction of Mission 66, Wirth and his colleagues built on the momentum of public concern about the state of the parks, highlighted by the influential essayist Bernard DeVoto and others.<sup>3</sup>

“Channeling use” for “visitor enjoyment” was the guiding precept for redevelopment plans that re-conceptualized how the parks functioned as public places.<sup>4</sup> Wirth argued that developing new visitor accommodation areas permitted restoration of scenic lands formerly obscured by lodges and cabins that had obstructed use and marred scenery for years. To absorb larger number of automobile tourists, the plans redirected public use of the parks to centralized areas. Wirth and his colleagues perceived auto travel through the parks in private vehicles as an inherently democratic solution for efficient “day use” visitation that removed the existing monopoly of concessioner-run public transportation services.<sup>5</sup> After a lengthy planning process with public participation, each park superintendent worked with his staff to outline a full list of needs that would clear maintenance and infrastructure backlogs and accommodate growing visitor numbers. Categories for

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<sup>2</sup> “Yearly Visitation to Rocky Mountain National Park, 1915 to 2008,” RMNP records, received from park ranger Cheri Yost, January 5, 2010; U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, “Master Plan Narrative—Mission 66 for Rocky Mountain National Park, Volumes 1&3” (National Park Service, 1961), 2.

<sup>3</sup> Bernard DeVoto, “Let’s Close the National Parks,” *Harper’s Magazine*, October 1953, 49-52.

<sup>4</sup> Ethan Carr et al, “The Mission 66 Era of National Park Development, 1945-1972,” Draft Multiple Property Documentation Form (Oakland, CA: National Park Service, January 2006), 17.

<sup>5</sup> Conrad L. Wirth, “Mission 66 in the Headlines,” in *National Parks Magazine*, v.32, no. 132, Jan-Mar 1958, 8-9, 36-38; Carr et al, “The Mission 66 Era,” 14-18.

improvement included roads, trails, campgrounds and related facilities, visitor centers, recreational sites, signage, litter control, restoration of historic structures, archaeological studies, housing, and utilities. The design concept for visitor centers shifted from small museum buildings to multi-functional interpretive facilities that also provided exhibits, rest areas, services, and in some cases administrative offices.<sup>6</sup> At Rocky, plans included road improvements, several new visitor centers, picnic areas, upgrades to campgrounds, administrative headquarters, and new housing for permanent and seasonal employees.

Although Rocky and other parks provided ample evidence of the need for infrastructure improvements in the planning prospectuses, Mission 66 sparked immediate public controversy nonetheless. In a modern context, the program highlighted the tension between preservation and use that dated back to the origins of the NPS. The new development program brought modern architecture, industrial-scale planning, and new construction practices into the national parks at a time when the Park Service faced a fundamental shift in management priorities. This shift reflected the public debate about the importance of wilderness as well as the influence of an influx of scientifically trained resource managers. Although examples of postwar architecture existed in the parks before Mission 66 began, the new program formalized the “Park Service Modern” style of concrete, prefabricated materials, standardized layouts, and minimal ornamentation. These elements presented a stark contrast to the rough-hewn logs and stone evident in Park

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<sup>6</sup> National Park Service, “Mission 66 Progress Report,” (Washington D.C.: National Park Service, March 1966), 35.

Service Rustic (1916-1942) structures, which the public had come to identify with national park settings.<sup>7</sup> Wirth and his colleagues argued that the contemporary, strictly functional buildings would distract less from the natural landscape and allowed the Park Service to meet the needs and lifestyles of modern visitors while better protecting natural resources.<sup>8</sup> Although often met with critical reaction, the Park Service Modern aesthetic was less an issue than the extent of expanded access to wild areas that the post-war developments encouraged. Conservationists increased their efforts to create wilderness legislation as a response, in part, to Mission 66. The goal was to ensure that Congressional policy supported “which areas should be for mechanized visitation and which for wilderness wandering,” as David Brower, executive director of The Sierra Club from 1952-1969, described it. Under Wirth’s leadership, the NPS testified against the legislation, and some conservationists felt that the agency’s stance blurred distinctions between true wilderness and roadside wilderness, or failed to distinguish appropriate uses of the parks for visitors.<sup>9</sup> In particular, Mission 66 construction

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<sup>7</sup> William C. Tweed, Laura E. Soulliere, Henry G. Law, “National Park Service Rustic Architecture: 1916-1942,” (San Francisco: National Park Service Western Regional Office, Division of Cultural Resource Management, February 1977).

<sup>8</sup> Sarah Allaback and Ethan Carr, “Rocky Mountain National Park Administration Building,” National Historic Landmark Nomination (Denver: National Park Service, September 1, 2000) 11-12.

<sup>9</sup> Ethan Carr, *Mission 66: Modernism and the National Park Dilemma* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), 266-268; David R. Brower, “‘Mission 65’ Is Proposed by Reviewer of Park Service’s New Brochure on Wilderness,” *National Parks Magazine*, Jan-Mar 1958, 3-5. “Mission 65” is Brower’s tribute to Olmsted’s 1865 description of wilderness as museum rather than playground, which would “yield in each case the interest of uncounted millions to the selfishness of a few individuals.”

programs also added recreational facilities such as ski lifts in mountainous parks and boat marinas in the national recreation areas added to the NPS during this period. The Park Service had operated winter use areas, such as Hidden Valley in Rocky Mountain National Park, as recreational resorts for decades.<sup>10</sup> The first edition of an NPS brochure, “Preservation of Natural and Wilderness Values in the National Parks” mentioned aerial tramways and observation towers as inappropriate but the final version omitted these from the list, along with ski tows and skating rinks, probably because some parks retained those devices.<sup>11</sup> Winter use areas became a particular target for criticism as tensions mounted between development and preservation interests.

Despite the controversy, Mission 66 developments improved working conditions for Park Service employees and increased the visitor service capacity of the parks even as they encouraged and facilitated intensive use. According to landscape historian Ethan Carr, the technical approach to park management established during Mission 66 remains a critical, if problematic, factor that allowed the parks to survive future periods of inadequate funding and was a turning point in adequate federal appropriations for the NPS. In the combined ten years of the program, total appropriations reached more than \$1 billion and visits to the National Park System more than doubled.<sup>12</sup> The program highlighted the tension between use and preservation for a new public constituency and a new generation of park managers. Administrators changed NPS resource

management policies in response to challenges from the conservation community and growing momentum for wilderness legislation.<sup>13</sup> In *Man and Nature in the National Parks* (1967), Fraser Darling and Noel Eichhorn presented a critique of Mission 66 in which they admitted the program benefited people, but argued that it had “done comparatively little for the plants and animals.” Although the Mission 66 planners failed to anticipate the full strength of the backlash against their program, they could claim success for shoring up infrastructure and radically altering the orientation of interpretation programs and patterns of visitor use in the parks.

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<sup>10</sup> “NPS’s Stand on Winter Use,” *National Parks Magazine*, Jan-Mar 1958, 21, 39.

<sup>11</sup> Brower, ‘Mission 65,’ 3-5.

<sup>12</sup> Carr, *Mission 66*, 335.

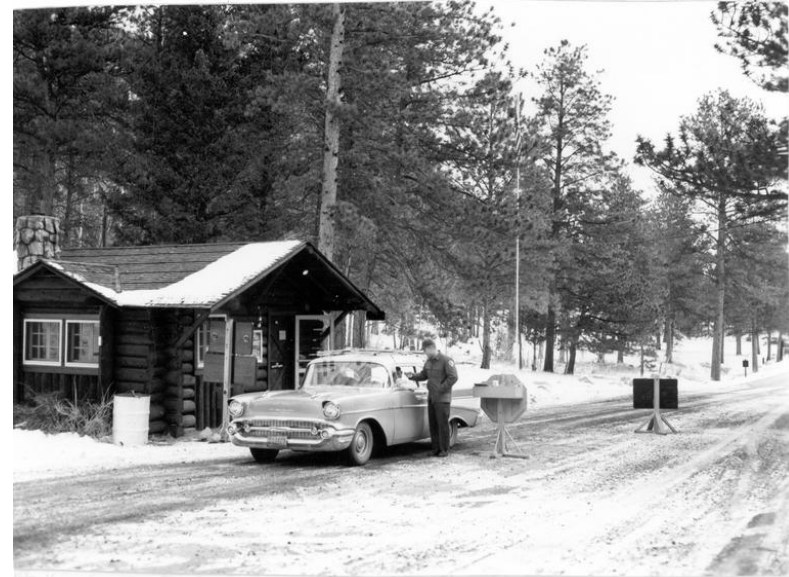
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<sup>13</sup> For example, see the Backcountry Management Plan for Sequoia/Kings Canyon, the Stagner report, the Leopold Report, the Robbins Report, and the Udall letter (1964); F. Fraser Darling and Noel D. Eichhorn, *Man and Nature in the National Parks: Reflections on Policy* (Washington, D.C.: Conservation Foundation, 1969) 28.

## Mission 66 at Rocky Mountain National Park

According to NPS historian Richard West Sellars, Mission 66 marked a period of major transition in national park history; decades of protection through development that began with Mather and Albright gave way to a new era of management based on ecological considerations.<sup>14</sup> For visitors to Rocky Mountain National Park, this transition is most visible today in the park's concentrated front country campgrounds and picnic areas, the modern improvements along Trail Ridge Road (5GA307 and 5LR502) and the entrance roads into the park, and in the three unique, yet related, visitor centers in the Mission 66 Park Service Modern style.

Until the Mission 66 era, Rocky's built environment reflected a combination of vernacular construction and the labor-intensive, Park Service Rustic style of buildings, roads, and other facilities erected in the 1920s and 1930s. The philosophy of building in the park's first few decades attempted to harmonize structures with natural surroundings through the use of materials such as hewn logs, massive stone walls, wood-shingle roofs, and hand-crafted details. Under Superintendent Roger Toll (1921-1929), NPS planners improved the operational infrastructure for Rocky at sites such as the east side utility area and the Fall River entrance. Notable structures from that period include the Moraine Park Museum (0217, 5LR.477, 1923), the Willow Park Patrol Cabin (0027, 5LR.1203, 1923) and Willow Park Stable (0258, 5LR.1205, 1926), Milner Pass Road Camp Mess Hall (0220, 5GA.1795, 1926), the



*Fall River Entrance Station before Mission 66 improvements, 1958  
Photo courtesy of Rocky Mountain National Park*

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<sup>14</sup> Richard West Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 203.

