

October 2026 Newsletter

Indian & James Peak Wilderness News

Rocky Mountain Wilderness Gathering Recap

IPWA attended the 3rd annual Rocky Mountain Wilderness Gathering this month. IPWA Board member Ainsley Medina was the RMWG program manager, leading the planning committee for this event. At the gathering there were 72 attendees, representing sixteen different organizations in CO & Wyoming, and eleven USFS employees covering ten different Ranger Districts.

Former Senator Mark Udall gave the keynote. His message conveyed optimism for the future and gratitude for all the work our organizations are doing; he spoke a fair amount about his experience passing the bill that created the James Peak Wilderness and the compromise that created the James Peak Protection Area on the west side. The USFS gave a State of the Wilderness talk and shared some of the changes with the current reorganization. Then we had a panel featuring representatives from the mountain bike community, Trout Unlimited, Breckenridge Outfitter & Guides, and a representative from A-Basin's sustainability office. They emphasized the benefits of collaboration and relationship-building. IPWA's board members, Ainsley Medina and Sara Raley, were on a panel about developing future leaders. We also had breakout sessions on recruitment & retention, fundraising, and advocacy. Key themes included engaging and getting to know your volunteer cadre, identifying fundraising sources and corresponding projects, and reaching out to local communities.



Wildlife Safety!

With winter on its way, bears in Colorado have entered hyperphagia and are spending the majority of their time seeking out any available calories in preparation for cold weather. This search for food can result in increased negative human/bear interactions in both the front and backcountry. A food storage order is in place across the Arapaho Roosevelt Pawnee. All forest users must store food and “smellables” securely at all times and maintain clean campsites. Do not feed or approach wildlife.

Fall is a busy time for other wildlife on the forest, including elk, moose and mountain lions. Maintaining awareness of your surroundings and giving all animals plenty of space helps to keep you and them safe. Drive slowly, especially near sunrise and sunset, and watch for wildlife crossing roads and trails. Learn more about animal safety on the Colorado Parks and Wildlife website.

Upcoming Events

Reading Group & Book Exchange

Our year-end gathering will be a potluck and book exchange on December 3, 6-8 pm! One of our members has graciously offered to host us in his home. Bring a wrapped book (used is fine!) to exchange and a side dish or dessert to share. All are welcome! For more information and to RSVP, click **here**.
Please RSVP by November 30.

IPWA Volunteer Corner

Help Wanted!

IPWA could use your help! Please let us know if you're interested in any of the following positions.

Two Training Coordinator Deputies: Support the Training Coordinator in managing and guiding the Training Committee to a successful summer patrol training day. The roles require strong project management and event planning skills. You do not need to be an expert on all things IPWA and wilderness! The roles are focused on supporting the committee, removing roadblocks to ensure we stay on schedule, simple procurement of materials, and supporting the flow of the in-person training day. Primary duties extend from January through June. Must be available to attend training day on 6/5/2027. Commitment: Jan - Feb: 1 - 2 hrs/wk; Mar - May: 2 - 4 hours/wk

Training Committee Members: Help shape the structure of our 2027 summer patrol training day! As a committee member, you will support a portion of the following: handbook review/update, online training review/update, training day activities and content development, documentation review. Commitment: Jan - Feb: 1 - 2 hrs/wk; Mar - May: 2 - 4 hours/wk

Boulder Bookstore Giftwrapping - "Save the Date(s)"!
Do you love books, the public, and wrapping rectangular things? Then please join IPWA in our annual holiday gift wrapping fundraiser at the Boulder Bookstore! We wrap pre-ordered books as well as the ones patrons bring us after checking out, at a large table in the basement with room for two. We'll send more information once you sign up, as well as a reminder 2 to 3 days before your 3-hour shift. Questions? Please email Marian Bussey at marian_isat@outlook.com.

2026 DATES & TIMES

Day & Date	Shift Time
Mon. 12/14/2026	11:00am - 1:00pm
Thurs. 12/17/2026	11:00am - 1:00pm
Sat. 12/19/2026	12:00 - 3:00pm
Sat. 12/19/2026	3:00pm - 6:00pm
Sun. 12/20/2026	12:00 - 3:00pm
Sun. 12/20/2026	3:00pm - 6:00pm
Tues 12/22/2026	3:00pm - 6:00pm
Wed 12/23/2026	12:00 - 3:00pm
Wed 12/23/2026	3:00pm - 6:00pm
Thurs 12/24/2026	11:00 - 2:00pm
Thurs 12/24/2026	2:00pm - 5:00pm

Winter Patrol

Active volunteers - Do you hike, snowshoe, ski, tele, splitboard, etc. in the snowy months? Are you interested in patrolling during the winter season which spans from mid-November through early June?

New & returning winter patrollers please fill out this **Interest Form** to receive additional information about the upcoming winter season!

IPWA Volunteer Spotlight



Meet Wayne H!

Why I volunteer: I volunteer with a few outdoor organizations and instruct in several schools focused on building skills, confidence, and judgment for exploring the Colorado backcountry. I find my time patrolling with the IPWA especially rewarding. I look to enhance people's wilderness experience, foster a deeper appreciation for this remarkable place, and educate visitors about the importance of protecting it. I also look for opportunities to train and support our volunteer patrol members so we are better prepared to assist anyone who may need help in the backcountry. A shoutout to Craig T who introduced me to the IPWA—now I'm hooked!

A great IPWA moment or memory: I was recently co-leading a Colorado Mountain Club backpacking trip when one of our group members experienced a medical emergency, requiring us to call Rocky Mountain Rescue. While we waited for SAR to arrive, Dan P was patrolling with IPWA, stopped to check on us, and immediately offered his assistance. It is that spirit of service and camaraderie that makes IPWA so special, and it is a big part of why I volunteer.

