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THE FIRST LADY OF THE ROCKIES: **ESTES PARK CELEBRATES 150 YEARS OF ISABELLA BIRD'S TRAILBLAZING LEGACY THIS FALL**

ESTES PARK, Colo., August 2, 2023 – Isabella Bird, “The First Lady of the Rockies,” is the inspiration for several special events throughout Estes Park happening this summer and fall to celebrate the 150th anniversary of her epic climb up Longs Peak. Famed as one of the first women to reach the summit of the iconic 14er, Bird is also known for boldly challenging the standards of her era and for shining a spotlight on Estes Park and Rocky Mountain National Park through her writings.

Growing up in England, Isabella was frail and suffered from nervous headaches and insomnia. Her doctors recommended an outdoor life, and in 1873 she moved to Colorado, where the air was said to be good for health. Settling in Estes Park, she eventually traveled 800 miles around the Rocky Mountains with her guide, a one-eyed desperado (and rumored paramour) named “Rocky Mountain Jim” Nugent.

Isabella went on to travel and write about all corners of the world and became the first woman to be elected Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society. Her popular book, [*A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains*](#), was instrumental in putting Estes Park on the map globally.

“Bird’s achievements are still relevant because they show what a lone woman can do,” [says Paula Williams, Curator for the National Library of Scotland](#). “There are still many parts of the world where an individual woman is constrained by society – whether through religion or convention. By being curious and interested in your surroundings and kind and courteous to other people you can make your own way in the world. Isabella would surely say, ‘Do not be afraid – get out there and explore the world!’”

From history tours to hiking, visitors to Estes Park can honor Isabella Bird in 2023 through numerous events; additional events and activities will be added to the [Visit Estes Park online calendar](#) throughout the summer. A few highlights include:

BETTIE COURSES: WOMEN & CONSERVATION (July – Oct.): Bettie Courses were created by the Rocky Mountain Conservancy to connect women to conservation efforts through educational experiences. Inspired by the work of Beatrice “Bettie” Willard, a foundational instructor at the Conservancy, these experiences allow women to gain confidence in activities like climbing, fly fishing and hiking. [Sign Up Here.](#)

LONGS PEAK REUNION (Aug. 18-20): Celebrate the history of Longs Peak at this weekend-long event in Estes Park. Festivities begin with a free concert at Performance Park on Friday, then continue with an all-day symposium on Saturday, detailing historic events that happened on the Longs Peak Trail, including a presentation about Isabella Bird and women on Longs Peak. The weekend wraps up with a picnic at the Meeker Park Lodge picnic area. [Learn More.](#)

WOMEN OF ROCKY HISTORY TOURS (Sept. 11 – Nov. 17): Hosted by the Rocky Mountain Conservancy, this scenic bus tour will take participants on a historical adventure throughout the Estes Valley and Rocky Mountain National Park. The program will showcase the impacts of other European homesteading women, including Anna Wolfrom, Ida McCreery, Esther Burnell, Katherin Garetson and Amanda Blocker Byrd. [Get Tickets Here.](#)

With more than 150 lodging choices that range in size, style and price, the Estes Valley offers a variety of accommodations to suit every summer vacation need, from cozy cabins to pet-friendly options. [Start planning your Rocky Mountain getaway now.](#)

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About Visit Estes Park

Visit Estes Park is the official Destination Marketing Organization for Estes Park, Colorado. A Destinations International (DI) accredited DMO, Visit Estes Park's mission is to drive sustainable year-round economic growth by encouraging visitor demand. Estes Park, just 90 minutes from Denver, is the basecamp for Rocky Mountain National Park, offering outdoor experiences, activities, dining, shopping and an environment that is welcoming and approachable. Known for world-class adventure, resident wildlife and scenic beauty, Estes Park is Colorado's quintessential mountain town. To learn more, go to visitestepark.com.