Timber Creek Road Camp Barn (0241, 5GA.1158, 1930), Shadow Mountain Fire Lookout (0043, 5GA.300, 1932), and Thunder Lake Patrol Cabin in Wild Basin (0239, 5BL.2392, 1930).<sup>15</sup> In the same period, Rocky built designated public camping areas at Glacier Creek, Aspenglen, Endovalley, and Pineledge as more primitive, inexpensive alternatives to privately operated tourist lodges.<sup>16</sup>

Expansion during the Great Depression relied on federal labor programs and resulted in a great deal of infrastructure in Rocky. When Trail Ridge Road opened in 1932, its popularity provided a tourism boost to the region. Other NPS sites lost on average 25 percent of their visitors, but visitation more than doubled at Rocky between 1933 and 1938.<sup>17</sup> The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) established camps in Rocky at Little Horseshoe Park and Mill Creek on the east side and Beaver Creek and Grand Lake west of the Divide. The CCC workers removed old structures and roads, maintained existing roads, and constructed two bridges, thirty-three new buildings, forty-three miles of trails, sewer treatment plants, utility and water lines, three amphitheaters, seven checking stations, rock walls, and landscaping.<sup>18</sup> Although the scale of this

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<sup>15</sup> Directory of Colorado State Register Properties, 138-140, 178-180,

<sup>16</sup> According to Musselman, Pineledge Campground, south of the High Drive, was converted to a residential area in 1932; Lloyd K. Musselman, "Rocky Mountain National Park: Administrative History, 1915-1965," (Washington D.C.: National Park Service, 1971), 155; C.W. Buchholtz, *Rocky Mountain National Park: A History* (Colorado Associated University Press, 1983) 159-160.

<sup>17</sup> Buchholtz, *Rocky Mountain National Park*, 177-179.

<sup>18</sup> Bill Butler, quoting August 18, 1942 memorandum from Superintendent David Canfield, "Final Inventory Report of all CCC work accomplished under the supervision of the National Park Service in Rocky Mountain National Park from April 1, 1933 to July 14, 1942" in "The Archaeology of the Civilian Conservation Corps in Rocky Mountain National Park," 2006, 23; Richard H. Quin, "Rocky Mountain

development era was comparable to Mission 66 in the effect it had on Rocky, it would prove insufficient for the onslaught of visitors to the park after World War II.

This scenario was not unusual within the Park Service--all NPS sites suffered from a lack of appropriations and adequate staffing for the duration of World War II. Rocky lost fourteen of twenty-four permanent employees, including Superintendent David Canfield (1937-1943; 1946-1954), to wartime military service. During the war, the park also recorded its first decline in visitation—a drop of 67 percent between 1942 and 1944. As soon as the war ended, tourism expanded along with the rebounding American economy, which resulted in an immediate return of crowds of people to the nation's parks. Budget and personnel did not resume apace with visitors, however.<sup>19</sup> Rocky's rangers could not keep up with the demands of growing problems such as highway and backcountry accidents, vandalism (including removal of signs and roof shingles for campfire wood), excessive littering at campgrounds and roadsides, and lack of sanitary facilities.<sup>20</sup> Staff housing options were extremely limited and of such poor quality that DeVoto referred to housing at Rocky as a "true slum district" and suggested

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National Park Roads," Historic American Engineering Record No. CO-78; Fall River Road No. CO-73; Trail Ridge Road CO-31. Washington, D.C., National Park Service, 52.

<sup>19</sup> Buchholtz, *Rocky Mountain National Park*, 193; Jerritt James Frank, "Marketing the Mountains: An Environmental History of Tourism in Rocky Mountain National Park" (Ph.D. diss., University of Kansas, 2008), 105-106.

<sup>20</sup> Buchholtz, *Rocky Mountain National Park*, 193-194.



that the park, along with others, should be closed until Congress appropriated adequate funding.<sup>21</sup>

DeVoto's assessment was deliberately sensational, yet not far off the mark. As a result of the wartime and postwar budgetary constraints, the park constructed only two entirely new buildings between 1939 and 1956: an employee's washhouse (B0119, 5LR487.39, 1950) on Sundance Circle and the Hidden Valley Lodge (non-extant, 1955). However, Rocky began to make use of the former CCC buildings and those acquired from purchased inholdings. In 1947 and 1948, Rocky erected nine residential buildings on Ptarmigan Lane from old CCC buildings and materials and in 1949 created an L-shaped bunkhouse (B0117, 5LR487.38, 1949) on Sundance Circle from two former CCC camp buildings moved to the site.<sup>22</sup> In 1958, the park moved five residential buildings to Sundance Circle (B0118, 5LR.487.30, 1929; B0122, 5LR.487.31, 1929; B0124 5LR.487.32, 1929; B0126, 5LR.487.33, 1929; B0128, 5LR.487.34, 1929) for use as seasonal housing.

But the park staff could not meet all requirements with reconstructed and relocated buildings—the long list of backlogged facility needs demanded new structures. On a broader level, the Mission 66 program implemented a new vision for the park that replaced opportunities for relatively few visitors to stay overnight in one of the historic lodges with the “day use” model that facilitated

rapid and controlled movement of large numbers through the park. Since the 1930s, Howard Baker, the Region II Director, had served as the regional landscape architect with oversight for all building activity in the park.<sup>23</sup> While preparing the park's Mission 66 prospectus, Baker and Superintendent James V. Lloyd (1954-1961) asked the Rocky staff to “think big” and develop ideas that would allow the NPS to “start from scratch” as if they were creating a national park for the first time there.<sup>24</sup> The prospectus stated that “outmoded facilities will be replaced with physical improvements adequate for expected demands but so designed and located as to reduce the impact of public use on valuable and destructible features.” In addition to staff housing, park personnel identified modernization needs including roads, trails, parking areas, interpretive facilities, campgrounds, picnic areas, administrative facilities, and acquisition of inholdings. They wanted development of these facilities near Rocky's boundaries whenever possible to facilitate day-use of interior park lands.<sup>25</sup> Planning and deliberations between park and regional staff resulted in a final request for Mission 66 projects totaling \$10,226, 305, which included \$9,167, 945 for Rocky Mountain National Park. Rocky also managed Shadow Mountain National Recreation Area and requested an additional \$1,058,360 for improvements at that adjacent site. While the prospectus emphasized visitor safety and staff working conditions,

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<sup>21</sup> DeVoto, “Let's Close the National Parks.”

<sup>22</sup> National Park Service, “Master Plan Narrative,” 4; Hillary Gerstenberger and Tracy Halasinski, “117 Sundance Circle, 5LR487.38” Colorado Cultural Resource Survey Architectural Inventory Form, 2004; Drawing NP-RM 2470, BRC Dormitory/Seasonal Housing Area, July 1, 1959.

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<sup>23</sup> Karen and Carl McWilliams, “Themes of Rocky Mountain National Park: NPS Rustic Architecture,” 1986, VF 978.8 RMNP/Historic Structures, RMNP library, 3.

<sup>24</sup> Frank, “Marketing the Mountains,” 116.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 115; NPS, “Master Plan Narrative.”



*Superintendent James V. Lloyd, 1958  
Photo courtesy Rocky Mountain National Park*

and natural resource protection, it also described Rocky as an “outdoor museum” with a need for “unsurpassed accessibility.”<sup>26</sup>

The key to Rocky’s comprehensive development program was an adequate system of roads to move visitors through the park. Although the three visitor centers— Alpine (B0543, 5LR11033, 1965), Beaver Meadows (B0447, 5LR9947, 1967), and Kawuneeche (B0392, 5GA.1285, 1968)—are the most striking architectural examples of Rocky’s Mission 66 facilities, these iconic buildings are best understood as key sites within a much larger comprehensive development program. Accordingly, planners earmarked more than half of the combined \$11 million budget for the park and the national recreation area for road construction and improvements. The average length of stay at individual park sites began to decrease with the advent of high-speed interstate highways, which encouraged lengthier trips to multiple destinations. Newer park roads at other NPS sites built after the 1954 Federal Aid Highway Act set higher standards for grading, curves, turnouts, and overlooks for older park roads, such as Trail Ridge Road and Bear Lake Road (5LR1233 and 5LR6998) at Rocky. Every passing year brought more wear and tear on the aging roads.<sup>27</sup> Trail Ridge Road had accommodated auto tourists passing quickly through the park for decades so that by the late 1950s the park managers understood that many visitors would leave their cars for only brief forays onto short trails or roadside interpretation points. The park’s Mission 66 prospectus acknowledged this, stating “While desirable, it is not

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 7, 9, 59.

<sup>27</sup> Superintendent’s Annual Report, June 7, 1963, NARA NRG-079-97-534, Box 39, Folder A26.

essential for the visitor to leave the road to experience the inspiration of these surroundings.”<sup>28</sup>

Road improvements also included new parking areas and picnic areas and wayside exhibits at carefully spaced stops along park routes. The Park Service encouraged picnicking as a day-use activity, but prior to Mission 66 Rocky contained only two officially designated picnic areas, each designed to serve not more than 12 parties. This limited capacity forced overflow parties to picnic at ad hoc sites along roadsides and adjacent to trails.<sup>29</sup> In addition to new picnic locations, the prospectus called for roadside interpretive signs, markers, or exhibits at eighteen points along Trail Ridge Road and its approaches, including: Horseshoe Park, Moraine Park, Deer Ridge, Beaver Ponds, Many Parks Curve, Rainbow Curve, Sundance Mountain View, Timberline Forest, Hayden Canyon View, Saddle below Tundra Curves, Iceberg Lake, Gore Range View, Medicine Bow Curve (Specimen Mountain View), Milner Pass, Sheep Rock, Farview Curve, Shadow Mountain Lake Overlook, and Lake Granby Overlook. Planners envisioned these in conjunction with parking area improvements, which they originally planned for 40 sites along Trail Ridge Road, including Horseshoe Park, Rock Cabins, Little Rock Cut, Lower Tundra Curves, and the Forest Canyon Overlook.<sup>30</sup> Because Rocky obtained only half of the necessary funding for parking areas, the park was forced to rank its original list of thirty

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<sup>28</sup> NPS, “Master Plan Narrative,” 5.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 19-20; Superintendent’s Monthly Report, September 1957.

requested parking areas in order of urgency. By 1959, the park had completed construction of new parking areas on Trail Ridge Road.<sup>31</sup>

The need to improve interpretive facilities and other visitor services also received extensive attention in Rocky’s Mission 66 prospectus. The centerpiece of visitor service concepts in the Mission 66 program was the modern visitor center, an elaborate multi-functional facility with designs that required the combined expertise of architects, landscape architects, and museum specialists.<sup>32</sup> Before 1950, Rocky’s visitors who wished to learn about the park outside of ranger talks and guided trips were limited to exhibits and literature at the Hidden Valley Lodge, the Moraine Park Museum (B0217, 5LR477, 1923), and the small exhibit room in the Fall River Pass store (B0170, 5LR.1207). The administrators felt that the west side of the park required its own interpretive facilities, as did popular destinations such as Bear Lake, Longs Peak, Wild Basin, Rock Cut, and Rainbow Curve. Early Mission 66 planning documents reveal that Rocky staff first considered Lower Hidden Valley and Bear Lake as sites for new visitor centers. This original plan included razing the Moraine Park Museum and its 1937 amphitheater and using the site for a small glacier interpretive station. The planners characterized the museum as “inadequate” and the amphitheater as “dilapidated.” They suggested both were no longer usable without

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<sup>31</sup> Top priorities included the following numbered sites: 7, 12, 11, 6, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 5, 25, and 18. Researchers could not locate a definitive list of parking areas developed in the first few years of the program. The prioritized list is included in Superintendent Lloyd to Chief, WODC, May 1, 1957, NARA-DV 8NS-079-97-437, Box 22, Folder D30 Roads & Trails, 1-1-57 to 12-31-57. See also Frank, “Marketing the Mountains,” 118.

