



Indian Peaks Wilderness Alliance (IPWA)

2024 Annual Report

Hello IPWA Volunteers, Supporters, and Friends,

In 2024, the Indian Peaks Wilderness Alliance (IPWA) remained steadfast in its mission to preserve and protect the Indian Peaks and James Peak Wilderness Areas. Thanks to the dedication of our 101 volunteers, we conducted 461 patrols (winter and summer), covered more than 3,500 miles, and engaged with nearly 45,000 members of the public - 17% more than last year - educating visitors to help ensure that these cherished landscapes continue to thrive for future generations.

This year, we welcomed 17 new volunteers to our team. Additionally, we continued our annual Photo Contest, and this report proudly features some of the incredible winning images. In addition to our Trailhead Host days, we also provided weekend volunteers at two popular Brainard Lake Recreation Area trailhead huts (Long Lake TH and Mitchell Lake TH).

IPWA is not alone in working to protect Wilderness in Colorado, and with several “sister” organizations, we helped plan and implement a Wilderness Alliance Gathering, held in Keystone in October. Eleven of the 14 Wilderness groups in Colorado attended informational sessions and networking events in conjunction with Forest Service staff.

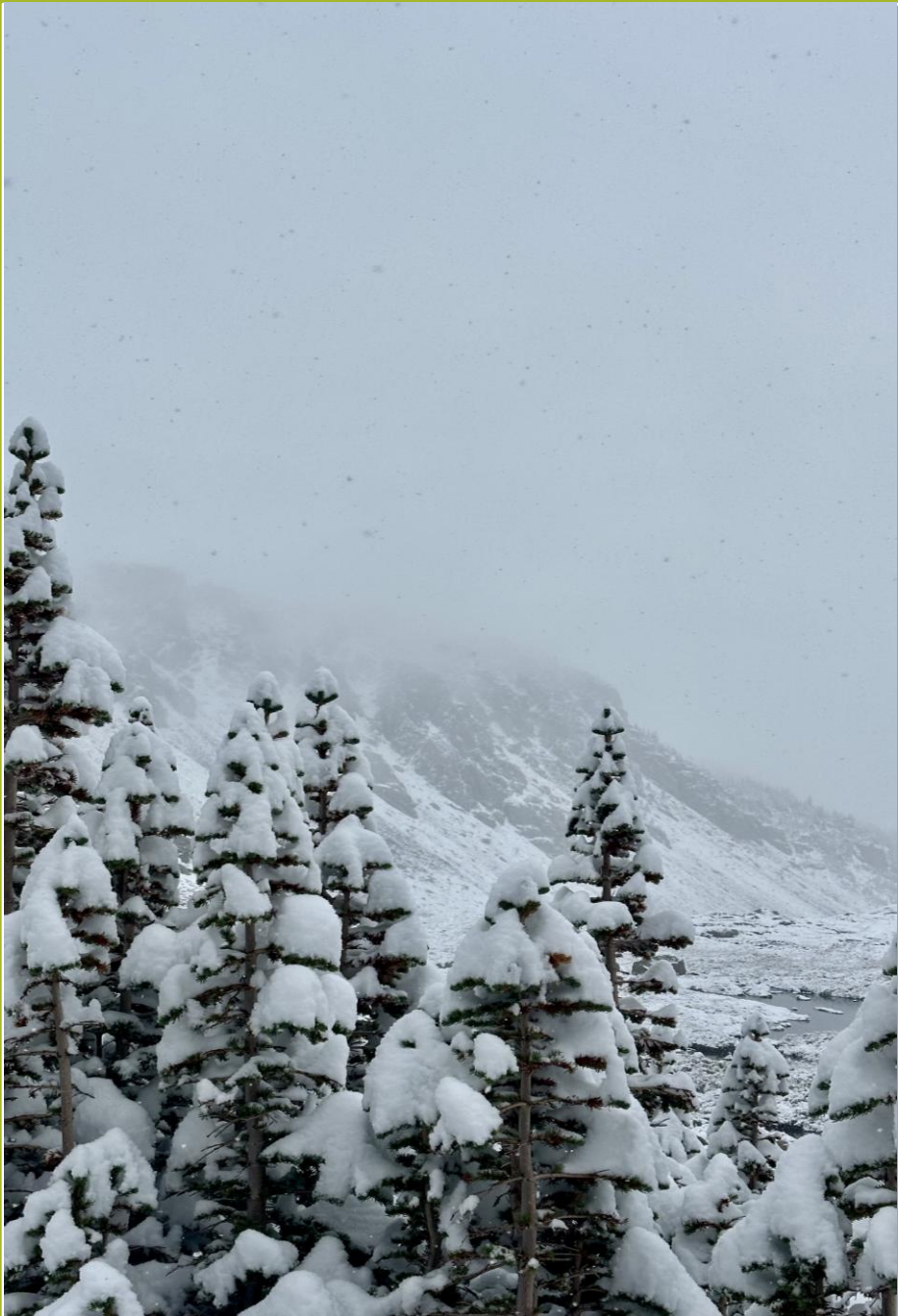
Financially, we remain in a strong position thanks to the generosity of our donors. This support has enabled us to allocate funds for impactful “brick and mortar” projects that will benefit the U.S. Forest Service, such as replacing kiosks and trail signage or funding more trail cameras to assess visitor usage. We also initiated an Endowment Fund in 2024 and have received over \$10,000 from donors keen to ensure IPWA’s financial stability in future years.

