

Welcome from Wallace Keck, Superintendent & Park Manager, to INPS:

A thick blanket of snow covers the City of Rocks National Reserve and Castle Rocks State Park of southern Cassia County. The last of the flower heads of rabbitbrush and sage have long-since fallen, and all is quiet. The past 10 years, I have witnessed this life cycle of the Albion Mountains flora, and I know it won't be long before I am trudging through snow, up along the sun-dried Granite Peak looking for the first Anderson's Buttercup of spring. Soon thereafter, each species will rise up to reveal new life. I will be tracking their blooms—nearly 500 species—with great expectations of a banner year. This year (2011), the excitement is more intense as many of you will be joining me in the quest, as the Annual Native Plant Society members converge in the Almo Valley. And we are ready to show you the best this corner of Idaho has to offer.

The National Reserve is well known for its granite spires and monoliths—the same that inspired nearly a quarter of a million emigrants bound for California in 1843–1882. You will experience this grand scenery, cultural landscape and history, as you tag along with guides knowledgeable in the diverse flora akin to the Basin and Range province.

Don't be surprised when you encounter species of the Northern Rockies and Snake River Plain as well, for the Reserve is located strategically at what scientists recognize as a bio-geographic crossroads. City of Rocks contains the largest pinyon pine forest in Idaho. Add to this habitat the mix of soils from grussic sands to thick loam along Almo and Circle Creeks and you have rich biological diversity—plants, mammals, and birds especially. As you enjoy all of these natural wonders, your eyes might just wander to the pinnacles as climbers from around the world test their skills on the best granite faces in the country.

You will be surprised how modern the accommodations will be in the midst of such primitive resources. From our first class RV campground at Smoky Mountain with showers, flush toilets, and WiFi, to our yurts with electricity, to the Inn, B&B's, mercantile, and restaurants in the gateway community of Almo, you will find comfort at the end of a long day in the wild. There is even a hot springs and large swimming pool where you can relax and watch the sunset.

Let our visitor services staff help you plan your visit by calling us at 208-825-5910.

Soon the snow will melt, and the mountains will turn shades of green as the waters flow from 10,339-foot Cache Peak to the wide dry valley. Don't miss this year's INPS meeting to remember. Until then, I'm off to look for the first *Orogenia linearifolia*. See you soon!

Wallace Keck

2011 INPS ANNUAL MEETING RESERVATION June24-26, 2011

Location: Castle Rocks State Park and City of Rocks National Reserve, Almo, ID

Please print

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Cell Phone _____ Email _____

Chapter affiliation _____ Non-member _____

If you plan to stay in one of the group campsites INPS has already reserved (no hookups), please indicate what you will need below.

RV site _____ Length of RV _____

Tent site for one tent _____ For 2 tents or more _____ How many? _____

For which nights: Friday _____ Saturday _____ Sunday _____

Number of Saturday dinner reservations @ \$20 _____ per person

Meeting registration fee @ \$10 _____ per person

Total enclosed \$ _____

Please mail this form with your check for the total shown above to:

Loasa Chapter, INPS, P.O. Box 5985, Twin Falls ID 83303-5985

Annual Meeting information:

The Loasa Chapter is hosting the 2011 INPS Annual Meeting at the City of Rocks National Reserve and at the adjacent Castle Rocks State Park, both headquartered at Almo, in south-central Idaho. Our gathering on June 24–26, 2011, affords great opportunities to observe native flora in a large variety of habitat types and unusual rock formations popular with climbing enthusiasts.

INPS received the attached welcome letter from Wallace Keck, Superintendent of City of Rocks National Reserve and Park Manager for Castle Rocks State Park. In addition, Wallace and his staff have created a facebook profile at <https://www.facebook.com/CastleRocksStatePark> to which they have been posting daily photos of wildflowers in bloom, all neatly identified. They now have over 75 different photos posted at their 2011 wildflowers album! There is also much information and many maps posted at their websites

<http://parksandrecreation.idaho.gov/parks/castlerocks.aspx> and <http://www.nps.gov/ciro> , including a 1995 complete annotated checklist of vascular plants.