<sup>32</sup> Linda Flint McClelland, *Building the National Parks* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 466.

rehabilitation.<sup>33</sup> As the planning process matured, the staff selected visitor center sites at both the east and west entrances and one in between at Fall River Pass.

The east entrance site made use of the new opportunity presented by the 1956 eastern boundary extension. The 320-acre addition provided the route for a new approach road to replace the crowded, narrow Thompson River entrance. Early visitor center site considerations included a “principal visitor center” on the new road at the Lone Pine Meadow site, just below the turnoff for Moraine Park, an alternative site at Deer Ridge, and a site closer to the boundary line on the north side of the new entrance road. The final decision came in September 1964 when Edmund Thomas Casey of Taliesin Associate Architects convinced the park staff to select a hillside site on the south side of the entrance road. Superintendent Granville B. Liles (1964-1965), with perhaps a greater sense of diplomacy than former Superintendent Lloyd, also lobbied for Casey’s site choice. He hoped its accessible location outside of the park’s entrance fee station would provide an opportunity to improve Rocky’s relationship with the Estes Park residents.<sup>34</sup> Designed as orientation hubs to provide interpretive services, restrooms, and museum exhibits, the three new visitor centers at Beaver Meadows, Fall River Pass, and the Grand Lake Entrance proved to be strategic components of an improved overall interpretive plan for the park.

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<sup>33</sup> NPS, “Master Plan Narrative,” 3-44.

<sup>34</sup> Allaback and Carr, “Rocky Mountain National Park Administration Building,” 22-25.

In addition to visitor orientation points, the park revamped venues for overnight visitors. Rocky’s plan for new campgrounds accompanied the removal of overnight lodging in the park. In the late 1950s, the park’s six existing campgrounds—Aspenglen, Timber Creek, Endovalley, Glacier Basin, Longs Peak, and Wild Basin—served double their planned capacity and lacked adequate roads,



*The Thompson River entrance, 1940  
Photo courtesy Rocky Mountain National Park*



*Construction of the Alpine Visitor Center at Fall River Pass, 1963  
Photo courtesy Rocky Mountain National Park*

water systems, and electricity. Mission 66 planners originally limited campground expansion plans on the west side. Seventy-seven campsites existed in the Timber Creek Campground on the west side, and park staff believed the new Shadow Mountain campground facilities would cover additional need.<sup>35</sup> The five east side campgrounds contained a total of 292 campsites before the Mission 66 program began. Large camping groups had no designated spots and crowded into individual campsites. The prospectus called for upgrades of the six existing campgrounds rather than replacement, with campsites reconfigured for greater capacity. Campground planning continued to adhere to plant ecologist E.P. Meinecke's CCC-era campground modernization guidelines, which minimized impact on vegetation by keeping camping groups within designated areas. His campground design included loop roads with parking spurs, footpaths, comfort stations, picnic tables, and fireplaces. The prospectus also suggested that the inadequate, dilapidated campfire circles be replaced or improved to provide space for a symbolic NPS tradition: informal educational gatherings around firelight under the stars.<sup>36</sup>

Trail development at Rocky also reflected general Mission 66 guidelines to improve safety and accessibility, to build shorter loop trips, and to distribute users through the backcountry.<sup>37</sup> The prospectus also called for five new trails totaling eighteen miles;

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<sup>35</sup> NPS, "Master Plan Narrative," 6, 11.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 3, 11; McClelland, *Building the National Parks*, 468; Master Plan 1962, 10; Linda McClelland, *Presenting Nature: The Historic Landscape Design of the National Park Service, 1916-1942*, chapter VI.

<sup>37</sup> McClelland, *Building the National Parks*, 468-469.

two would connect with four cross-mountain trail routes, and the other three would provide loop trips connecting points of interest.<sup>38</sup> Although park records are vague on where trail development occurred in the 1950s and 1960s, it is certain that the park paved the trail around Bear Lake and transformed it into a self-guided nature trail and completed trail improvement work at Rock Cut and Forest Canyon Overlook in conjunction with parking area improvements at both sites. The prospectus mentioned the Lake Haiyaha, Loch Vale Trail, and the park probably completed it during Mission 66, along with a 5.2-mile trail from the park boundary to Lost Lake and the Specimen Mountain Trail. Another group of ten or so trails originally constructed in the 1920s and 1930s appeared on the prospectus for re-routing and reconstruction.<sup>39</sup> Further research is needed to confirm if the park completed that work during Mission 66.

In the 1950s and 1960s, visitors to Rocky encountered modernized and upgraded facilities throughout the park, but most remained unaware that similar improvements progressed behind the scenes. The standard of living for all Americans advanced in the 1950s with the availability of affordable single-family residences, modern electrical appliances, and other conveniences. Homes lacking garages, electricity, and modern sanitation became less acceptable, and park managers understood better housing was necessary to attract and support a growing professional staff.

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<sup>38</sup> NPS, "Master Plan Narrative," 32.

<sup>39</sup> Shawn Wignall, Facility Management Administrative Specialist (Trails), Rocky Mountain National Park, in private e-mail message to Cheri Yost, March 8, 2010.



*Dedication of Beaver Meadows Visitor Center/Headquarters Building, 1967  
Photo courtesy of Rocky Mountain National Park*

Before Mission 66, only 17 of the 31 permanent residential structures, 10 of the 55 summer cabins, and 3 of the 9 dormitories and bunkhouses offered what administrators termed “regular living accommodations.” Management and protection seasonal staff numbered eighty-nine employees in 1959, but the park hoped to increase these to 155 by 1966.<sup>40</sup> As a result, planners gave early priority to on the list of developments to worker housing and included plans for new permanent residences located at the east side residential area, the Grand Lake entrance, Fall River entrance, Hidden Valley, and Wild Basin.

Existing water and sewer systems for the residential and public areas also failed to meet minimum sanitary standards. As recreational use of the park and the surrounding lands increased dramatically, so did contamination of the public-use water supplies from horses, hikers, fishermen, and wild animal feces. In 1957, about 1,200 horses occupied commercial livery in Rocky’s immediate vicinity. To address the increasing human health risk, the campgrounds at Longs Peak, Wild Basin, Aspenglen, and Endovalley needed improvements to water treatment.<sup>41</sup> Rocky could obtain electrical power for the park from the Bureau of Reclamation, the Town of Estes Park, or a nearby REA cooperative, but it did not have commercial water and sewer systems available for use. The Colorado-Big Thompson Project, the Bureau of Reclamation’s transmountain diversion system completed in 1957, provided

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 4, 8, 36.

<sup>41</sup> Gene B. Welsh and Robert E. Novick, U.S. Public Health Service, Region VIII, Denver, “Report on Inspection of Sanitary Facilities, RMNP, Colorado, July 1957,” ROMO TB04 Utilities, Folder D5031, Sanitation Matters, Reports (Historical), 54-69.

municipal water and power for twenty-nine cities including Estes Park and Grand Lake. But Congressional funding was essential so the park could develop small systems with hypochlorinators and sewage disposal fields, as well as a sewage treatment plant for the east side utility area.<sup>42</sup>

Throughout the park, modernization of architectural forms accompanied the less-visible modern infrastructure. A strikingly different architectural design appeared with the transformation of the parks under Mission 66, and Rocky Mountain National Park’s new structures expressed the advent of modern architecture into the parks. After World War II, reformers’ long-held optimistic vision that they could remake society with the application of ration, science, and technology came to dominate the architectural discipline. Constructed of freely-expressed industrial materials like concrete, steel, glass, and plywood and often produced in prefabricated or standardized units, modern architecture rejected allusions to past styles and overt decoration. Glass curtain walls integrated the inside and outside while voluminous, open interiors without partitions facilitated circulation flow and flexibility of use. Modern architecture’s reserved elegance derived from its minimalism, its rational, gridded layout, and its transparency. Participating fully in the movement, designers for the parks used the opportunity afforded by Mission 66 to create a Park Service variant of modern architecture. Because these structures could resemble industrial or commercial architecture, NPS architects

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 34.



Beaver Meadows Entrance kiosk, 1962  
Photo courtesy of Rocky Mountain National Park

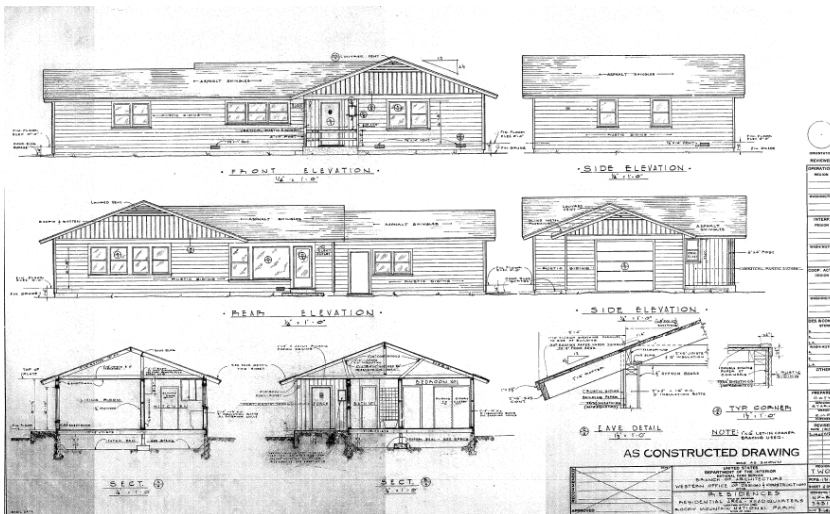
softened the starkness of modern architecture with low, horizontal profiles, stone veneers, wood siding, and dark or muted paint colors. They meant their buildings to blend unobtrusively into their surroundings.<sup>43</sup> In Rocky, this postwar architectural trend first appeared at the washhouse building (B0119, 5LR487.39, 1950) constructed on Sundance Circle to provide shower and laundry facilities for seasonal employees living in the “tent city” temporary housing there.

