

Grand County Wilderness Group 2024 TRAINING

Volunteer DOs



Operate within the scope of the Grand County Wilderness Group VSA



Represent the USFS and GCWG in a professional, positive manner



Serve in the capacity of contacting the public to provide information and education



**Collect data:
Engagement vs.
Contact**



Follow rules/policies/safety guidelines provided by the GCWG Handbook



Only answer questions that you know the answer to, or know how to find the correct answer

Volunteer DOs

- Go through the proper channels to report the needs of trailheads/bathrooms
- Collect trail condition information
- Document and report violations/illegal activity (forms in cabin)
 - Gather adequate details of violation reports
 - Collect photographic evidence of violations **ONLY** if it can be done discreetly
- Exit situations that make you feel uncomfortable

Trail Ambassador & Trail Assessment

You are a trail ambassador anytime you are hiking on national forest or wilderness trails. Members should wear their Volunteer GCWG Shirt and, if you have one, your forest service volunteer Badge.

In an effort to be more supportive of hikers, being an ambassador is encouraged on weekends and holidays when the hiker numbers are highest. It offers, to weekend hikers the availability of a knowledgeable, helpful trail volunteer. Bring along your trail book to answer any questions. Always hike with a friend.

Being a trail ambassador is one of the easiest ways to meet your volunteer hours quota.

Ambassador Duties include:

- Being a **cheerful presence** on the trail
- **Answering questions** about the trails,
- **Sharing information** about regulations, since many times that is all that is needed. Examples are: The Indian Peak's Wilderness leash law or camping 100 ft. from water (40 good strides equals Approximately 100 ft). Remember we are not law enforcement.
- **Doing trail assessment, and reporting back** on the trail conditions.

To report trail conditions you will need to use the Headwaters trail alliance volunteer reporting form.

Goto headwaterstrails.org/trail-volunteer-forms

- Fill in your name and personal info.
- Fill date and trail info.
- Check Trail Assessment.
- For Hours Worked on Trail, put the Number of hours that you hiked.
- For Type of Maintenance, select Other and enter Trail Ambassador
- For Number of Trees and Drains cleared enter 0.
- Next is the Trail Assessment, Fill out any thing that needs work.
- You can enter no work needed, if nothing was found.
- Submit the Report.

- **Report shortages** of sign in sheets in the trailhead boxes to the person responsible for that box. [Go to Registration Boxes](#) to find the person(s) responsible.

Trail Assessment Hikes are being added this year, To see a list of these hikes and to signup for them go to [assessment hikes](#). Below is a list trails that GCWG supports for trail assessment along with the trailhead and registration box.

[Click here](#) to order your volunteer badge

Each individual needs to record their time for trail hosting. Hours are sent to the member tallying our volunteer hours for the Forest Service. The Forest Service uses these hours are used in grant applications and reports. Hours for being a trail ambassador are from portal to portal. (when you leave and return to your house or "portal").

Volunteer DON'Ts

- Use confrontational language or participate in discrimination, harassment, or threatening behavior.
- Enforce regulations by asking for identification or asking to check permits. It is OK to help a visitor make sure they have the right permit if they're unsure.
- Report violations without the proper detail to officially document them.
- Disturb a visitor's personal belongings, even if they appear abandoned.
- Post unofficial signage/posters at trailheads.
- Initiate contact with individuals where drugs, alcohol, firearms, or other suspicious activity may be taking place.
- Engage in trail maintenance without prior approval

SAFETY



Safety policy should be provided through GCWG



Report injuries to HTA/GCWG

Rendering Aid to Visitors

Uncompensated volunteers conducting good faith emergency care are covered by Good Samaritan Laws.

Introduce yourself and ask for permission before assisting.

Take very detailed information if you must leave scene to call for additional help.

Only offer aid up to your level of training and experience.