Our success would not be possible without our dedicated volunteers—including our hardworking Board of Directors, the U.S. Forest Service Boulder Ranger District, and our supporters. Thank you for your unwavering commitment to protecting these special wilderness areas. We look forward to another year of stewardship, education, and advocacy.

Fiona Garvin
Chair, IPWA Board of Directors



Photo Credit: Bill Bowman



Our Mission

The Indian Peaks
Wilderness Alliance's
mission is to "Preserve
and Protect the Indian
Peaks and James Peak
Wilderness Areas."

Photo Credit: Iona Binnie

“The idea of wilderness needs no defense. It only needs defenders.”
— Edward Abbey

Your support for the Indian Peaks Wilderness Alliance helped us actively protect the Indian Peaks and James Peaks Wilderness areas which provide an array of important benefits to our communities such as:

- Clean water and clean air
- Protected plant and wildlife habitat
- Economic value
- Opportunities for solitude and outdoor adventure
- Scientific knowledge of natural processes
- Fire education and wildfire prevention

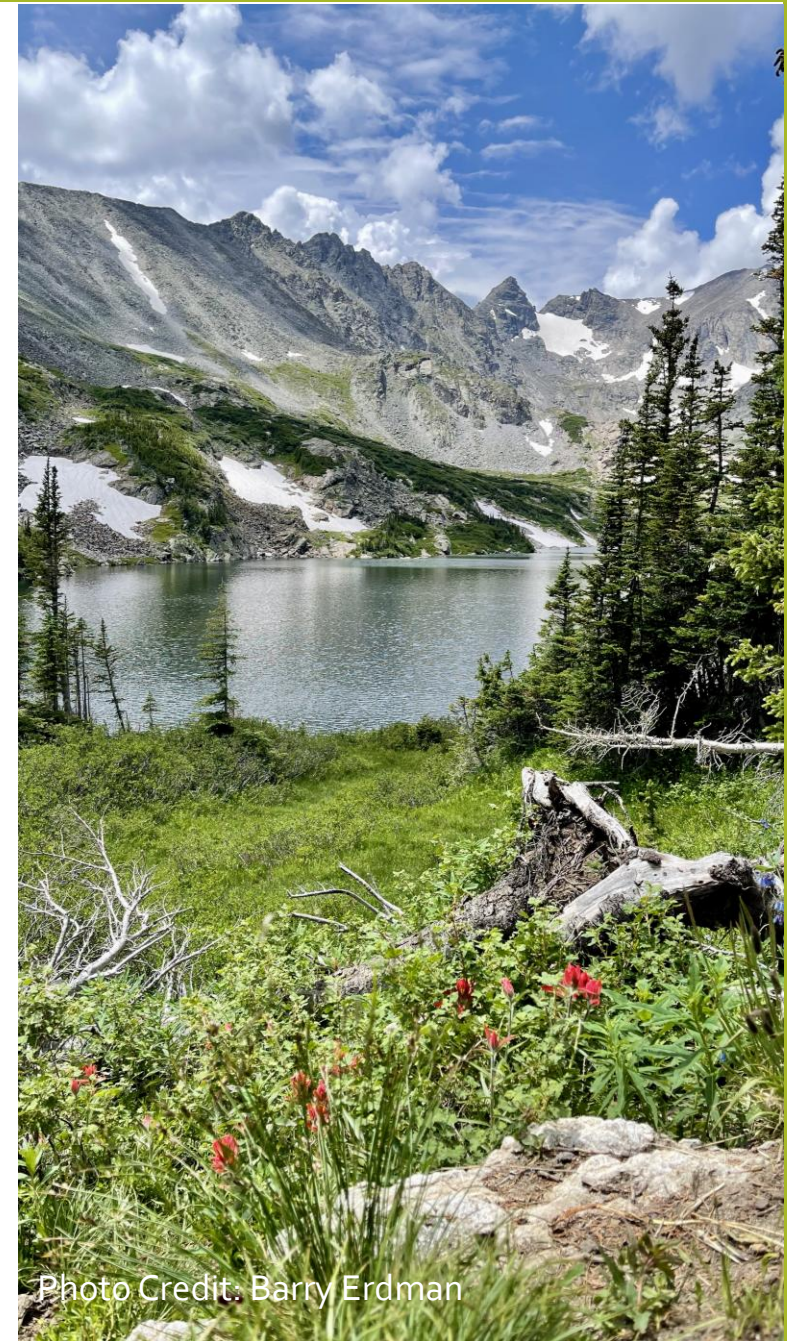


Photo Credit: Barry Erdman

Our History – celebrating 40 years!

In October of 1978, the Indian Peaks Wilderness was designated by Congress as part of the Wilderness Preservation System. With its new designation, it started to receive more and more visitation and impacts.

In 1980, a citizens' working group was organized by 3 pioneering women - Dr. Anne Forrest Ketchin, Jan Robertson, and Anne Vickery. In collaboration with the USFS, this group produced a set of 27 points for preserving and protecting the Indian Peaks, and in 1985 IPWA was officially incorporated as a Colorado Non-Profit organization.