Because of visitor centers’ key visual and functional importance, architects, either with the Park Service or private firms, created customized plans for them. But for less-public buildings like administrative, utility, and residential structures, the agency deemed standardized plans acceptable and appropriate. These too displayed the fundamentals of modern architecture. Composed of utilitarian materials like concrete block and plywood siding, the structures featured flat or shallowly-pitched gable roofs, banks of windows, and horizontal shapes. Single-family housing mimicked the new ranch houses sprouting up in suburbs across the nation, and the type became known as the “Mission 66 ranch.” The agency codified the basic requirements for the plan and style of Mission 66 ranch variations in its 1957 “Standard Plans for Employee Housing” publication. As contractors erected housing, the NPS further refined the plans until by 1964 a 1,200 square-foot, three-bedroom residence with attached carport became the norm. In Rocky, local

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<sup>43</sup> Sarah Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers: The History of a Building Type* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2000); Carr, *Mission 66*; Gwendolyn Wright, *USA: Modern Architectures in History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2008).





Standard plans for single-family dwelling at Rocky (Drawing NP-RM 3431B)  
 Courtesy NPS Technical Information Center, Lakewood, CO

builders constructed nine Mission 66 ranches among existing housing next to the utility area and south of the new Beaver Meadows Visitor Center. Completed in 1959 from the standardized plans, the homes were identical in appearance, although the layout could be adjusted for site conditions. A suburban-like curvilinear loop drive delineated the Mission 66 residences from the rustic architecture surrounding them. Along with dwellings, the Park Service generated common designs for its unexceptional structures and sites: campgrounds, comfort stations, check stations, kiosks, ranger stations, maintenance buildings, and other support structures. Although Rocky Mountain still contains scattered rustic-style architecture, the majority of ordinary structures encountered by the public are modern buildings constructed from stock blueprints.<sup>44</sup>

The National Park Service's adoption of modern design provided visual homogeneity within each park and among all the parks as a whole. Major buildings like visitor centers varied in appearance somewhat, but their architecture conveyed the Mission 66 purposes of consolidating and managing visitor interactions with park resources. Standardization of design ensured that campers in any park knew the nearest comfort station or ranger kiosk. In new parks or parks like Rocky that acquired large land holdings after World War II, the visual unity was more pronounced. Park officials removed or relocated many of the privately constructed Rustic-style historic lodges and ranches in Rocky and wiped out the remnants of earlier human habitation. Mission 66 planners replaced the older, more individualized buildings with their stock designs for

<sup>44</sup> Carr, *Mission 66*, 167-173.

campgrounds and structures. Thus, in Moraine Park, few log buildings remain to mar the naturalistic setting, and campers visiting it retreat to a nearby Mission 66 campground that looks like others throughout the park system. The Park Service's rapid transition from the older, much beloved, rustic style to the plain, modern architecture after 1950 encountered vocal criticism. But for most Americans, the parks' everyday face was that of the ubiquitous Mission 66 "Park Service Modern."<sup>45</sup>

Like its Park Service Modern architecture, Rocky's Mission 66 interpretive facilities showed an increasing reliance on technology and spatial planning to accommodate large numbers of visitors efficiently for short stays. Park rangers employed color film, full-color exhibit panels, and the latest audiovisual technology to deliver automated messages at wayside interpretive points, auditoriums, and outdoor amphitheaters—a technique that maximized staff resources as interpretive demands soared. Various outside enterprises produced similar commercial products, including an "auto tape tour" of Trail Ridge Road. Visitors played the tapes while driving through the park at a suggested speed as the narrator described the features visible through car windows and suggested locations for photo opportunities.<sup>46</sup> Expanded parking lots,

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 141.

<sup>46</sup> 1963 RMNP brochure, Denver Public Library vertical clippings file; Superintendent's Monthly Report, July 1964; "Park tours via a tape handy, informative," *Rocky Mountain News*, July 7, 1960. The "Auto Tape Tour" for Trail Ridge Road, produced by Comprehensive Communications, New York City, sold for \$5.95 at commercial locations near the park. The audio recording commentary by Peter Thomas included sound effects and included a suggested vehicle speed to coincide with the timed description of features encountered along the road.

walkways, and naturalistic landscaping enhanced the visitor service areas and used design elements to manage foot and vehicle traffic patterns.<sup>47</sup> Short-loop nature trails at Rock Cut, Forest Canyon Overlook, and Bear Lake provided quick breaks from auto travel. The signage on these trails encouraged stewardship of nature but also facilitated rapid movement in and out of the park. Increased capacity and services for recreational camping vehicles and comfort stations with flushing toilets and electric lights allowed more visitors—even camping novices—to spend a night or two in the park at controlled sites where rangers could manage their environmental impact. In the visitor centers, educational literature, concessioner wares, and modern displays echoed the commercial environment of mid-twentieth century America—thus visitors "conditioned by media" to become passive observers experienced nature in the park in a familiar, comforting manner.<sup>48</sup> In general, the increase in interpretive signage, the recorded educational materials, and the NPS-managed overnight stays produced a more uniform experience for most park visitors.

All of the combined improvements, including picnic areas, signs, comfort stations, paved and widened trails, and widened roads, produced a new, well-groomed appearance in the visitor use areas.<sup>49</sup> The removal of evidence of private land use activities also

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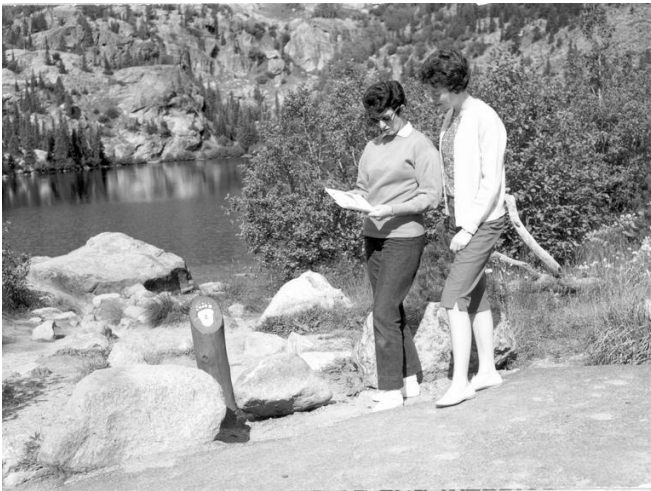
<sup>47</sup> McClelland, *Building the National Parks*, 466.

<sup>48</sup> Janet Ore, "Modern by Design: Mission 66 Architecture and Consumer Culture in Rocky Mountain National Park" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Western History Association, Denver, Colorado, 8-11 October 2009), 10.

<sup>49</sup> Buchholtz, *Rocky Mountain National Park*, 204.



*Automated message repeater on Trail Ridge Road, 1960  
Photo courtesy Rocky Mountain National Park*



*Visitors on the self-guided Bear Lake Nature Trail, 1963  
Photo courtesy of Rocky Mountain National Park*

contributed to a visual uniformity and far greater NPS control of developed areas within the park boundaries. The mass-produced, rapid-construction quality of these sites represented the progressive optimism of the program, which assumed that the simple, improved facilities could satisfy the demands of heavy visitor use on park resources.<sup>50</sup> The three new visitor centers at Fall River Pass, Beaver Meadows, and the Grand Lake entrance consolidated multiple conveniences and services for visitors on main routes, and the expansion of campgrounds and picnic sites concentrated activity at specific front country sites. In return, the park sacrificed a richer portrayal of historic tourism and economic activity. Some locals and regular visitors missed the lodges and did not see revamped and newly constructed campgrounds as improvements, particularly because they encouraged more auto tourism and day use.<sup>51</sup> In an administrative history of Rocky written as the Mission 66 era was coming to a close, Lloyd Musselman characterized the recent changes as superficial and a detriment to “naturalness” in the park.<sup>52</sup>

On the other hand, more visitors meant more national park advocates, as Wirth predicted. Ranger-naturalists deliberately established programs to get people out of their cars and hiking away from roadways on improved and new trails, particularly short interpretive trails. Campfire talks in campground amphitheatres also

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<sup>50</sup> Ore, “Modern by Design,” 4.

<sup>51</sup> Buchholtz, *Rocky Mountain National Park*, 205; *Estes Park Trail*.

<sup>52</sup> Musselman, *Rocky Mountain National Park*, 215.



*Moraine Park Campground amphitheater with fold-down screen, undated  
Photo courtesy Rocky Mountain National Park*

attempted to broaden visitor experience in the campfire tradition, although updated with modern audio-visual technology.<sup>53</sup>

While Rocky modernized its technology and architecture under Mission 66 it simultaneously sought to restore “naturalness” through the purchase and obliteration or re-use of inholdings. Emphasizing restoration and protection of the natural environment, the park removed evidence of pre-NPS land use activities and eliminated public overnight accommodations other than camping “as rapidly as the private property can be acquired and existing contracts expire.”<sup>54</sup> When Rocky temporarily placed employees in recently purchased lodges and simultaneously expanded campgrounds, the public asked pointed questions about the necessity of tearing down lodges and the degree of federal control over decisions affecting the local economy. As “gateway towns” for Rocky, Estes Park and Grand Lake depended on park-related tourism even before Mission 66 began. Wirth cited the economic benefits to “Estes Park Village” in his 1956 address about the proposed program to President Eisenhower and his cabinet. Mission 66 planners expected the gateway towns to expand and provide services that park villages inside the boundaries had formerly provided. But they failed to anticipate the controversy of removing existing structures and the local nostalgia for historic lodges.<sup>55</sup> In Rocky’s case, building removal within the park had been in the works for years as park managers sought to restore “natural conditions.” The *Estes Park Trail*, the Estes Park Chamber of

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<sup>53</sup> Buchholtz, *Rocky Mountain National Park*, 211-212.

<sup>54</sup> NPS, “Master Plan Narrative,” 9.

<sup>55</sup> Carr et al, “The Mission 66 Era,” 14.

