

Nature Association offers Spring Ecology

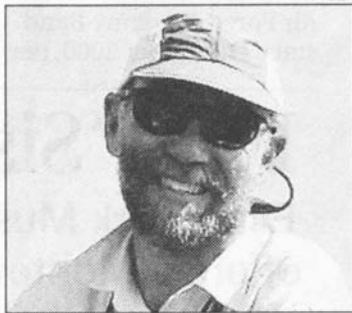
By **Dave Patrick, RMNA**

Special to the Trail-Gazette

Rocky Mountain Nature Association (RMNA) Field Seminars office will host Spring Ecology in Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP) on April 14 and 15. Dr. Timothy Kittel of the University of Colorado will guide participants through a survey of the physical and biological processes in the Park as snow-covered environments rapidly change with the warming of summer.

Ecologically, spring is one of the most diverse times of the year in Rocky Mountain National Park — animals awaken from hibernation, alpine flowers bloom, and the snow melts. Kittel will provide insight into the natural history of organisms and function of ecosystems that are not often appreciated in summer visits to the field. It is the perfect time to learn about how animals withstand the winter cold and why flowers bloom so quickly.

Kittel, a research ecologist at the Institute of Arctic and Alpine Research, University of Colorado, Boulder, has over 30 years of pro-



Courtesy photo

Dr. Timothy Kittel will teach Spring Ecology.

fessional experience in global comparative ecosystems and climate geography. According to Kittel, “a goal for me as an instructor is to foster what is often called a ‘sense of place’ — which is to say in this context, to start on the road to develop an intuitive, personal sense of how natural systems work. A lot of people don’t realize how much is going on in winter, but the thaw of spring allows us to see all the activity that

took place over the winter months.”

A long time advocate for experiential education, Kittel’s seminars are hands-on. He likes participants to do more than just think. As a result, participants are able to retain and to connect lessons learned in the field with other ecosystems. “It’s just fun to teach, to connect students with nature and to watch them develop new ideas.”

Spring Ecology may be taken for Colorado State University graduate or undergraduate credit. BOCES teacher re-licensing credit is also available. Credit is optional and life long learners are welcome. To register or inquire about this course, call 586-3262 or visit www.rmna.org.