



500 Big Thompson Ave.
P.O. Box 1200
Estes Park, CO 80517
www.EstesParkCVB.com

For Information Contact:
Suzy Blackhurst, Information Officer
sblackhurst@estes.org
970-577-9900; 800-44-ESTES

August 26, 2008

Aspen Gold Marks Changing Season

Estes Park, CO — Autumn heralds its arrival in the mountains with cooler nights and the gradual changing of colors starting at the higher elevations and slowly moving to the valley floor. The weather is at its very best with warm sunny days, clear blue skies, and are most reliable for planning day time excursions into the park.

Even people are transformed with the changing of the season. Hot soups and heavier meals regain their appeal; long pants and an extra sweater feel good against the skin as the air becomes more brisk and refreshing. Your step quickens. Perhaps you're ready for a more exhilarating mountain trek to Emerald Lake from Bear Lake, or even the much easier walk to Alberta Falls, Fern or Cub Lake.

It's time to watch for the aspen's annual transformation to pure gold, a sight that never tires. Everywhere you turn there are splashes of brilliant color. Some of the best viewing is south of the village on Colorado Highway 7, along the Peak-to-Peak Highway. Meander up the Little Valley Road into the National Forest Service land (off Fish Creek Road which intersects U.S. Highway 36 just east of Estes Park), where there are magnificent groves of aspens waiting to show off their colors. Extraordinary quaking aspen groves can also be found at Hidden Valley, Bear Lake and Wild Basin in Rocky Mountain National Park.

At elevations from 9,000 to 11,000 feet in Rocky Mountain National Park, the colors begin to change in the early part of September and march steadily down the mountain sides to 8,000 feet by mid-month. Depending on the weather, full color in the Estes Valley may not be reached until late in September or, under ideal conditions, early October. Ideal conditions mean sufficient moisture, sunny days and cool nights to produce the choicest selection of colors. Fall foliage displays can last as long as four weeks if there are no early snows or high winds.

Aspens are considered to be the largest living organism in the world; with root systems that extend for miles and miles connecting one grove of aspens to another. Aspens with identical colors indicate a "family" of trees; a group growing from the same part of the root system. These genetically identical trees will be the same shade of yellow, gold or red, changing colors and dropping their leaves

--END--