Commerce, and the Town of Estes Park pushed for a review of the lodge demolition policy when NPS officials announced that the park planned to eliminate several well-known lodges. Mr. R.A. Waugh of Chicago wrote directly to Wirth to express dismay about the loss of historic lodges and the opportunity to stay overnight in Rocky. He remarked, “Any time it is required to stay in the honky tonk atmosphere of Estes Park Village in order to see the Park, please count me out.”<sup>56</sup>

Emboldened by funding support for the Mission 66 program, Superintendent Lloyd acquired the reputation in the late 1950s for heavy-handed dealings with some of Moraine Park property owners, which further entrenched their position that the park was pushing them out. Other locals who sold out to the park felt they had been treated fairly by the federal government. Because the closing of beloved historic lodges was controversial, Lloyd and his staff considered retaining Fall River Lodge in Horseshoe Park and the Brinwood Hotel in Moraine Park (NPS-owned since 1932 but operated under concession) under new concession management. But the cost of the required renovations discouraged bidders. Both closed in 1959 and the park restored the sites to natural conditions. By 1963, Rocky Mountain had spent \$3,235,000 for purchase of 11,080 acres of inholdings.<sup>57</sup> Park managers viewed the purchase of the key private tracts as necessary to preserve the park’s prime

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<sup>56</sup>R.A. Waugh, Chicago, to Conrad L. Wirth, November 20, 1957, NARA-DV, 8NS-079-97-437, Box 22, Folder D30.

<sup>57</sup> Notes from Glenda Prosser’s unpublished biography of Glenn Prosser, in Bill Butler unprocessed inholdings files, RMNP archives; Ferrell Atkins, Transcript of interview with Cravens-Scott, 22-26, RMNP library; Buchholtz, *Rocky Mountain National Park*, 205.

scenic values and restore critical wildlife ranges and scenery. To this end, Mission 66 helped finance the purchase of 7,000 trees and planting of 1,000 pounds of native grass seed to re-vegetate former inholdings.<sup>58</sup> Many of the “adverse uses” the park staff wished to eliminate predated the park and included reservoirs, ditches, canals, private access roads, lodges and outbuildings, private residences, corrals, pastures, fencing, and recreational facilities such as swimming pools and the 9-hole golf course at the former Stead’s Ranch in Moraine Park.<sup>59</sup> Regional Chief of Lands Jack Aiton played a key role in the negotiation for this 560-acre property. When the sale was finalized for \$750,000 on August 1, 1962, the park completed the goal of removing all large commercial inholdings on the east side.<sup>60</sup> While some areas of Rocky began to appear more “natural” as the park removed evidence of human activity, it simultaneously added modern infrastructure in other places.

Rocky’s Mission 66 planning and construction programs included Shadow Mountain NRA because of the agency’s emphasis on “parallel development” with multiple use areas that fell under NPS purview. Cooperation and shared resources between the two were central components of the strategy for the west side and the Grand Lake area during the 1950s and 1960s. Rocky officials balanced responsibilities for managing and enhancing tourism in a recreational area while they provided stewardship for more

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<sup>58</sup> *Estes Park Trail*, March 1965.

<sup>59</sup> NPS, “Master Plan Narrative,” 5; Minutes of the Mission 66 Planning and Development Committee, RMNP Archives TB20, Public Relations, File A2435, Mission 66 Reports, January 5, 1959.

<sup>60</sup> Musselman, *Rocky Mountain National Park*, Chapter XII; *Rocky Ramblings*, August 1962.

sensitive ecological zones. Consequently, development at Shadow Mountain during Mission 66 was extensive, in part a reflection of limiting construction inside Rocky. In brief, new facilities at Shadow Mountain included two comfort stations at Stillwater Campground in 1957, picnic sites at South Shore and the Granby Boat Dock in 1959, an amphitheater at Stillwater Campground in 1960, a parking area and boat launch ramp at the campground in 1964, and reconstruction of the campground in 1967.<sup>61</sup> Additionally, the agency constructed a new campground at the Shadow Mountain Dam that included two comfort stations and two water stations.<sup>62</sup> When Shadow Mountain transferred to the U.S. Forest Service in 1979, so did management of those facilities.

The magnitude of Mission 66's physical and conceptual reorganization of the parks necessitated a strong public relations campaign with involvement from all park sites. The program's proponents anticipated the need for an educational component and mixed public reaction underscored that need. Always connected to the promotion of tourism in the parks, the automobile and oil industry supplemented the promotional effort. Sinclair Oil Corporation ran a series of ads and distributed a map of all NPS units; Phillips Petroleum Company created a guide to the program; and Standard Oil Company sponsored a radio program. In its ten-



*Stead's Ranch in Moraine Park, before building removal (undated)  
Photo courtesy of Rocky Mountain National Park*

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<sup>61</sup> Mission 66 Reports, RMNP TB20, Public Relations, File A2435; Superintendent's Monthly Reports, October and November, 1957, July 1964; *Rocky Ramblings*, June 22, 1967, 5.

<sup>62</sup> Superintendent's Monthly Report, June 1964; Superintendent's Memo to Regional Director, December 14, 1964, NARA NRG-079-97-534, Box 39, Folder A26.

year span, the NPS generated more than 1,300 press releases and 533,000 answers to written inquiries about the Mission 66 program.<sup>63</sup> Rocky's officials participated in the educational program as early as 1957. For example, Assistant Superintendent George Hartzog, Jr. and other Rocky personnel went on radio station KCOL in Fort Collins to talk about Mission 66 and its importance for the NPS Golden Anniversary. Hartzog, who from 1967 to 1972 served as director of the National Park Service, called Mission 66 "an improvement and management program to bring the standard of service, development, and management up to the levels required by increased postwar visitation numbers."<sup>64</sup> Rocky personnel continued to give public presentations to civic organizations and local media as construction projects developed in the park.<sup>65</sup> Don Beard, Assistant Director of NPS in charge of Office of Public Affairs, addressed a group of NPS superintendents at a meeting in Rocky's Hidden Valley Lodge on September 16, 1962. He addressed the importance of presenting a united front, releasing stories first to the media, and fighting apathy internally among staff. He pointed out that conservationists used an emotional appeal to convince women's organizations that Mission 66 was harming the parks, and Park Service indifference allowed them to be wrongly influenced this way.<sup>66</sup> NPS leadership believed that public opposition reflected lack of understanding about the needs that the development had to meet.

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<sup>63</sup> National Park Service, "Mission 66 Progress Report," March 1966, 52-53.

<sup>64</sup> Transcript of interview with George Hartzog, RMNP 21364, RMNP library.

<sup>65</sup> E.g. In 1961, the park engineer addressed Greeley Kiwanis. Superintendent's Monthly Report, July 1961.

<sup>66</sup> Transcript of interview with Beard, RMNP 21369, RMNP library.



*Signage at development sites promoted the Mission 66 program to visitors  
Photo courtesy of Rocky Mountain National Park*

The mounting controversy highlighted the tension between the dual missions of use and preservation. Efforts to protect roadless wilderness gained momentum as each new Mission 66 project opened to the public. As historian Jerritt Frank argues, public opposition and mounting evidence that growing visitation was “destabilizing” the environment prevented the park from relying on infrastructure expansion.<sup>67</sup> The controversy over park promotion and increased accessibility reflected rising interest in preserving roadless wilderness areas. NPS employees and close allies of the service increased demands for science-based stewardship of natural resources to balance the traditional emphasis on tourism promotion. Interior Secretary Stewart Udall issued a policy memorandum on July 10, 1964, that stated natural areas (such as Rocky) should be managed to perpetuate and restore their natural values, with significant historic features preserved only if compatible with the primary goal.<sup>68</sup> On September 3, 1964, the Wilderness Act defined wilderness as “primeval” areas of at least 5,000 contiguous acres where humans could visit but not remain or improve. This led to studies of all roadless areas in national parks, including Rocky, to determine possible wilderness areas. Yet use of those primitive backcountry areas continued to increase as visitor numbers climbed. The NPS released Wilderness Management Criteria in 1966 to limit backcountry construction to structures that protected wilderness values, a criterion that naturally excluded campgrounds and picnic facilities. The 1967 Park Roads Standards, also a reaction to the controversy over Mission 66 road

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<sup>67</sup> Jerritt Frank, “Marketing the Mountains,” 103, 160-161.

<sup>68</sup> Barry Mackintosh, *The National Parks: Shaping the System* (Harpers Ferry Center: National Park Service, 1991) 66.

development and improvements, rejected “use over preservation.”<sup>69</sup> Beatrice Willard and John Marr’s research on human impacts highlighted the fragility of the alpine tundra in Rocky and presented a critical view of Mission 66.<sup>70</sup> Darling and Eichhorn’s influential critique of the program in 1967 further supported the hazards to resource protection as park visitation continued to escalate.

Rocky’s policies and master plans in the 1970s thus reflected these ideas about wilderness and natural areas management and presented a starkly different context for the Mission 66 developments. Concurrently, the “recreational revolution” of hiking, backpacking, and climbing led to a 900 percent increase in backcountry use from 1965 to 1975. The NPS began to consider human carrying capacity for its backcountry sites and instituted a quota plan in 1972. In 1973, Rocky removed the bolted-in safety cables from the Longs Peak Trail to reduce climber “traffic jams.”<sup>71</sup> Although in the early 1970s local business owners opposed wilderness designation because of the restrictions it would impose, public hearings and correspondence revealed growing approval for the wilderness recommendation. Some of these supporters reacted specifically to the new Mission 66 park facilities; other comments called for Rocky to “de-urbanize” and remove all developments in Rocky, such as the stretch of Bear Lake Road through Moraine Park,

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<sup>69</sup> McClelland, *Building the National Parks*, 476, 480.

<sup>70</sup> Beatrice E. Willard and John W. Marr, “Effects of Human Activities on Alpine Tundra Ecosystems in Rocky Mountain National Park, Colorado.” *Biological Conservation*, v.2, no.4, July 1970, 257-265.

<sup>71</sup> Sellers, *Preserving Nature*, 191; McClelland, *Building the National Parks*, 477; Buchholtz, *Rocky Mountain National Park*, 219-222.



the Hidden Valley Ski Area, and remaining inholdings. Not just a simple backlash to the industrial appearance of modern design, these reactions reflected a deeper concern about human presence in nature.<sup>72</sup> After years of study, the 1974 NPS recommended five units of wilderness designation at Rocky consisting of 239,835 acres (91 percent of the park).<sup>73</sup> Although Congress delayed official designation until 2009, NPS policy required Rocky officials to manage the recommended area as wilderness, which prevented further development in the park after the early 1970s.

As Mission 66 concluded, the staff at Rocky coped with ongoing needs not yet addressed by the program and new maintenance issues that resulted from a period of such rapid expansion. By the early 1970s, Rocky had spent about \$8 million in Mission 66 funds and anticipated spending of \$10-12 million to meet additional demands.<sup>74</sup> In 1968, Rocky managers reflected on the recent construction and provided some general feedback to the Design Office. In general, park staff recommended that the office should work more closely with individual parks through all phases of construction, and that engineers and architects should spend more time in the field to incorporate detailed site logistics and avoid expensive errors. For example, buildings on Rocky's west side, such as the Kawuneeche Visitor Center, bore the stress of snow buildup on flat roofs, while stronger winds and less snowfall on the east side

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<sup>72</sup> McClelland, *Building the National Parks*, 472; Frank, "Marketing the Mountains," 154.