Photo Credit: Nina Larsen Reed



Photo Credit: Bill Bowman

Our Wilderness Areas

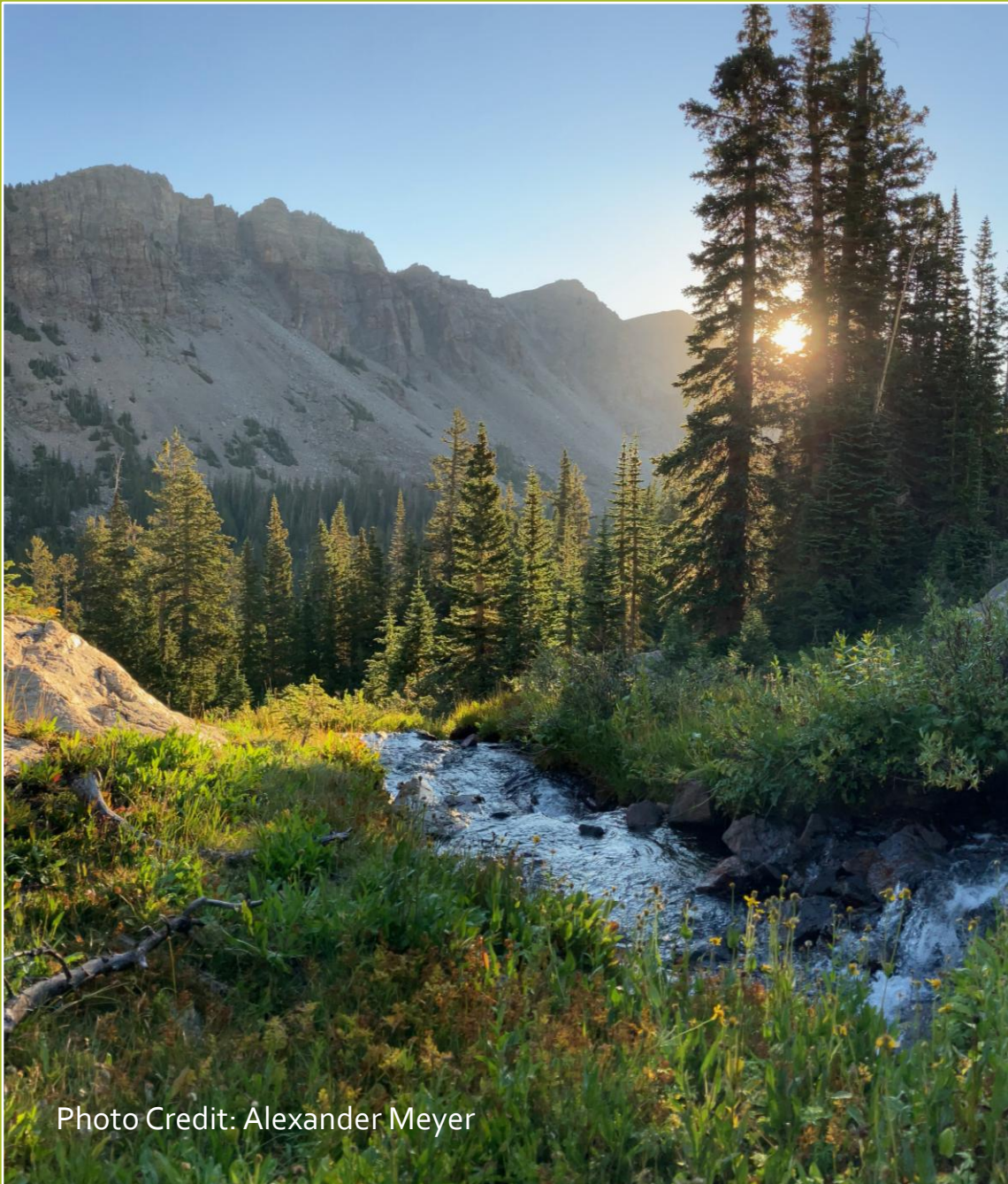


Photo Credit: Alexander Meyer

Indian Peaks Wilderness

The Indian Peaks Wilderness is among the top five most visited wilderness areas in the country with ~ 150,000+ visitors per season.

~30-minute drive from Boulder,
~ 60-minutes from Denver.

Situated within the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests.

Peaks were named by Ellsworth Bethel in the early 1900s after native American tribes that visited/populated the area or were based in the West.

