

Along with The Tobin Tree: **Colorado Photos**



The high peaks keep their snow late into the spring, long after it has melted at the lower elevations. This is a view similar to the view of the Never Summer Range (Chapter 20).



This gives you an idea of what a hay field looks like on a big ranch.



This is another field on a big ranch. The hay has been cut and baled in huge rolls that are moved by large machines. In the Tobin story, the Sweetwater Ranch is a small haying operation. The bales are small and can be picked up and stacked by hand.



This is an example of a barn on a Colorado Ranch. Beyond the fields you can see hills that are not irrigated, where vegetation includes grass, sedges, rabbit brush, scrub oak, mountain mahogany, and juniper.



Areas on the ranch that are not irrigated are 'dry land' where vegetation includes rabbit brush and native plants that do not need much moisture to survive.



As you can see, the high peaks are dusted with snow while the lower elevations are spring-green. The tall trees indicate a river is probably nearby.



In the Tobin story (Chapters 10-11) the families picnic at a lake, perhaps like this one. The forest here is mainly Lodgepole pine and Douglas fir. There are usually big rocks along the shore, perfect for diving! The water would be cold and clear!

To the right, you see rock outcroppings typical of mountain areas in Colorado. You can see many such areas on the map of the Sweetwater Ranch.

Jason's Rock (Chapter 9) had a flat top where the family could sit together and share a quiet moment.

Some rocks would probably require ropes and technical gear to climb, but Jason's Rock was safe to 'free climb'.



Colorado is known for its aspen trees found in the valleys and on lower slopes of the mountains. The trunks of the aspen are white, and the leaves shake or flutter in the wind. Hence the name quaking aspen.

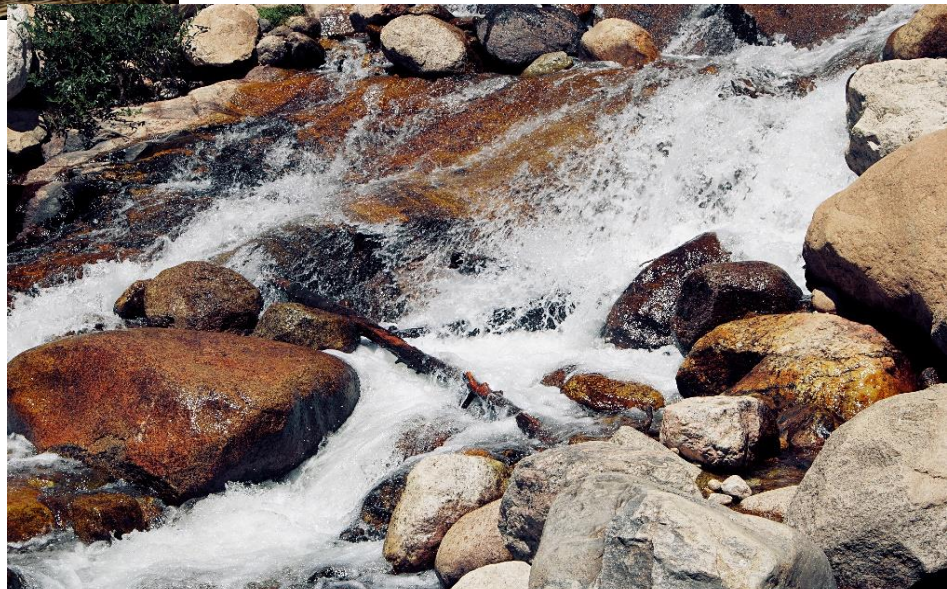
In the fall, the cottonwood and aspen trees turn a bright gold.



In the mountains, the rivers and streams are fast moving.

This might be like the river on the Sweetwater Ranch.

The river in the canyon might look like this. Imagine water swirling around and over boulders as big as cars.





At high elevations, trees do not grow well. High wind, lack of soil, and limited moisture, cause their growth to be stunted. This is called the **Krumholtz Effect**.

Treeline is the point where trees no longer can grow.

Above treeline is the **tundra**. Here, a wide variety of plants have adapted to the wind and temperature range.

In this closer view of the tundra, you can see small flowering plants, moss, and low growing grasses. The plants grow low to the ground, and their growth cycle to maturity is only a few weeks long.



This is a perfect habitat for pika. They can find plenty of plants and seeds for food, and dried grass for lining burrows to stay warm in winter.

The person in the photo is at the level of the tundra, but above you can see the high peaks.

At the highest elevation, very little vegetation is found, other than tiny plants, lichen on the rocks, and small grasses that can survive the extreme conditions.



This is a great example of a lake in a mountain **cirque**. It is well above the tundra, but a few plants grow in hollows where soil has collected and melting snow provides moisture.

The remnants of ancient glaciers are nearly gone now, in Colorado, but snow fields do remain. In the Tobin story, I gave them a bit of glacier to slide on!



Winter is a beautiful time in Colorado. This picture shows what it is like to cross-country ski in the forest where the snow is deep. This might be like the trail to the beaver pond.

The Tobin story takes place in a mountain valley in the Colorado Rockies. But this is only one region of the state. Colorado includes the flat plains of grass in the eastern half, the dry plateaus of the west, and the mountains running north and south in the center.

The town near the Sweetwater Ranch is small, but the state also has big cities. Cal goes to college in Denver, the state capital and largest city, located on the plains to the east of the mountains.

You can search for more photos of Colorado to see: *Dinosaur National Monument in Colorado*, *Mesa Verde National Park*, *Pawnee National Grassland*, and many other points of interest.