Good Samaritan Laws do not cover medical professionals who have a duty to act, misconduct, or gross negligence



Indian Peaks Wilderness Rules & Regulations Review

Hiking & Camping

Number of hikers cannot exceed 12 people (or a combined total of 12 people and livestock where allowed)

Day hikers do not need a permit to hike in IPW, unless in a group of 8 or more people. (QUIZ: How do visitors acquire a large group permit?)

Overnight permits in Indian Peaks
Wilderness required June 1 – September 15

No camping within 100' of lakes, streams, and trails (QUIZ: how many average adult steps is this?)



Hiking & Camping

Most common group size issues at Monarch Lake include:

Organized events without proper permit

Large groups that either do not have a large group permit, and/or exceed 12 heartbeats

Large groups that agree to split up, but don't follow through



Pets

Pets are required to be on a leash at all times in Indian Peaks Wilderness AND at Monarch Lake.

Hunting dogs permitted off-leash while actively hunting

Note: In some areas (like Devil's Thumb Trailhead) there is often a section of trail between the trailhead and the Wilderness boundary where pets are allowed off-leash. Once visitors cross the Wilderness boundary, pets must be leashed.



Potential Pet Problems Include:

Dogs off leash

Pet waste/dog bags left behind

Dog-traffic accidents

Aggressive dogs

Dog-wildlife conflict

Injuries to pets



Potential Pet Problems Include:

Many dogs lose their sense of appropriate territory in a wilderness environment and become uncharacteristically aggressive or reactive.

Be prepared to discuss problems with the intention of educating pet owners and reducing risks.

If they INSIST their dog is perfect, explain that they must set a good example



Potential Pet Problems Include:

If you witness a dog bite or receive a report, do your best to make sure the parties exchange information.

Highly encourage victim to seek medical care; usually the hospital will report the bite to Animal Control.

What does Animal Control do?



Mechanized, wheeled, and motorized devices

Bicycles, chainsaws, carts, wagons, portage wheels, strollers, and any other motorized/mechanized devices are strictly prohibited in Wilderness.

Wheelchairs allowed.

Drones legally can fly OVER Wilderness but can't be operated or landed within Wilderness.



Organized Events

Organized events such as races and competitions are prohibited in Wilderness Areas

Organized groups (i.e. school groups, running clubs) must abide by large group regulations