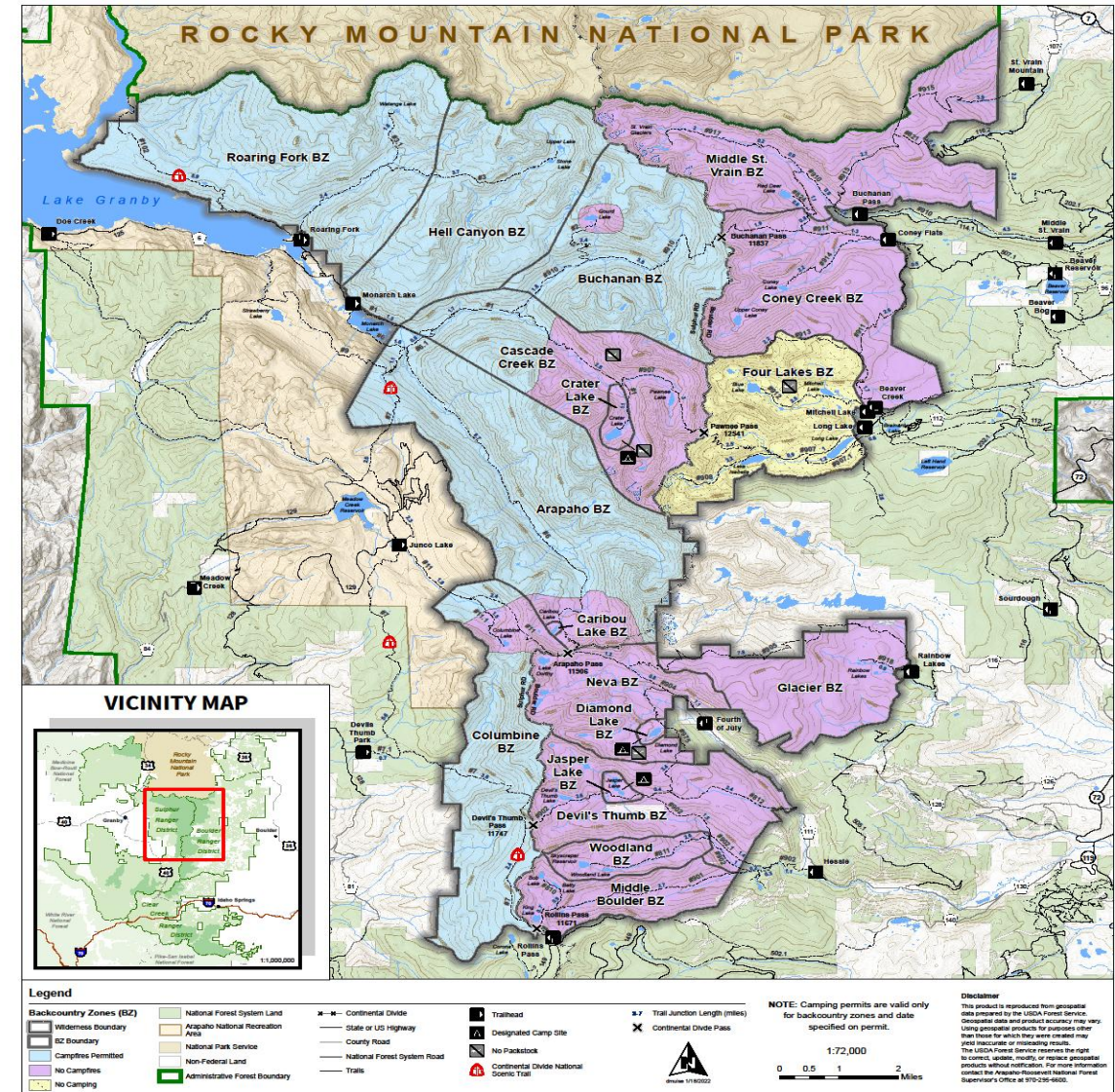
Indian Peaks Wilderness

The IPW was designated as wilderness in 1978 by an act of Congress and encompasses approx. 75,000 acres.

- Originally proposed to be part of Rocky Mtn National Park by Enos Mills, the IPW is located just south of the Park.
- The IPW stretches 18 miles north/south and 15 miles east-west at the widest point.
- Elevations range from 8,300' to 13,500'.
- 7 peaks over 13,000'.
- 28 maintained trails covering ~ 130 miles.
- Camping permits required (one of two Wildernesses in Colorado which requires permits).