Fun fact about me: Growing up, my family rarely ventured into the backcountry, so hiking and camping weren't a big part of my childhood. It was my wife, Sue, whom I met in college, who introduced me to the fun and adventure of the outdoors. I've been making up for lost time ever since—and judging by the amount of time I now spend in the mountains, Sue occasionally wonders what she unleashed!

Where I'm from and where I call home: Sue and I call Lafayette, Colorado, home. After visiting Colorado for several years, we finally decided to make the move in 2020—yes, right in the middle of the pandemic! We came from the Northeast, where we spent several decades living and enjoying the outdoors in New York, Vermont, and Connecticut. We still have a deep appreciation for the Northeast, but once we experienced Colorado, it was hard to imagine calling anywhere else home. Nothing beats Colorado!

A recommendation: I can't pass up the opportunity to make a *few* recommendations:
1. Music: Mike Masse and Trace Bundy. They're very different artists, but both are from the area and put on a terrific show.

2. Backcountry skills: If you're going to explore Colorado's backcountry, please be prepared. I highly recommend *Mountaineering: The Freedom of the Hills.* It's an outstanding resource for anyone looking to build their backcountry knowledge, skills, and confidence.

3. Wilderness First Aid: If you haven't taken a Wilderness First Aid course, I strongly encourage you to do so. You never know when those skills will be needed—and knowing what to do in a backcountry emergency can make a real difference in someone's life.

See More on Our Instagram

Program Updates

Summer Patrols

We only have a week left in our summer season! We're excited to celebrate all our accomplishments soon.

- Number of service activities: 834
- Hours: 4,036
- Miles: 5,127
- Patrols: 717
- Trailhead host shifts: 100
- Trail project days: 3



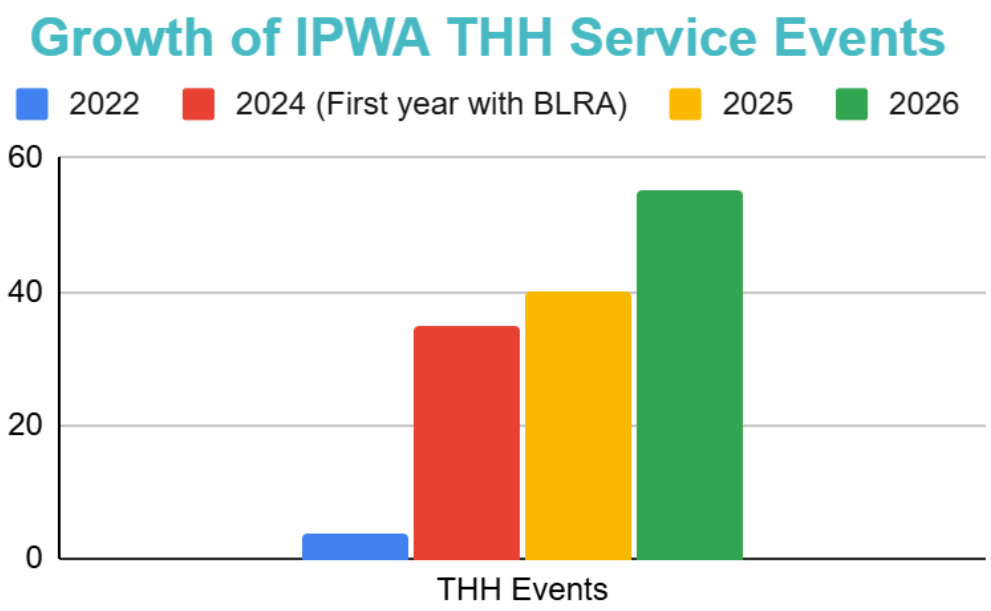
Trailhead Hosting Recap: 2026

Way to Go IPWA and USFS!

Below is a graph showing the Trailhead Host Events Growth over the last 4 years. Spoiler Alert! 2026 was a very good year!

Hats off to - Lyle Skaar/USFS BRD for supporting IPWA's interest in hosting at BLRA, to Jarrod Harris/ORH and his team for supporting us in the field and making us feel part of the BLRA team, to Fiona Garvin (who already has way too many IPWA jobs) for stepping up yet again to co-coordinate trailhead hosting, which allowed IPWA to expand hosting to more locations and ...

most importantly ...to all our generous volunteers that stepped up to make it happen. Well done all!



Volunteer Collected statistics:

Locations	People Seen	Meaningful Interactions	Dogs	Backpackers	Anglers	Horseback
East Portal	1665	170	289	129	111	0
Hessie	651	55	55	64	21	0
BLRA	9908	751	1286	207	318	0
Totals	12224	976	1630	400	450	0



Facebook Group for Volunteers

If you haven't already, join our **Volunteer-Only Facebook Group**! We'll be using this space to cross-post program updates, event registration links, and reminders. It's also a great way to coordinate and connect with fellow volunteers!

Join Here

Calling All Volunteers!

Ever wonder how IPWA is managed?
Have questions or comments for the IPWA Board?

We'd like to invite all current volunteers to attend our monthly virtual IPWA Board of Directors meetings, typically held on the 2nd Wednesday of each month from **6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.** Your presence and participation is encouraged to help increase volunteer engagement and understanding of our organization!

Head over to the IPWA Volunteer Portal for additional information on how to participate.

Volunteer Portal

Wondering How You Can Support the IPWA?

Click the links below to learn more!

Donate

Volunteer!

Become a supporter today for just $10!

Be sure to like and follow us on social media!

Indian Peaks Wilderness Alliance | PO Box 17382 | Boulder, CO 80308 US

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