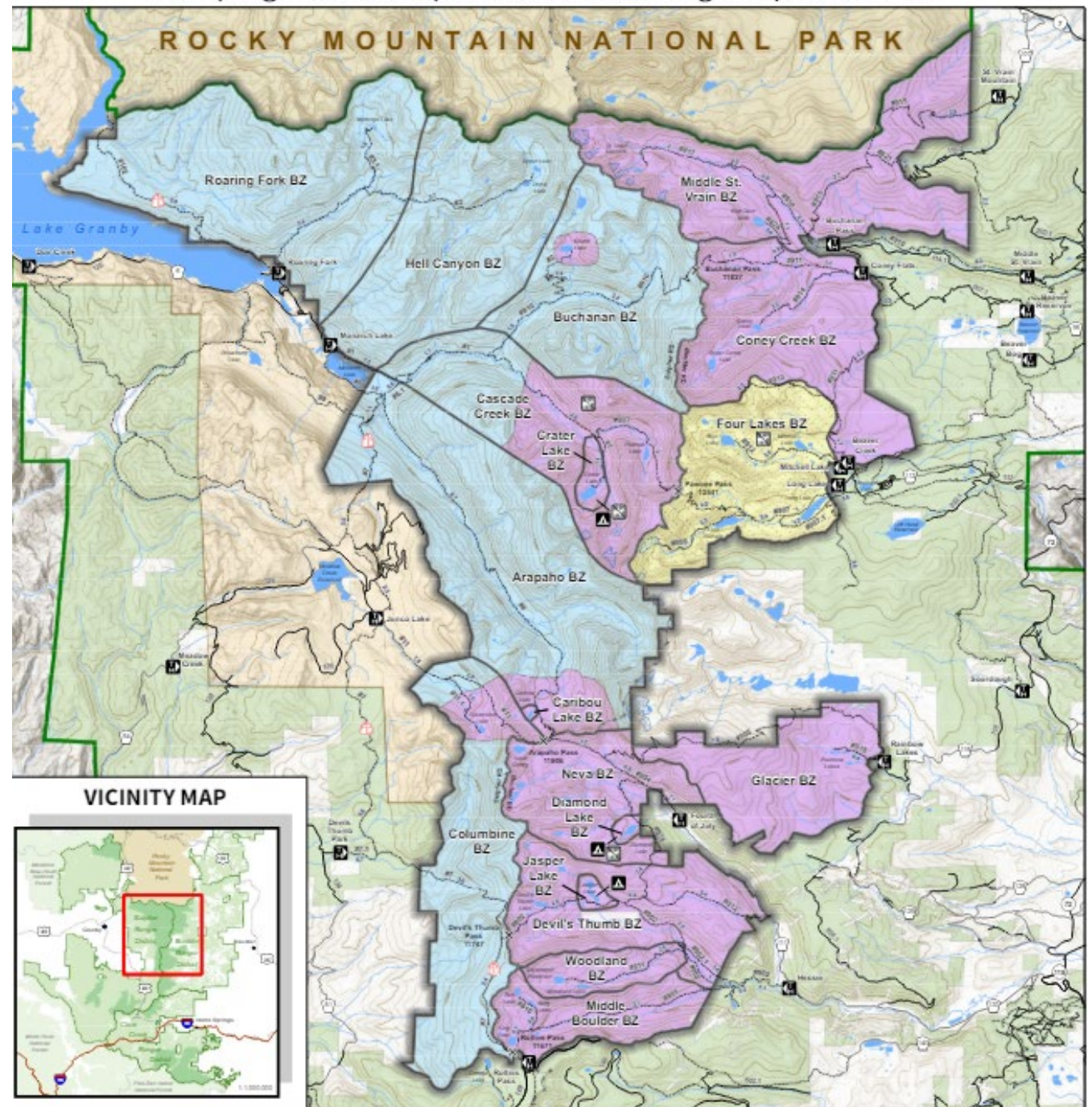
Special Uses

Special Use Permit is required for research, commercial, and guiding activities.

If you suspect that there are illegal activities like this, REPORT.

If you're unsure, chat up the group leader. Be discreet, DO NOT mention their SUP or their authority.