INDIAN PEAKS WILDERNESS AREA

Camping Permit Required June 1 through September 15



James Peak Wilderness

James Peak Wilderness receives heavy usage summer and winter, with ATVs and snowmobiles using the old Rollins Pass road to access the Wilderness as well as thousands of backpackers, anglers, and hunters each year.

~60-minute drive from Boulder,
~ 60 minutes from Denver.

Situated within the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests, JPW encompasses three main lake basins, plus access to James Peak and western slope trails.



Photo Credit: Miriam Rosenblum



James Peak Wilderness

The JPW was designated as wilderness in 2002 by an act of Congress and was signed into existence by George W. Bush.

Approx. 17,000 acres, with the majority on the East side of the Continental Divide.

It is situated within 4 distinct Colorado counties – Boulder, Clear Creek, Gilpin, and Grand.

Named after Edwin James, a botanist who was part of Stephen Long's expedition to Colorado in 1820.

Approx. 20 miles of trails.

Elevation from 9,000' to over 13,000'.

Upper montane, sub-alpine, alpine ecosystems.

The Winter Park Ski train from Denver goes underneath the JPW at the Moffat Tunnel!

Our USFS Boulder Ranger District Partner



IPWA "assists the Boulder Ranger District by providing a volunteer presence in the Indian Peaks and James Peak Wilderness Areas that promotes responsible visitor use and supports the preservation of the Wilderness and the areas natural resources."

IPWA and USFS:

- Work together under a joint Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which defines roles, responsibilities, and working relationships.
- Conduct joint volunteer training annually
- Plan and execute joint projects annually
- Volunteers complete annual service agreements and RAW (Risk Awareness Worksheet)

Alliances

We also partner with and form alliances with a diverse range of organizations to achieve our mission.



Current and Past Alliances

- Vista Recreation
- Bear Vault
- Boulder Bookstore
- Bryan Mountain Ski Patrol
- Colorado Mountain Club (CMC)
- Eldora Ski Area
- National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance (NWSA)
- Poudre Wilderness Volunteers
- Eagle Summit Wilderness Volunteers
- University of Colorado
- and more!



Photo Credit: Jeff Sampson

Our Volunteers

Volunteer Impact

Our 118 volunteers performed 461 patrols in 2024, covering over 3,500 miles (winter and summer). While these figures vary year-to-year, we are proud to hit our target of 3,000-4,000 miles per year. We encountered 44,845 members of the public – a number which keeps rising each year.

