



## Roaming Rocky Podcast Script Wilderness Celebration

(elk bugling)

(sound of applause)

(Vaughn Baker-Park Superintendent) Today we celebrate the designation of Rocky Mountain National Park's backcountry as wilderness, an idea that as many of you know has been around awhile. We're also here to thank those whose persistence over the years has brought us to today. One of the people who persisted in getting the wilderness designation for the park, first as a United States senator, and now as Secretary of the Interior is Ken Salazar. Thank you for your leadership, the leadership you provided in getting us to today, and it's now my privilege and honor to introduce to you the 50th Secretary of the Interior.

(sound of applause)

(Ken Salazar-Secretary of the Interior) Thank you, thank you, Vaughn, and thank you for all of you who are here. And before I mention the names of some key people who have really been involved with making this all happen today, I want to just reflect a little bit on Rocky Mountain National Park and the landscapes of America.

I think when all of us look back at the history of these United States, one always finds that it is in the times of crisis that we look to those things that mean most to us, those things that really connect us to our place and the people of this country that have made us the greatest living democracy in the whole history of the world.

So fast forward to 2009. We as Americans are also at a point where we are at a crossroads of many difficult issues including the difficult economic times that we are navigating at this point in time. So it's very appropriate, it seems to me, that at this point in our history we stand up and we say we will refuel our spirits, we will refuel our strengths by celebrating the landscapes of America. And as I see the landscapes of America, signified by this crown jewel of Rocky Mountain National Park, I think that we celebrate today the statement that Enos Mills wrote about now over a hundred years ago, where he said the following, "In years to come when I am asleep beneath the pines, thousands of families will find rest and hope in this park." He was right. We will find rest and hope here at Rocky Mountain National Park. Thank you very much.

(sound of applause)

(Vaughn Baker) Certainly no one knows the backcountry of Rocky probably any better than our senior senator from Colorado. He spent a lot of time in it. My pleasure to introduce Senator Mark Udall.

(sound of applause)

(Mark Udall, United States Senator from Colorado) Good afternoon. What a celebration. I didn't think I'd feel the emotion that I feel here today, but it's washing over me. It's a wonderful, wonderful feeling.

Let me turn and reflect, if I might, on what we celebrate. This was a long time in the coming. I wanted to share some personal perspectives with everybody that's here.

This is personal for me. I have, I'm sure, outlasted my welcome in some settings when I talk about my family's connection to Estes and to the park, and to Grand Lake. My grandfather, as some of you know, was the first concessionaire in Rocky Mountain National Park. He owned the Stanley Hotel in the 30s with the Stanley brothers. Enos Mill, who Ken mentioned, was a friend of my grandfather's. And they shared many of the same perspectives and dreams and hopes for this place we call Rocky Mountain National Park.

I've had the great, good fortune to be here in every season, to climb Longs Peak and the Diamond during the beautiful series of August days—I see my good friend Ralph back up here—in that true wilderness. I've had the great fortune on the beautiful days of the fall to climb on the Twin Owls of Lumpy Ridge. To ski in the backcountry in the middle of the winter. And to the walk the Continental Divide with my family and peer both directions off the Continental Divide.

This place has taught me more than I can truly express. So this park, I think, helps us in this process understand how we bridge the divide. How we remind ourselves that we all have a common interest and a common spirit.

(Vaughn Baker) Now I'd like to introduce Colorado's newest member of the United States Senate, and we hope to get you out in the park sometime, Senator. You have a standing welcome. Senator Michael Bennett.

(sound of applause)

(Michael Bennett, United States Senator from Colorado) It's wonderful to be here today. And the only—Secretary Salazar talked about how this was crossing the finish line—and the only thing I can take credit for is not dropping the baton in the last foot before the finish line (audience laughter) as then Senator Salazar was handing off the baton to me. So, congratulations to all of you on the stage and to all of you here today for this incredible accomplishment and this great privilege and the chance to cast a vote after all of your hard work, to get us to that finish line. This is a time, I think, when fifty years from now, and a hundred years from now, people are going to look back and ask whether or not we made the kinds of hard choices that need to be made in order to create the kind of opportunity both domestically and internationally that our children and our grandchildren deserve. And that I can just say that with the leadership of President Obama and the leadership of Secretary Salazar and the rest of that administration I feel very good about where we are headed. So, I look forward to working with all of you in the years ahead and thank you for sharing this day with me. I can't tell you how much I appreciate it.

(sound of applause)

(Vaughn Baker) Over the years, the park has enjoyed a close working relationship with Senator Allard and his staff. Whenever we needed the boundary adjusted or a new visitor center at Fall River, we knew that we could always work with Senator Allard to get that through for us. And so, it is now my pleasure to introduce Senator Wayne Allard.

(sound of applause)

(Wayne Allard, former United States Senator from Colorado) Thank you very much. It's great to be with you today. I can be relaxed since I don't serve in the Senate any more. I don't have any notes or anything like that. (audience laughter) so I can just kind of enjoy everything that's going on here but I was very grateful that Secretary Salazar took this opportunity to invite me to attend and join all of you here to this great occasion. A little bit about Rocky Mountain National Park, five generations of my family had an opportunity to be in the park one point in time. In fact some of them were here before it was a park. And I'm delighted that we were able to preserve the wilderness aspects of this park for future generations because I want my grandchildren and my relatives after that to be able to enjoy the park as, I think, each and every one of you in this park want to see happen. We want to presume this for future generations. So, I'm delighted that I could be here today

to have this celebration with everybody else. And I'm truly happy that we were able to get the Wilderness designation here in Rocky Mountain National Park. Thank you,

(sound of applause)

(Vaughn Baker) When Betsy Markey was just a lowly Senate staffer, we used to drag her up to the spring openings on Trail Ridge Road. She'd hop up on the rotary snowplow and walk through the snow. She probably won't have much time for that now but we hope that you'll still come back and see us from time to time. We're just very pleased to have Representative Betsy Markey here.

(sound of applause)

(Betsy Markey, United States Representative from Colorado) Thank you, Vaughn. Thank you everyone for being here. I pray that our Rocky Mountain National Park will stand as a reminder of our common heritage for generations to come. And that the protections we bestow upon this place today are the time capsule into which future generations will place their love in this glorious land. Thank you all very much.

(sound of applause)

(Vaughn Baker) At this time I will ask our guests on the stage to be joined by Mayor Burke, Mayor Pro-Tem Levine, and former Mayor Baudek to unveil a sign, that if you were there two years ago at Moraine Park, when the delegation came together to announce that they had reached a compromise on the Wilderness Legislation, they unveiled this sign. We brought it back and —here's our Vanna White here (audience laughter) — Tony Schetzle, our Deputy Superintendant will assist the dignitaries in the unveiling of their new and improved sign.

(audience laughter)

(sound of applause)

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