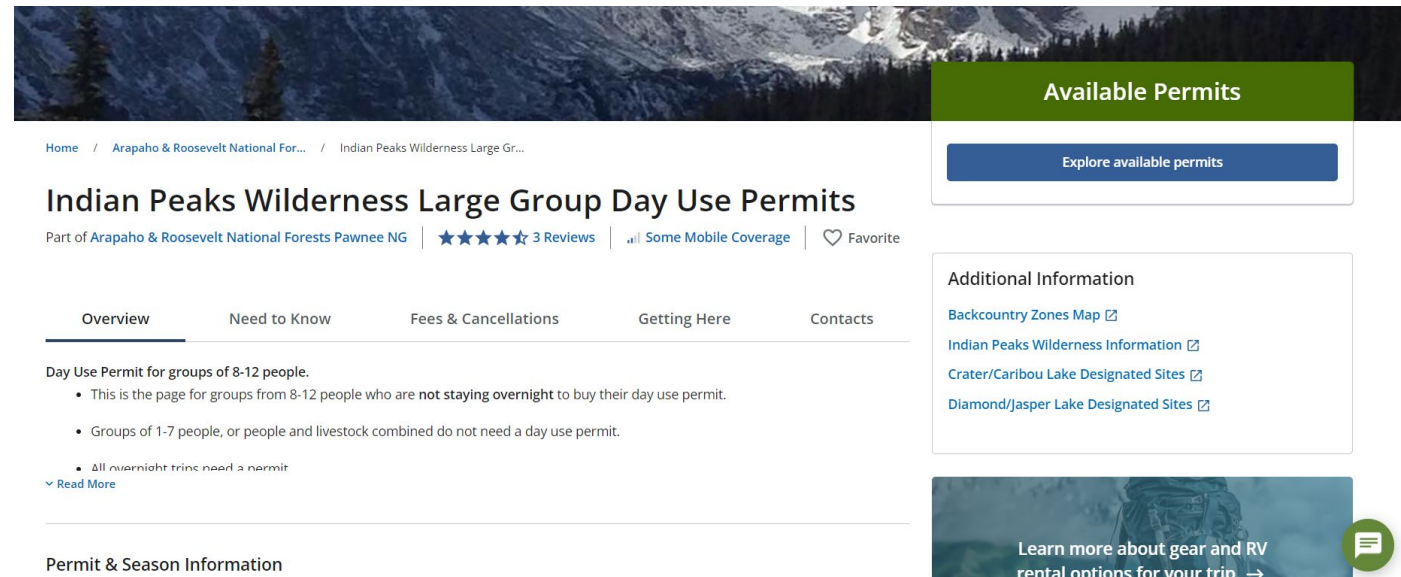
Backcountry Zones



How to Acquire a Permit

Recreation.gov

- Full-Season in Advance: Visitors can acquire permits from the day permits are released (usually March 1) through Sept 15
- 3 Days in Advance: 25% of permits become available 3 days before the trip start date. This allows people to get a permit last minute
- Large group Day Use: Can be done same day



The screenshot shows the Recreation.gov website for Indian Peaks Wilderness Large Group Day Use Permits. The page features a header with a mountain landscape image and a green 'Available Permits' button. Below the header, the title 'Indian Peaks Wilderness Large Group Day Use Permits' is displayed, followed by a breadcrumb trail: 'Home / Arapaho & Roosevelt National For... / Indian Peaks Wilderness Large Gr...'. The page includes a star rating of 3 reviews, a 'Some Mobile Coverage' icon, and a 'Favorite' button. A navigation bar with tabs for 'Overview', 'Need to Know', 'Fees & Cancellations', 'Getting Here', and 'Contacts' is present. The 'Overview' tab is selected, showing a 'Day Use Permit for groups of 8-12 people.' section with bullet points: 'This is the page for groups from 8-12 people who are **not staying overnight** to buy their day use permit.', 'Groups of 1-7 people, or people and livestock combined do not need a day use permit.', and 'All overnight trips need a permit'. A 'Read More' link is provided. On the right, an 'Additional Information' section lists links for 'Backcountry Zones Map', 'Indian Peaks Wilderness Information', 'Crater/Caribou Lake Designated Sites', and 'Diamond/Jasper Lake Designated Sites'. At the bottom right, a banner promotes 'Learn more about gear and RV rental options for your trip.' with a speech bubble icon.

Available Permits

Explore available permits

Indian Peaks Wilderness Large Group Day Use Permits

Part of Arapaho & Roosevelt National Forests Pawnee NG | ★★★★★ 3 Reviews | 📶 Some Mobile Coverage | ❤ Favorite

Overview | Need to Know | Fees & Cancellations | Getting Here | Contacts

Day Use Permit for groups of 8-12 people.

- This is the page for groups from 8-12 people who are **not staying overnight** to buy their day use permit.
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Read More

Additional Information

- [Backcountry Zones Map](#)
- [Indian Peaks Wilderness Information](#)
- [Crater/Caribou Lake Designated Sites](#)
- [Diamond/Jasper Lake Designated Sites](#)

Learn more about gear and RV rental options for your trip. →

What do I want visitors to do with their permit?

Big picture: As FPOs, we need proof that they booked the right zone for the right dates.