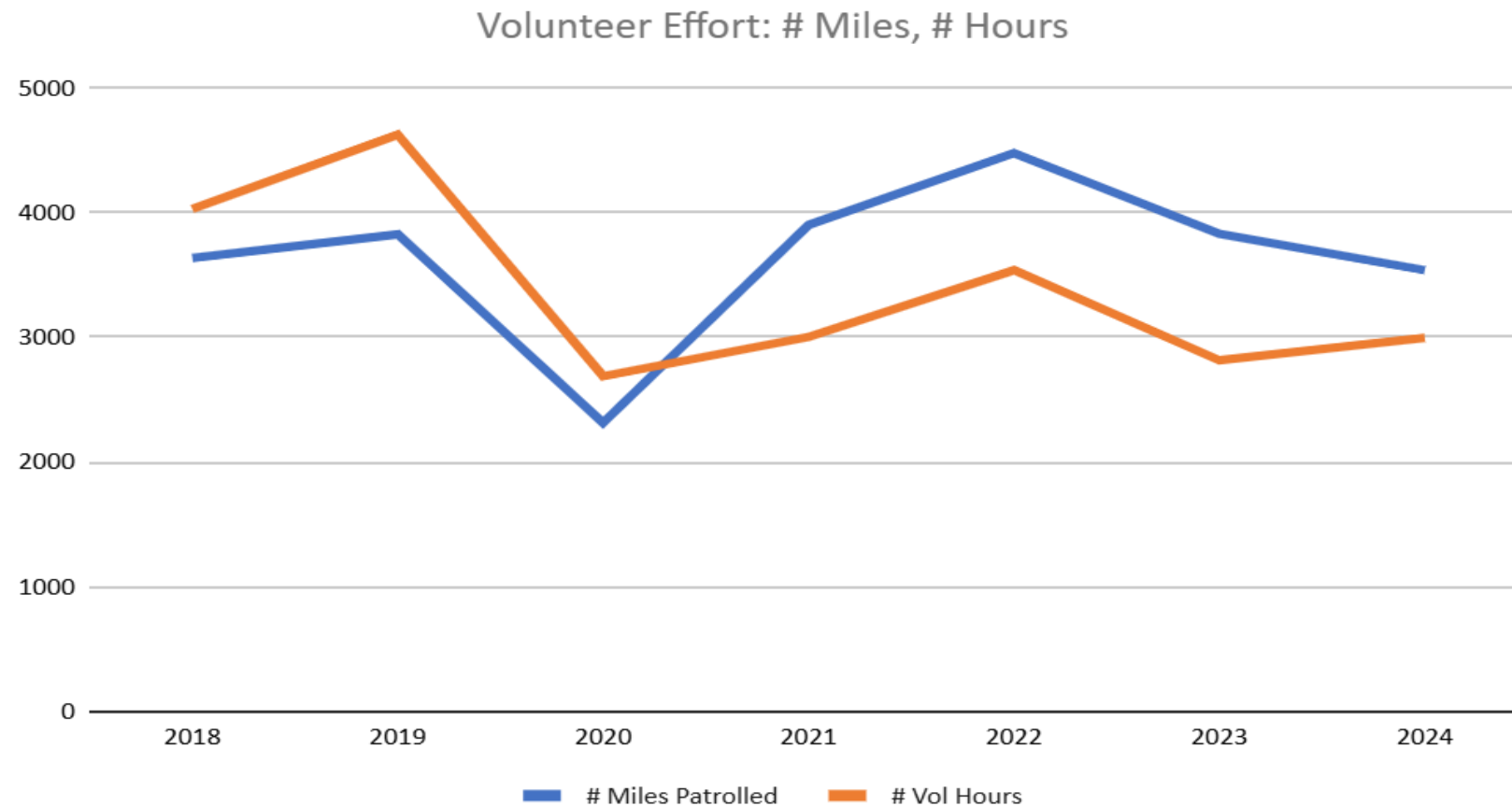




Photo Credit: Jeff Sampson

Our Programs

Our Programs

To “Preserve and Protect the Indian Peaks and James Peak Wilderness Areas” we implement four main programs with our 100% volunteer workforce.



Patrols



Education



Advocacy



Restoration

Wilderness Patrol: Summer

In the 2024 Summer Patrol season, IPWA volunteers:

Spent 2,533 hours on 384 patrols, covering 2,977 miles

Contacted 42,710 members of the public; a 17% increase from 2023

Counted 6,346 dogs – a 9% increase from 2023, of which 455 were off-leash (an 11% decrease!)

Removed 100 illegal fire rings



Photo Credit: Nick Walden

Trailhead Host Programs

Our Trailhead Host program hosted two days at East Portal Trailhead (James Peak Wilderness) and one day at Hessie Trailhead (Indian Peaks Wilderness). We also staffed the two Brainard Lake Trailheads (Long Lk, Mitchell Lk) on most summer weekend mornings.

We contacted 7,322 visitors during Trailhead Host days, including close to 200 backpackers heading into the three main lake basins of JPW.



Wilderness Patrols: Winter

Our volunteers patrol the Brainard Lake Recreation Area and James Peak Area from the end of hunting season to the start of the summer season .