<sup>73</sup> Wilderness Recommendation, Rocky Mountain National Park, Colorado, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, March 1974).

<sup>74</sup> Musselman, "Rocky Mountain National Park," 217.

tended to minimize snow load problems. NPS architects producing designs in San Francisco had not considered this. The park also noted that future construction jobs should incorporate all essential completion items with change orders to the existing contracts. The existing arrangement required the park to cover many final additions and adjustments to jobs through their own maintenance funds and manpower, which left some needs unmet or delayed.<sup>75</sup>

Despite the major effort of Mission 66, the most popular front country areas continued to be problematic and congested. Bear Lake Road "paid the highest price of visitors' pressure," according to Buchholtz. In 1978, illegal parking on the roadway and hazardous driving conditions encouraged the establishment of a free bus shuttle system for Bear Lake Road. Projects continued in the 1970s, including resurfacing Trail Ridge and Bear Lake Roads and purchasing additional inholdings, such as the Holzworth resort in 1974.<sup>76</sup> Park officials hoped to construct a new campground at Wild Basin but could not acquire the necessary private land parcels.

However, the major barrier to additional development was changing NPS policy. Rocky's 1976 Master Plan made permanent the shift towards wilderness protection for this "primitive core of a vast mountain region:" "Major new development in the park is not recommended. Rather, a rearrangement or reduction of existing facilities as necessary to meet current demands for esthetic and recreational opportunities offered by the park, consistent with

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<sup>75</sup> Superintendent to Chief, Design and Construction, SSC, "Field comments on completed projects," February 29, 1968, RMNP TB-01 Maintenance, Folder: Buildings, Construction and Maintenance.

<sup>76</sup> Buchholtz, *Rocky Mountain National Park*, 206, 223-224.

perpetuation of its natural resources, is called for. Man's impact must be minimized and controlled.”<sup>77</sup>

*Hidden Valley: A Public-Private Development in Rocky*

The story of Hidden Valley represents the extent to which Mission 66 expansion affected natural resources before wilderness protection gained momentum in the 1970s. Hidden Valley was a winter recreation site in the early 1930s although the park had not yet developed it. Skiers rode to the top of the runs on Trail Ridge Road in automobiles. In the late 1930s, the park put in a few shelters, a skating pond and a warming hut. Locals installed a primitive ski tow in 1941. In 1948, the NPS added more runs, and a concessioner opened the first official rope tows, powered by car engines. During Mission 66, Rocky officials followed Wirth’s philosophy that well-designed facilities were the best means to regulate visitors and took control of further resort planning. In July 1954, Wirth and the Assistant Secretary of the Interior, Orme Lewis, approved a new lodge, two new surface lifts, and shuttle bus service up Trail Ridge Road. The Colorado Transportation Company, ran the busses through vehicle tunnels made with removable Quonset huts (0760 5LR10944 and 0761 5LR10945), that served as overpasses for skiers above. The Eagle Construction Company built the Hidden Valley Lodge, a multi-functional building designed by Cecil Doty of the Western Office of Design and Construction in the Park Service modern style. The two-level lodge, which opened on December 18, 1955, featured a modern design of glass, wood, and concrete with large viewing windows facing the slopes.

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<sup>77</sup> Final Master Plan, Rocky Mountain National Park, January 1976, 1, 3.

When the park formalized Mission 66, Hidden Valley Winter Use Area was open from December to April. The Mission 66 prospectus suggested that Hidden Valley could function year-round with a corresponding program of summer activities and exhibits.<sup>78</sup> Visitation demands outgrew the lodge facilities and in 1956 the Park Service allowed the concessioner to build a new wood-frame structure for ski and skate rentals and a cafeteria. NPS functions such as ski patrol headquarters, interpretive facilities, and bathrooms remained in the lodge. Rocky also allowed the concessioner to install two Austrian Schroll Platter Pull tows in 1956 and to enlarge the skating rink in 1958. The concessioner replaced the Austrian tows in 1960 with T-bars and added a 50-kilowatt generator in a generator house at Lower Hidden Valley in 1961.<sup>79</sup>

By 1962, the official park policy stated that winter use of the park was to be “encouraged but carefully planned to provide only a minimum of increased facilities.” In particular, the Master Plan declared a moratorium on additional ski lift facilities.<sup>80</sup> The further ski slope development in 1963, as well as completion of the concessioner’s ski-lift housing structure at Upper Hidden Valley was supposed to end the period of construction in the area.<sup>81</sup> But use of

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<sup>78</sup> NPS, “Master Plan Narrative,” 17; Kathryn Howes Barth and Ann Alexander Leggett, *Finding Hidden Valley: A Recollective History of a Colorado Ski Area* (Boulder, CO: White Sand Lake Press, 2006).

<sup>79</sup> Superintendent’s Monthly Report, March 1958, January 1961; ROMO TB 20, Public Relations, File A2435, Mission 66 Reports; Barth and Leggett, *Finding Hidden Valley*, 112.

<sup>80</sup> RMNP Master Plan, 1962, 7, 11.

<sup>81</sup> Superintendent’s Annual Report, June 7, 1963, NARA NRG-079-97-534, Box 39, Folder A26; SMR, July 1965, January 1966.

the Hidden Valley area continued to grow each winter through the Mission 66 era and in 1968 the Colorado Transportation Company completed an addition to the wood-frame ski rental building that created space for a large dining area and expanded ski shop. In 1972, the company received long-awaited permission to install a 6,000-foot-long chair lift, eliminating the need for the shuttle bus service. Helicopters brought in the lift towers and workers took care to make the tow line inconspicuous. However, the NPS named Roger Contor, formerly the first superintendent of North Cascades National Park, as Rocky's new superintendent, and the park's priorities continued to shift towards more environmentally sensitive policies. The 1973 Draft Plan called for closure of the Hidden Valley Winter Use Area, and the park rescinded permission to operate the chair lift for summer visitors. In 1977, the NPS purchased the area from the concessioner for \$750,000 and removed the chair lift. Rocky contracted with Estes Park Valley Recreation and Parks Department to operate the ski area until it closed in 1991. By September 1992, the park had removed the remaining T-bar and Poma lifts. In 2001 and 2003, the park deconstructed the remaining structures and reused materials to create scaled-down visitor service structures for the Hidden Valley site.<sup>82</sup> Hidden Valley's history recaps the trajectory of Mission 66 from intense focus on the visitor experience to virtual obliteration of human activity on the site. As Hidden Valley shows, by the 1970s, the Mission 66 vision had faded.



*Skating rink and warming hut at Hidden Valley Winter Use Area, 1958  
Photo courtesy Rocky Mountain National Park*

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<sup>82</sup> Buchholtz, *Rocky Mountain National Park, 196-198*; Barth and Leggett, *Finding Hidden Valley*.

## Mission 66 Property Types

*Note: the survey forms associated with this report contain full site development histories for each Mission 66 development site in Rocky.*

### Visitor Centers

In the draft multiple property nomination for Mission 66 resources, Ethan Carr uses Sarah Allaback's report, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers: The History of a Building Type*, to define the visitor center property type.<sup>83</sup> Major characteristics in this definition include multiple visitor and administrative functions; centralized interpretive displays and facilities including exhibits, amphitheaters, auditoriums, and information desks; a spatial procession or attention to visitor flow; and views of natural features or historic sites from a terrace or window wall. Siting included adjacent central parking and a location at a critical point in the park's overall circulation pattern, such as an entrance or destination point.<sup>84</sup> Each visitor center can be assessed individually or as part of a visitor center district that would include associated structures such as comfort stations and amphitheaters, landscaping features, parking lots, trails, roads, maintenance yards, and residential units. To be considered eligible for National Register listing under criterion A, the visitor center must be associated with Mission 66 development in the park. To meet eligibility under criterion C, the visitor center must retain most or all of the physical characteristics of this

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<sup>83</sup> Sarah Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers*.

<sup>84</sup> Carr et al, "The Mission 66 Era," 113-117.

property type and should possess physical integrity reflective of the Park Service Modern style. This includes but is not limited to flat roofs, window walls, exposed steel supports, concrete and concrete block construction, overlapping functional spaces, horizontality of profile, massing, color, and texture of materials, naturalistic landscaping, and integrated site work. Major alterations to the façade, wing additions, and new roof structures result in ineligibility.

- Alpine Visitor Center, Fall River Pass (BO543, 1965)
- Beaver Meadows Visitor Center/Administration Building, east entrance (B0447, 5LR.9947, 1967)
- Kawuneeche Visitor Center, west entrance (B0392,5GA.1285, 1968)

### Roads and Trails

Carr defines the eligibility requirements for roads and trails as those retaining integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association without substantial realignment or complete reconstruction. Reconstruction or realignment of the road or trail since the Mission 66 period disqualifies these features as contributing elements in a district, but repaving or other surface alterations do not. While modernizing upgrades characterized road building in the Mission 66 era, planners attempted to minimize their visual impact, and most projects reconstructed existing roads to improve alignment, grading, and width. Vegetation to blend ditches and shoulders to adjacent landscape and rounded cut-and-fill slopes were common, as was re-seeding to repair construction scars. Design standards for Mission 66 two-way roads often required twenty-five feet of

pavement with three-foot shoulders. One-way roads were twelve-foot wide with no more than two-foot shoulders. Maximum grades were 7 percent but up to 10 percent in sections. Other features associated with roads include entrance stations, overlooks and associated displays or comfort stations, trail heads, parking lots, and gas stations. Carr specifies that only short-loop nature trails easily accessible to automobile tourists with wide paths, boardwalks, level paths, and extensive interpretive displays are likely to be considered as contributing resources in a Mission 66 district.<sup>85</sup>

- Bear Lake Road including Big Thompson River Bridge, (BLR, 5LR.1233, 1960)
- Bear Lake Nature Trail (FR-05, 1960)
- Fall River Entrance, Checking Station (B0353) and Kiosks (B0669, B0670, B0671, 1961)
- Trail Ridge Road, Horseshoe Park to Deer Ridge (Section 1-A, 1963)
- Deer Ridge Intersection and Trail Ridge Road, Deer Ridge to Fall River Pass, including the Hidden Valley Intersection (Section 1-B, 1968)
- Old Fall River Road (5LR885, 1959 and 1968)
- Forest Canyon Overlook (1958)
- Rock Cut Parking Area and Nature Trail (1961)
- Beaver Meadows Entrance/East Entrance Road (1958)
- Beaver Meadows Checking Station (1960, non-extant) and Kiosks (1960, non-extant)

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid, 120-121.