Campers must have either a printed copy or a PDF/photo of their permit saved on their phone **that is carried with them on their trip.**

Their email confirmation does NOT count, it doesn't display enough information for us to verify that they have the right permit.

Not having their permit on them can result in a fine.

Quiz

What lakes on the west side of Indian Peaks Wilderness require campers to camp in designated sites only, year-round?

Caribou and Crater Lake

Reporting Violations



What should be reported to the USFS?

- Violations that cannot be solved through education
- Repeated violations after education
- Egregious violations (motorized vehicles in Wilderness)

No Report Needed

- Events where you can successfully connect with the visitor to educate them on the rules and regulations
- Visitor ceased behavior after education

How to report violations

- Incident Report Forms are in the binders at the cabins.
- Forms should include as much detail as possible, including where the activity took place and that violators repeated behavior despite being educated
- We will pick up the forms 1x/week to enter into Law Enforcement reporting system.

Egregious Violations

- Activity likely to be occurring during extended period of time or repeated
- Examples include suspected illegal guiding operations, illegal trail work, uncooperative visitors who are spending extended time in the Wilderness, motorized/mechanized equipment use in the Wilderness, etc.
- There is no guarantee that there will be a follow-up, but there's a chance that a Ranger can get there in time to address the situation
- On weekends, the Grand PLACES Ambassador will contact the rangers if they are in the area
- During the week, the GCWG Liaison should contact the Forest Service Liaison

The Wilderness Crew is on Thursday through Sunday and will be in and out of the backcountry during these days.

Dangerous/Emergency Situations

Danger to the public and/or affects large areas of the Forest

Examples: life-threatening activities, violence, wildfire, drunk/belligerent visitors, etc.

Get out and call 911 – you can call 911 without cell service*

Grand County Sheriff: 970-725-3343 (dispatch line)

Authority of the Resource and Leave No Trace

- Visitors are more likely to change their behavior if they understand the impacts it has on the natural world.
- A single person trained in Leave No Trace reaches 256 others in their lifetime with a vital education to protect the outdoors.
- Explain the “why”. People are 5x more likely to want to protect the outdoors if they understand the reasoning behind ethics (such as Leave No Trace Ethics)
- 9 out of 10 people still need Leave No Trace skills and information to make a greater positive impact on the environment

Authority of the Resource Video

The attempt to transfer the authority from the manager, ranger or agency, to those things in nature.

The explanation of the reason behind how behaviors can negatively impact the natural world.

https://youtu.be/IdLGzruLmz0?si=m_gHNM1wKdz7BgUN

Authority of the Resource

Scenario:

You are staffed at Monarch Cabin and notice a bunch of visitors huddled around one area taking photos. You notice that they're about 30 feet away from a mama and baby moose. How would you address this situation?

7 Leave No Trace Principles:

1. Plan ahead and prepare
2. Travel and camp on durable surfaces
3. Dispose of waste properly
4. Leave what you find
5. Minimize campfire impacts
6. Respect wildlife
7. Be considerate of other visitors

Why Teach Leave No Trace

9 out of 10 people visiting the outdoors are not informed about Leave No Trace

There are 13 billion trips into the outdoors planned each year in the US alone

Grand County sees 3.5 million visitors a year

Visitors play a critical role to the economy both locally and for the state

- In 2022 Colorado saw \$27.7 billion in tourism spending

Many impacts by humans are preventable



IMPACTS **FROM OUTDOOR** **RECREATION AFFECT**

- Soil
- wildlife
- water
- other visitors

- Vegetation
- Cultural Resources
- Campfires

Immediate vs. Cumulative Impacts

- Trash
- Dog poop
- Wildfire
- Wetland damage
- Overcrowding
- Water pollution

- Trail Braiding
- Vegetation damage
- Campfire scars
- Trash
- Soil compaction
- Wildlife imprinting

Cumulative Impact

Notice what happens over time when more people recreate at the same place over time.



What are ways these impacts can be minimized?



