

September 2026 Newsletter

Indian & James Peak Wilderness News

Brainard Lake Road Closing on 1 October

The Brainard Lake Road will close on the evening of October 1 this year, as Forest Service staff prepare for maintenance and repair projects. While the road typically remains open to non-motorized use throughout the fall and winter, the road will be closed to all uses from October 2 to October 16 to allow staff to conduct surveys and prepare the area for repairs the following year.

The road closure will start from the Brainard Lake Entrance Gate and will apply to the entire road leading up to the upper trailhead parking areas. Visitors interested in recreating in the Brainard National Recreation Area can park at the Brainard Gateway Trailhead and use the Waldrop or Little Raven trails, which run parallel to the road, to access Brainard Lake and the surrounding trailheads.

Winter day-use fees will go into effect starting October 17. Visitors will need to display an America the Beautiful pass or pay the $10 day use fee to park at the Brainard Gateway Trailhead. To read more about the seasonal regulations and view maps of the recreation area please visit the **USFS website**.

Campground Closures

Temperatures and leaves are coming down with the arrival of fall, and with the seasonal transition comes the closing of many campgrounds across the Arapaho Roosevelt Pawnee. While some developed campgrounds stay open later, the

majority will be closed for the 2026 season starting Sunday, September 20. A full list of campground operating dates is available on the **USFS website**.



Backpacking

If you're planning to do some backpacking in the Indian Peaks or James Peak Wildernesses in the coming weeks, here are a few things to keep in mind:

- Remember that the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests remain in Stage 1 Fire Restrictions, which means campfires are prohibited outside of developed and hosted campgrounds and recreation areas. Campfires are *always* prohibited on the east side of the Continental Divide in IPW/JPW.
- If you're heading for a Backcountry Zone with designated campsites in IPW, like Diamond Lake, Jasper Lake, Caribou Lake, or Crater Lake, you must still camp in the designated sites within 30 feet of the campsite marker.
- Animals are preparing for winter! A food storage order is also in effect for many areas, requiring that all food, trash and "smellables" must be stored securely when unattended. Lock food in a vehicle or utilize a bear canister and keep your campsite clean to discourage visits from wildlife. We highly recommend this in areas without a formal food storage order.
- The weather is changing! Even if it feels hot in Boulder or Denver, the alpine is a different story. Check the forecast before you go, pack layers, and be prepared to turn around if the conditions worsen.



Reading Group & Book Exchange

Save the date! December 6, 6 pm. Our year-end gathering will be a book exchange and potluck. All are welcome! Details and sign-up will be in next month's newsletter.

Photo Contest Reminder

The IPWA annual photo contest is open until September 30th! Here is the link to the submission form for the **2026 Photo Contest**. Contest rules and past winners are available on the photo contest page on our website: https://www.indianpeakswilderness.org/photo-contest



Help Wanted!

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

Deputy for Uniform Coordinator: Help our Uniform Coordinator research shirt and jacket options and assist with inventory management! The time commitment is 2-4 hours per month, plus helping with uniforms at Training Day.

Training Coordinator Deputy (2): 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

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 Elisabeth H!

Why I volunteer: Selfishly, it gets me up into the mountains more than I would ordinarily make time for. Plus it's great to meet people on the trail and (hopefully) answer their questions. I truly can't think of a more rewarding volunteer job!

A great IPWA moment or memory: On my very first hike, my mentor and I were having lunch on a bluff at Lake Isabelle, when suddenly a banana peel came flying through the air, landing not far from us on the snowfield. The culprits: a group of young women just over the bluff. They hadn't seen us (in our uniforms, of course). Not the best time to decide to throw a banana peel out in the wilderness. Sheepishly one of them went and picked it up.

Fun fact about me: In 2002 our family took a rafting trip down the Grand Canyon. I got ejected in one of the rapids, and the brief swim (I was maytagged, as they say) so marked me that I became obsessed with the Colorado River. I wanted to run away and become a river guide (at age 51). Instead, I wrote a novel about it, called In The Heart of the Canyon (still available online, if you'll excuse the little bit of promotion).

Where I'm from and where I call home: Originally from New Hampshire, I lived in Vermont, Washington DC, San Francisco, and Seattle before moving to Boulder in 1988. For 37 years we lived in the mountains, raising our 3 children there; but last year we moved into town — I was tired of shoveling the 17 icy steps up from the garage up to our kitchen. Now I can walk to a grocery store, a coffee shop, a library, and Open Space. Very different!

A recommendation: I just finished reading Whistler, by Ann Patchett, about 2 family members reuniting after a long separation. Simple and profound. I hope it wins her a Pulitzer. (Also, for my upcoming movie group get-together, I chose a film called The Good One, about a father-daughter hiking trip. Can't vouch for it, since I haven't seen it, but it looked engaging.)

Program Updates

Trail Projects

Our final IPWA Trail Maintenance Project of the season was conducted in the James Peak Wilderness on Saturday, September 19th. An IPWA crew of eight led by USFS Forestry Technician Emma Brock used draw knives, pruning saws and a crosscut saw to prepare for a bridge replacement along the South Boulder Creek Trail #900. We hiked about 2.5 miles to where a tree had been felled earlier by the USFS. We cut a 24-foot section of it and then de-branched and de-barked it, producing a 24-inch diameter log. Next year it will be cut it into two 12-foot stringer logs, finished with a flat tread and used to replace the two broken ones that span the creek at that location.

We then headed up to a second felled tree near another broken bridge but soon met an uncooperative bull moose blocking the trail. After awhile, the crew voted to turn back home. We had enough energy to work another log but probably not enough to outrun a moose.

The morning started with a beautiful rainbow and ended with a stiff cold wind. In between, we enjoyed getting some good work done together!









Recent Outreach



National Public Lands Day Celebration
In mid-September, IPWA celebrated National Public Lands Day with partners from the **USFS** and **Preserve Rollins Pass.** Visitors stopping at three of the agencies' stations were rewarded with a voucher for a free day at participating public lands sites. At the IPWA station, our volunteers shared IPWA's mission with visitors, recruited new volunteers, and asked visitors what wilderness means to them. Visitors were enthusiastic about sharing their thoughts and reflections on wilderness, a few of which are below:

· *"We have different paths and then we come to the wilderness and together are humbled."*
· *"Your awareness and senses expand."*
· *"It creates community as well as intimacy."*
· *"I'm excited to share it with others and protect it for the future."*
· *"It keeps us alive."*
· *"We're guests."*
· *"It reminds you of our food systems and drinking water."*
· *"It's the oldest source of wisdom."*
· *"It's important to protect public lands and that's why alliances such as yours matter."*

Summer Patrol Updates

October is our last month of summer patrols! We're excited to still be out there to help the public as conditions and regulations change along with the seasons. We've

conducted 645 patrols so far this summer over 4,592 miles and 3,692 hours, with more to come!



Naturalist Corner

The James Peak (JP) and Indian Peaks (IP) Wilderness Areas are a preserve for the fauna and flora of Colorado. They are a place where visitors can see how Colorado once looked. Non-native plants and animals are theoretically banned from the Wildernesses. So much for theory, weeds are everywhere.

By Rob Pudim



Read The Article

Get Involved

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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