



Roaming Rocky Podcast Script Hydration

(elk bugling)

(sound of rushing water)

When you think about drinking water at Rocky Mountain National Park, don't think trickle, think big gulp.

Welcome to Rocky Mountain National Park. My name is Tara. I work as a park's backcountry coordinator. Rocky's a great place to play and work, especially if you like to be outdoors. The roads and trails of Rocky Mountain National Park can take you to elevations between 8,000 and 14,000 feet.

One of the most important things to remember while travelling both on and off trail in the park is to stay hydrated. Our bodies need water to both heat and cool throughout the seasons. While on a picnic or a drive in the park, your body's at rest and relatively cool. This is when we regulate fluids best. When you begin to walk or hike the trails of the park at high elevations, your heart rate increases, your body heats up, respirations increase, and you require more water. In order to replenish this water supply, you need to drink more fluids than usual.

Remember, at altitude your body is working harder to maintain its normal functions. Losing a bit of water may not seem like a big deal. Right? But losing too much can cause dehydration. Dehydration can range from a minor annoyance to a life-threatening state.

When you become dehydrated, lactic acid can build up in your muscles and break down muscle fibers causing fatigue. Common symptoms of dehydration include headaches, and minor loss of coordination, for example, frequent stumbling or tripping. As dehydration progresses, it can lead to conditions like heat exhaustion, heat stroke, and even acute mountain sickness.

To prevent dehydration, drink early and often. Drink before you're thirsty and throughout your day. Water and diluted sports drinks are best.

Today we're thinking about heading to Lawn Lake. Let's head to the trailhead and talk more about how to stay hydrated on our hike.

Lawn Lake is roughly 12 and a half miles round trip. It gains 2,000 feet in elevation and ends at about 11,000 feet. Good hydration starts before the hike as well as throughout.

Let's take a look at what's in our backpack. There's a variety of ways to carry water. A simple water bottle works well. Some believe in using a recycled jug. Another option is to use a hydration bladder similar to this one. It fits in your pack and allows you to drink as you go.

Keep in mind that you should drink at least a half a quart of water every hour that you are hiking. Fluid loss can exceed as much as two quarts per hour while active during the hottest times of the day.

Today, we're hiking to Lawn Lake. If you do the math, you might find out that a gallon of water may be necessary. That's pretty heavy. So you may want to consider bringing some type of water purification with you, either mechanical or chemical. A water filter can be used directly out of the stream to filter water or a self-purification bottle with filter integrated. Another method would be to chemically treat your water.

Well, there you have it. Drink early, drink often. Stay hydrated and enjoy the park.

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Park information is available at 970-586-1206 or on-line at www.nps.gov/romo

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