Attached is a reservation form. If you have not already sent in this form please do so immediately, as we need it to arrange for the Saturday dinner and to plan for camping.

DIRECTIONS: From Interstate 84 take exit 216 (Declo); go south on Idaho 77 south through the small town of Declo across old US hwy 30, and on south through the town of Albion to the Conner Creek junction, then turn right (southwest) on through Elba and to the south side of Almo. The visitor center in Almo will be on the left (east) side of the road. Maps are available there at any time, but the center closes at 4:30pm.

Our evening programs will be at the Ranch House unit of the Castle Rocks State Park, northwest of Almo, on the Big Cove Road (2800 S). This road is about 2 miles north of Almo,

on the Elba-Almo road. Go west on the Big Cove Road for less than 2 miles to the Ranch House. If we have inclement weather, we will meet in the Park warehouse southeast of the Visitor Center in Almo. This warehouse also includes a large conference room in the upper floor.

FRIDAY: 2-5pm – Registration for the INPS annual gathering will be at the Visitor Center in Almo, in order to provide you with a pass to the State Park, to direct you to camping, and to get a tally of those going on the North Fork Circle Creek tour tomorrow (see below) to arrange for shuttles. For those arriving later, registration will continue at the Ranch House. We suggest you arrive early, to take advantage of the Visitor Center before it closes at 4:30pm.

--6pm – dinner with grilled sausages for the group, at the Ranch House. Sausages, buns, condiments, paper plates and napkins will be provided. Please bring your own utensils and beverages. Also, please bring an appetizer, salad, or dessert to share.

--7pm -- Wallace Keck, Superintendent of the National Reserve and Manager for the State Park, will give us an orientation on the area. As he is very knowledgeable about the flora, fauna and geology of the area, he will be able to answer many questions.

SATURDAY: 9am – meet for the field trips

Almo Creek wetlands and adjacent sagebrush-grass and

pinyon-juniper types within the Ranch Unit of Castle Rocks State Park: This unit has a good network of trails and interesting microclimates adjacent to the many granite monoliths used by rock climbers. The wetlands area has uneven footing but the walk is otherwise fairly easy, generally within a mile of the facilities at the ranch house. Meet at the Ranch House and walk from there.

North Fork Circle Creek drainage: This would involve a shuttle to the upper edge of the drainage, within the City of Rocks National Reserve, and walking four miles downhill through several habitat types to the Circle Creek Overlook. This trail would provide the best opportunity to see a variety of habitat types plus superb vistas, but there are no facilities along the way. We are expected to be gone from 9am to 2pm; be prepared for this. Those wishing to catch the shuttle at the Visitor Center should meet there at 8:30am; all others will meet at Bread Loaves on the west side of the National Reserve. This is the ideal trip, as it will be lead by Wallace Keck, Park Manager, and goes through the greatest variety of habitat types.

Emery Canyon: This field trip involves a minimum amount of walking—a riparian area and a hillside are alongside the road. This option allows the opportunity to drive to other sites within the area, and we will always be close to the cars. We will meet at the Bread Loaves Campground turnoff.

Be prepared: All field trips will require plenty of water and sun protection. Packing a light lunch is advisable.

SATURDAY EVENING – 6pm – meet at the Ranch House for the annual meeting, dinner, and a special speaker: **Dr. Stephen L. Love**, Research Professor and Superintendent of the University of Idaho Research and Extension Center at Aberdeen, will speak to us about the buckwheats of Idaho and their use in landscaping.

SUNDAY field trips are optional; let us know if you are interested. Please remember that check-out time at the campgrounds is 1pm. Please let me know any questions or suggestions.

Thanks. --Valdon

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