#### Day Use (Picnic) Areas

Carr defines the day use area property type as either new picnic areas planned in conjunction with new traffic patterns, visitor centers, parking areas, or interpretive displays, or converted campgrounds designed to lessen environmental impacts by reducing visitor activity to day use only. Physical characteristics include generously sized access roads and parking spurs for large vehicles and trailers, shade structures, fire pits, comfort stations, and exploitation of views or shade. Substantial reorganization, extensive loss of shade structures, or loss of original comfort stations will disqualify these areas as contributing resources.<sup>86</sup>

Rocky constructed multiple small picnic areas in conjunction with road improvements and other site developments.

- Sprague Lake Picnic Area (1960-61)
- Endovalley Picnic Area (1973)

#### Campgrounds

Carr defines the campground property type with the following features: one-way loop roads, 25-foot parking spurs, a herringbone site pattern or alternating campsites on opposite sides of the road, new water and electrical lines, standardized comfort stations, utility hookups for trailer campers, planting beds, signboards, and walkways. Substantial reorganization of the campground configuration or loss of original comfort stations disqualifies a Mission 66 campground.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid, 121.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid, 121-122.

At Rocky, two of the campgrounds, Glacier Basin and Moraine Park, also include a Mission 66 era kiosk at the campground entrance. Carr does not mention this feature, but the entrance kiosk exemplifies a characteristically modern campground element that can be considered a small-scale feature associated with a campground road. The entrance kiosks are in the same standardized Park Service Modern style used for the checking kiosks at the park entrances. Carr differentiates ranger stations as a separate property type (see below), but Moraine Park Campground and Timber Creek Campground included Park Service Modern ranger stations within the campground boundaries and may be considered integral components to the campground property type at Rocky.

- Glacier Basin Campground (1958-1965)
- Aspenglen Campground (1960-1966)
- Longs Peak Campground (1960-1961)
- Endovalley Campground (1962-1963)
- Timber Creek Campground (1963-1968)
- Moraine Park Campground (1963-1967)

### Ranger Stations

Carr describes Mission 66 era ranger stations with the following elements: a ranger office, a small open display area typically separated from the office, concealed maintenance areas, and sometimes comfort stations. The Park Service Modern features included flat or shallow roof lines or exaggerated contemporary roof forms, concrete masonry walls, curtain window walls or other

large window designs, exposed steel supports, and horizontal profile.<sup>88</sup>

In Rocky Mountain National Park, the ranger stations also doubled as housing for the ranger in an attached duplex unit in the rear of the building. Additions of new facades, wings, roof structures, or extensive remodeling of interior spaces that alters function or flow are disqualifying characteristics.<sup>89</sup> The park modified the existing ranger stations at Longs Peak and Wild Basin in the Mission 66 period but these modifications do not meet Carr's criteria.

- Moraine Park Campground Ranger Station (B0619, 5LR.1216, 1967)
- Timber Creek Campground Ranger Station (B0351, 5GA.1328, 1968)

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid, 113-117.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid, 119-120.

## Residences

The NPS design offices based Mission 66 residences on standardized plans that achieved economy of scale within a maximum budget allowed by Congress. Carr provides an extensive description of the standardized plans and their typical variations for individual residence but little guidance on typical characteristics of standardized multiple housing units. Disqualifying elements include major alterations to exterior appearance, fenestration pattern, or roof structure.<sup>90</sup>

- Single-family residences, Headquarters Utility Area (B0139, 1959; B0140, 1959; B0141, 1959; B0142, 1959; B0144, 1959; B0149, 1959; B0425, 1959; B0426, 1959; B0428; 1959)
- Washhouse, Headquarters Utility Area (B0119, 5LR.487.39, 1950)
- Bunkhouse (Research Center), Headquarters Utility Area (B0117, 5LR487.38, 1949)
- Six-Unit Apartments, Headquarters Utility Area (B0429 5LR.1270, 1962; B0430, 5LR.487.36, 1962; B0431, 5LR.487.37, 1962)
- Single-family residences, Grand Lake Entrance (B0461, 5GA.1286, 1964), (B0462, 5GA.1287, 1964)
- Emergency Housing Units” built on Ptarmigan Lane in 1947-49 (B049, 5LR.10926, 1948; B0100, 5LR.10927, 1947; B0101, 5LR.10928, 1947; B0103, 5LR.10930, 1947; B0104, 5LR.10931, 1947; B0105, 5LR.10932, 1947; B0137, 5LR.10934, 1949; B0138, 5LR.10935, 1949)



*Multiple-unit residential buildings constructed on Sundance Circle, 1963  
Photo courtesy of Rocky Mountain National Park*

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid, 123-125.

### Amphitheaters and Outdoor Interpretive Displays

Carr provides little guidance on the necessary characteristics of amphitheaters, other than to say they must retain integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association. He includes roadside or trailside interpretive exhibits in this property type, presumably because they also contribute to visitor interpretation services at sites removed from the main visitor centers.<sup>91</sup>

- Aspenglen Amphitheater (B0825, 1962)
- Moraine Park Campground Amphitheater (B0827, 5LR.1223, 1959 structure replaced 2001)
- Timber Creek Campground Amphitheater (B0826, 5GA.1330, 1966, replaced 2001)
- Glacier Basin Campground Amphitheater (B0824, 1938, replaced 1958)

### Concessioner Facilities

Carr defines this property type as limited to lodges, park stores, and restaurants.<sup>92</sup>

- Moraine Park Livery Comfort Station (B0677, 5LR.1218, 1969)
- Moraine Park Livery Residence (B0893, 1969)
- Fall River Pass Store (B0170, 5LR.1207, 1936, addition 1965)

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid, 122.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid, 126.

### Maintenance and Utility Buildings

Carr defines the most common form of maintenance building as a rectangular, concrete masonry structure with a flat roof and visible overhangs that housed equipment storage, a shop, a restroom, a tool room, and a smaller storage area. Disqualifying alterations include changes to fenestration pattern, a new roof structure, or a major exterior alteration that transforms the building's outward appearance.<sup>93</sup>

- West Side Utility Building (B0473, 5GA.1288, 1965)

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid, 123.



## **Potential Mission 66 Districts: Rocky Mountain National Park**

As a park that underwent substantial redevelopment under the Mission 66 program, Rocky Mountain National Park contains both buildings and districts potentially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. In making the following evaluations, we have generally relied on the 2006 draft Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) written by Ethan Carr, Elaine Jackson-Retondo, and Len Warner. The report presented the park-wide context for Mission 66 and proposed guidelines for determining eligibility. (See Appendix) However, to our knowledge, neither the Colorado Historic Preservation Review Board nor the Keeper of the National Register has accepted the context report. Thus, at this time, proposed National Register of Historic Places nominations will be evaluated within the local context of Rocky Mountain National Park in accordance with the National Register's criteria for sites and districts. We have used the MPDF draft to guide our analysis but have ultimately assessed Mission 66 resources for their significance to Rocky Mountain's history and built environment.

The MPDF established two types of Mission 66 property eligibility: visitor centers (and visitor center districts with associated buildings and sites) and Mission 66 districts that represent a significant development within Mission 66. Both property types must retain high integrity and embody the management goals of the program. This categorization suggests that only visitor centers may be individually eligible and that other structures and sites are only eligible as contributing elements in an historic district. Based on

this, we have identified five potentially eligible districts in Rocky Mountain.

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE FOR MISSION 66 IN ROCKY: 1947-1973  
Carr, et al, delineated 1945 to 1972 for the park system's Mission 66 period of significance. Although the parks began receiving additional Mission 66 funding in 1956, they had begun planning for the expansions as early as 1945. The 1972 ending date recognizes that development projects continued after the official end of Mission 66 under Hartzog's successor program, Parkscape, U.S.A., which lasted until 1972.

Rocky Mountain's Mission 66 period of significance begins in 1947 when the park experienced its first wave of post-World War II visitation, its numbers jumping from 334,000 in 1945 to almost 900,000 in 1947. Only the beginning of an escalation of visitors, the circumstances forced Rocky to increase its staff. With no living space for new personnel, the park constructed the Emergency Housing Units along Ptarmigan Lane in 1947. As the earliest representation of Rocky's response to the post-war park craze, these structures mark the beginning of park actions that led to the Mission 66 building program. In Rocky, Mission 66 programs ended in 1973, providing the end date for the Mission 66 period of significance. The park converted Endovalley Campground to a picnic area consistent with the design concept for day-use areas, and the master plan released that year called for the closing of Hidden Valley Winter Use Area.

## NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA

As Carr's MPDF outlines, Rocky's Mission 66 resources are potentially eligible under Criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places. Criterion A defines historically significant resources as those "that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history." In this case, national park planning and development under Mission 66 is the context. Under Criterion C, resources that "embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction..." may be eligible for the Register. Thus, this criterion makes potentially eligible resources in Rocky Mountain that represent modernist design and construction in the national parks (Park Service Modern architecture). Criterion G relates to properties that are less than 50 years old and are not eligible for the National Register unless they "are of exceptional importance." Many of Rocky Mountain's Mission 66 structures are less than 50 years old so must meet this requirement. Arguments for "exceptional importance" will be addressed in the following potential districts.

## POTENTIAL VISITOR CENTER DISTRICTS

### Alpine Visitor Center

Period of significance: 1963-1973

In 1963, Rocky Mountain began building its first Mission 66 Visitor Center at Fall River Pass. Along with the visitor center, the park constructed a large parking lot, a viewing plaza and walkways, toilets, a water and sewer system, and power plant and shelter. The site's original, privately-owned store also underwent modernization and enlargement when the park added a wood addition in 1965, and a concrete addition in 1971, and undertook a renovation in 1987.

### *Option One: Individual Site*

Conceived and constructed under Mission 66, the Alpine Visitor Center and its associated elements are potentially eligible as an individual site under the National Register criteria and the considerations presented in the MPDF (See Appendix). The contributing features include the visitor center, plaza and walkways, and parking lot. Noncontributing features consist of the comfort station (2000); store (1936); and ranger station (1922, NR January 29, 1988).

Integrity: the visitor center and its immediate surroundings have excellent integrity sustaining little change since construction. Two additions to the store occurred within the proposed period of significance, but the park modified the façade in 1987, rendering it ineligible.

Criteria A & C: As Rocky Mountain's first and most unaltered Mission 66 visitor center district, Alpine represents both the park's post-World War II reconceptualization under Mission 66 and its Park Service Modern architecture. Period of significance under Criterion A is 1963-1973 and under Criterion C 1963-1965.