- Overpopulated recreational sites can cause hazards and safety concerns for humans and wildlife.
- A high increase in recreation to one area creates both immediate and cumulative impacts over time on the natural resources.





According to the CDC, one day's pet waste can contain
-several billion fecal coliform bacteria, Giardia, eggs of roundworms, hookworms and tapeworms



Trash lasts a long time
-plastic bags can last up to 20 years
-disposable masks can last up to-450 years
-dog poop bags can last up to-20 years



**Americans pay \$2.9 billion to fight
fires on public lands.**

85% of wildfires are human caused.







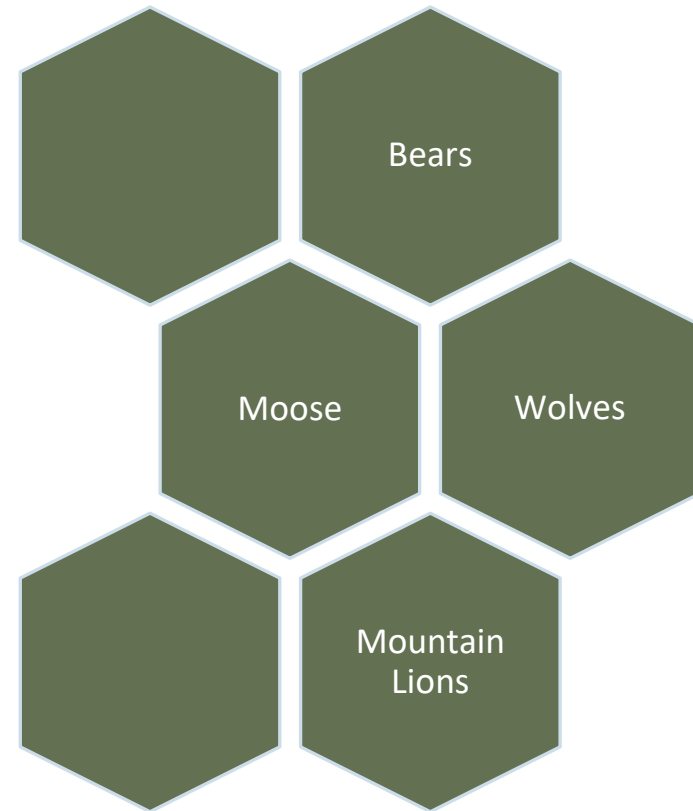
Trash is the #1 cause of bear reports in Colorado

Once bears are conditioned to go to trash receptacles for food, they often become euthanized

In 2020-120 bears were euthanized in CO; nearly twice as many as in 2018.



Wildlife Safety



Moose

- Give moose plenty of space. Thumb should cover moose with arm extended out and holding your thumb out. (Thumb rule)
- If it hasn't seen you, try to keep it that way
- If it does see you, talk softly and back away slowly
- If it charges, run in a zig zag pattern and try to put large item between you and the moose
- Watch for warning signs (ears back, snorting, hair on back raised, bluff charges)



Bears

- Give bear space
- Do not run
- Group together, pick up
- Face bear, back away slowly
- Make yourself big, make lots of noise



Mountain Lions

- Give space, and give lion escape route
- DO NOT RUN
- Stand ground or back away slowly
- Face lion, maintain eye contact
- Look as large as you can
- DO NOT bend or crouch
- If lion attacks, fight back
- Report lion encounters



Wolves

- Make Noise
- Give them plenty of space
- Keep pets on leash
- If you cannot retreat, stand your ground and look as large as you can
- Report wolf encounters and sightings
- Low chance of wolf encounter



All Wildlife

- Give space, and give animal escape route
- Do not approach
- DO NOT FEED WILDLIFE



Wildlife that obtain human food can lose their fear of humans and develop attractions to human inhabited areas, turning wild animals aggressive and potentially dangerous panhandlers.

Such animals tend to be euthanized by land managers due to their safety risk



Thank you and have a
great season!

Questions?