

# Cowboy Brad's Rocky Mountain Music

"BEING A GOOD COWBOY SINGER, I always play my mom's request." So begins the Cowboy Sing-Along, an Estes Park tradition. "Cowboy Brad" Fitch dresses the part in dungarees, broken-in boots and the ever-present cowboy accessory, the felt hat. He is the spitting image of John Denver, Colorado's most iconic musician, with the same sincere smile and golden locks. Despite the cloud cover, spectators gather as Brad tips his hat and calls them by name. He is a community fixture, having performed in Estes Park for some 15 summers. Soon, the storm blows in and audience members become umbrella bearers, tapping their feet as they fend off the rain.

According to Fitch, certified cowboy sing-alongs are "required by law, and in accordance with state facilitators" to play Denver's "Rocky Mountain High." "It depends on where we play, but that song tends to be the most requested," Fitch said. It is this song and others like it that place Denver, and Fitch, for that matter, in the pantheon of Colorado crooners.

Cowboy Brad began his musical journey early, accompanying his mother on the baritone ukulele. But it was when he set his sights on the guitar that Fitch found his home. Like his singer/songwriter idols – Gordon Lightfoot, James Taylor and Jimmy Buffett – Fitch wanted to sing about "things that mattered to me," and at age 17, up against the decade of disco, he founded country act Buffalo Fitch and the Cow Chip Kids, or Fitch and Chips for short.

When the band broke up, Fitch took to the seas, serving eight years in the U.S. Coast Guard. But his dream of making a living making music never went under. Today he plays 120 shows a year, including the sing-alongs in Estes Park, where he spends his summers.

Fitch can't pick just one most-loved Colorado locale, so he lists them by landscape. "My favorite mountain would have to be Longs; I love the Upper Glacier Gorge area, and Snowbank is a great lake." When seeking solitude, he ventures toward Trail Ridge. "What inspires me about Colorado is the majesty of its scenery," he said. And coming in a close second is what Fitch terms the "mountain lifestyle" – access to activities like skiing, hiking, horseback riding and climbing. Yes, here in Colorado, there is a certain sort of magic, or, in the immortal words of John Denver, that "Rocky Mountain High," that makes for one contented cowboy. CDs and songs can be purchased and played at [cowboybrad.com](http://cowboybrad.com) – *Tabby Kube*



Christopher Amundson

"Cowboy Brad" Fitch carries on the "Rocky Mountain High" tradition of John Denver. His uncanny resemblance to the Colorado legend brings sunshine on everyone's shoulders at his Estes Park sing-alongs.