Criterion G: the site is close to meeting the 50-year rule (2013), but if Rocky Mountain wished to pursue district nomination, a strong case could be made for the Alpine Visitor Center's exceptional significance within the park's overall Mission 66 era.

*Option Two: Amendment to Existing Fall River Historic District*

Although the entire complex of structures at the Alpine Visitor Center does not meet the criteria for a Mission 66 district, it could be included under an amendment to the existing Fall River Historic District. Since our focus was Mission 66 buildings, we did not research this amendment thoroughly. However, we think that a strong case exists for a district that would include the Mission 66 buildings and sites and the already NR-listed ranger station, pump house, and catchment basin. Because of recent construction or renovation, the store and comfort station are ineligible for listing. Under Criterion A, the district represents the history of private concessionaire and park development at the site from 1922 to 1973, and under Criterion B, the district exemplifies the evolution of park service design from rustic to modern between 1922 and 1965.

Additional elements for the amended district would include the visitor center and plaza, the parking lot, and the pump house and

catchment basin. The store and comfort station would be noncontributing features.

Kawuneeche Visitor Center

Period of significance: 1958 -1973

Rocky Mountain administrators had long recognized the need for an administrative, interpretive, maintenance, and residential hub at its west entrance near Grand Lake. It began planning for these services in the late 1950s, beginning the grading for the entrance road in 1958 and completing the entrance plaza in 1964. In 1965, the park finished a utility building, maintenance yard, and two residences, and in 1968 the visitor center/administration offices.

Planned as a unit and entirely constructed under the Mission 66 program, these sites could be eligible as a Westside Entrance Historic District. It would be a large contiguous or scattered discontinuous district. Even though united under the Mission 66 historic context, this district has the weakest claim of the three visitor center areas to National Register status. It has undergone more changes and is the least geographically cohesive potential visitor center district. In our estimation, no individual building, including the Kawuneeche Visitor Center, is individually eligible. Contributing features include the visitor center, its parking lots, walkways, and landscaping, the entrance station, the utility building, and the two residences. The noncontributing features are the new and moved housing in residential area.

Integrity: The integrity of this district is compromised in several ways. The visitor center has significant alterations including a 1989 addition to its west side and the comfort station wing's new seamed-metal covered gable roof. The setting for the district is compromised with the addition of substantial new housing in the residential area. The park has replaced windows in the utility building and filled the garage bays.

Criteria A and C: The district could be eligible under A because it represents a major expansion of facilities under Mission 66 on the park's west side. Of the three visitor center districts, Kawuneeche has sustained the most alterations and therefore does not compare favorably to the park's other visitor center districts. However, it is the only such site on the west side. The visitor center's addition does not disqualify it from National Register consideration within a district as it meets Carr's requirement of compatibility in design and original intent for the building.<sup>94</sup> In our opinion, the accumulation of changes to the district and to individual buildings within it lead to enough loss of integrity that the district does not meet eligibility under Criteria C.

Criterion G: Although road construction falls within the 50 year rule, all of the buildings are less than 50 years old. In our view, the changes to both the Kawuneeche Visitor Center and the larger district are significant enough that this district could not meet Criterion G's requirement of "exceptional significance."

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid, 116.

## MISSION 66 DISTRICTS

### Moraine Park Campground

Period of Significance: 1963-1973

Under the Mission 66 managerial goals, Rocky Mountain purchased and demolished the private structures that existed in Moraine Park. To compensate for the loss of lodging, it began constructing the Moraine Park Campground on the hillside above the park in 1963 and opened it to the public in 1966. Moraine Park is the largest campground built during the era and the best remaining example of a cohesive Mission 66 development and contiguous site in Rocky Mountain (other than visitor center districts). It is potentially eligible for the National Register under the MPDF guidelines because it is "an outstanding example of its development type.... [it] represents above average, well preserved examples of Mission 66 planning and design."<sup>95</sup> The contributing features are the entrance road, entrance kiosks, ranger station, four remaining Mission 66 comfort stations, amphitheater, compressor building, loop drive, parking spurs, walkways and campsites. The new comfort stations are noncontributing features.

Integrity: Moraine Park Campground retains good integrity. Two new comfort stations have replaced Mission 66 facilities, and the amphitheater underwent a sensitive rehabilitation in 2001. But these changes do not significantly alter the overall integrity of the campground.

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 127.

Criteria A & C: As Rocky's largest and best preserved Mission 66 campground, Moraine Park represents the Mission 66 goals of managing growth and modernist principles of design. Its period of significance under A is 1963-1973 and under C 1963-1966.

Criterion G: Begun in 1963, Moraine Park is close to being 50 years old. However, a case could be made under Criterion G that the campground has "exceptional importance" due to its relatively-unaltered condition and its status as Rocky's most important Mission 66 campground.

#### Mission 66 Housing Area

Period of Significance: 1947-1973

Adequate employee housing was a top priority for Rocky's Mission 66 planners, and in 1947, the park began addressing the problem with the Emergency Housing Units along Ptarmigan Lane. In 1959, the park added nine ranch houses to an existing neighborhood of 1920s-30s era housing. Set along curvilinear loop roads, these single family residences mimicked suburban living. Later in 1962, builders erected three apartment houses on Sundance Circle where they joined a 1949 renovated CCC bunkhouse, a 1950 wash house (renovated in 1962), and twelve other seasonal housing buildings. Eleven of those other buildings no longer exist and one remains—building 495, built in 1929 and moved to this site at an unknown date. In 1958, the park moved five Rustic-style buildings from the High Drive to Sundance Circle to serve as additional seasonal housing (118, 122, 124, 126, and 128). The park records cannot

substantiate construction dates of these buildings, which are only vaguely cohesive in style and no longer retain original integrity. By 1965, the park had added landscaping, roads, walks, and parking to Sundance Circle. Also in 1965, the Kunz Construction Company moved three residences and two garages to Marmot Drive (281, 269, 458, 354, and 450) to complete the array of staff housing options on that loop.

The MPDF suggests Mission 66 residential areas as possible historic districts. Because park employee housing was one of the most pressing problems addressed in Rocky Mountain's post-World War II period, residential areas created in the Mission 66 era that retain integrity are potential historic districts.

#### *Option One: Inclusive Mission 66 Residential Historic District*

Include all residential areas constructed in the post-World War II era. While a district of this description is historically and logically consistent, it is our least favorite option because it is scattered and discontinuous. Contributing features include all Mission 66 moved or new residences and garages, roads (especially loop roads), driveways, research building, and associated features. Noncontributing features include the wash house (remodeled in 2008) (119); bunkhouse (117); and 102 Ptarmigan Lane.

Integrity: With the exception of two buildings (wash house and 102 Ptarmigan), Mission 66 housing, whether moved under the program or constructed new, retain their historic integrity. However, the integrity of the large district is somewhat compromised with the inclusion of several new dwellings and the 1920s-30s houses now part of the existing Utility Area NR district.

Criterion A: Within the context of park development under Mission 66, all the moved and new dwellings could constitute a district. This would include the 1947-49 Ptarmigan Lane structures, the 1959 Alpine Circle and Thunder Lane ranch houses, and the 1950s-60s Sundance Circle apartments, research center, five moved dwellings on Sundance Circle, and the five moved buildings on Marmot Drive. Period of significance is 1947-1973.

Criterion C: Because this district would include structures that exhibit the rustic style rather than Park Service Modern architecture, it would not be eligible under Criterion C, despite the larger modern landscape design.

Criterion G: The park constructed or moved most of the housing into the potential district before 1962. If the park made a National Register nomination before 2012-5, it would have to meet Criterion G. We do not believe this broad district meets the “exceptional importance” or “outstanding representative” qualifications because of the large number of moved buildings and residences constructed with CCC materials in the rustic style.

*Option Two: A Select Mission 66 Ranch House Residential Historic District*

An easily distinguishable “neighborhood” within headquarters area housing features the Mission ranch houses along the loop roads of Alpine Circle and Thunder Lane. These are geographically, architecturally and historically unified. This option, however, ignores other housing areas that are historically tied to Mission 66.

Contributing features include the nine single-family residences, driveways, roads, landscaping, and associated features.

Integrity: all Mission 66 ranch houses have excellent integrity.

Criterion A: all ranch houses clearly represent the Mission 66 program to provide adequate single-family housing and better living standards for park employees.

Criterion C: all ranch houses are excellent examples of Park Service Modern residential design that replicated the architecture and setting common to post-war suburbia.

*Option Three: Expanded District under the Utility Area District*

The simplest solution is to add the Mission 66 housing to the existing Utility Area Historic District that already encompasses the earlier 1920-30s residences. The 1990 addendum to the Utility Area Historic District excluded the Mission 66 structures based on date of construction. Under Criterion A, a strong argument could be made that a district that includes housing and utility buildings from the 1920s through the 1960s represents park developments over time. The new boundary would revert to an earlier boundary for this district and would again include Sundance Circle, Ptarmigan Lane, Alpine Circle, and Thunder Lane. The two discontinuous boundaries would be included in the new boundary, which would extend on the north side to the Mission 66-created east entrance road for the park (1959). Contributing features for the amendment would include the nine 1959 ranch houses (139, 140, 141, 142, 144, 149, 425, 426, 428), three 1962 apartment buildings (429, 430, 431), eight

“emergency housing units” built on Ptarmigan Lane in 1947 (49, 100, 101, 103, 104, 105, 137, 138), five residences moved to Sundance 1958 (118, 122, 124, 126, 128), residence 458 (built 1940, renovated 1959, moved to Marmot Drive 1965), residence 269 (listed in SMR as 265—probably incorrect or renumbered; built 1939, moved to Marmot Drive 1965), residence 281 (built 1939, moved to Marmot Drive 1965), two garages moved to Marmot Drive in 1965 (354, built 1955 and 450, built 1959), roads (especially the loop roads), driveways, and associated features. Noncontributing features are those structures lacking integrity such as the wash house (119), 102 Ptarmigan Lane, and the research center (117), as well as structures built outside period of significance ( 879, built 1986 and 990, built 1989).

Integrity: All Mission 66 housing retains good integrity as does the surrounding landscaping, roadways, and walks. Two structures have lost their historic integrity but still retain their setting and location.

Criterion A: adding Mission 66 housing to Utility Area nomination could be justified under the theme of park service evolution in housing and employee living.

Criterion C: Justification under C would be the evolution of housing and architectural design from the early rustic design to modern architecture.

We do not believe an argument exists for adding Mission 66 housing to the Beaver Meadows Visitor Center nomination. Housing already existed at the Utility Area site, and planners logically considered adding more houses there before they had decided where they

would locate the new visitor center. The planning and construction of the visitor center was separate from decisions about additional housing.

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