IPWA Winter Patrollers complete additional classroom and field training in:

Basic wilderness first aid and CPR

Radio and satellite device communications

In 2023-2024, winter patrol season, IPWA Volunteers:

Completed 77 patrols

Logged 464 volunteer hours

Skied or snowshoed over 544 miles

Contacted more than 2,144 visitors

Encountered 64 bikes and 296 dogs (68 off-leash)



Wilderness Restoration



In 2024, IPWA Volunteers worked to remove 44 trees impacting wilderness trails. We completed three trail work projects in conjunction with USFS staff. We anticipate increased efforts in 2025, both in tree work and trail maintenance!

Wilderness Advocacy and Outreach

In addition to Trailhead Hosting, we participated in 3 Farmers Markets in Boulder (co-tabling with USFS) and one Farmers Market in Louisville. Many folks stopped to look at maps, ask questions about trails, and learn about what IPWA does.

We also reach over 5,000 contacts regularly through our monthly newsletter, our website, and our social media channels.



Supporting Education: Wilderness Research Grants

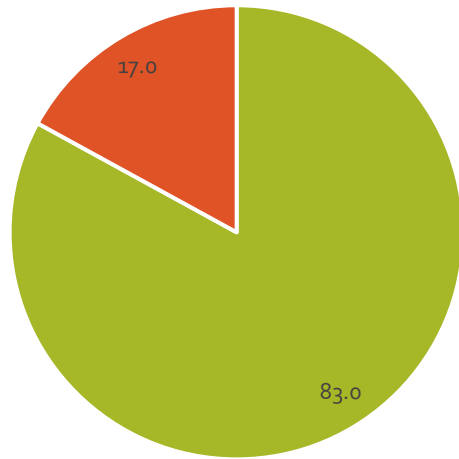
In 2024, IPWA funded four post-graduate research grants:

- Rachel Billings: Genetic and Acoustic Characterization of Hybrid Fitness and Hybrid Zone Dynamics
- Annie Meeder: Tracing Alpine Frontiers: Plant-Microbe Interactions and Vegetation Shifts
- Charles Oliver: The Microbiome of Disappearing Alpine Glaciers
- Jacob Watts: Understanding Lichen Adaptation and Community Changes



2024 Financials

IPWA Expenses 2024



- Total Program Expenses (83%)
- Total Admin Expenses (17%)

Total Revenue:	\$42,789
Total Expenses:	\$40,963
Overage:	\$ 1,826

In 2024, IPWA applied for and received a Boulder County grant for \$7,207 to support purchasing radios and related equipment for our patrollers.

Photo Contest

2024 was IPWA's 10th year to hold our annual Volunteer and Supporters Photo Contest. We had nearly 50 submissions, of which the Board selected 12 to turn into note card packet. Super Supporter donors who give \$100+ are given a set of these notecards as a "Thank You" for their financial support.



Photo Credit: Eva Pavlik

Challenges/Opportunities to Our Mission

During our next planning cycle, we see a number of challenges facing our organization, the USFS, and the IPW/JPW Areas including:

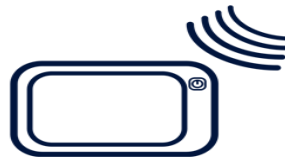


Overuse

*Continued
Colorado
population growth*



**Lack of
Awareness
of Leave No Trace
Principles**



**Technology
Drones, Mtn
Bikes, Social Media**



Pollution



**Climate
Change**

In addition, the USFS is facing a freeze on Seasonal Ranger hires for 2025, and on-going uncertainty regarding federal funding levels, which will reduce their enforcement and trail maintenance presence in the Wilderness and other public lands.

2024 IPWA Board of Directors



Photo credit: Yonah Cohen

Board Officers:

- Fiona Garvin - Board Chair
- Peter Fellenz - Vice Chair
- Serge Goldberg - Board Treasurer
- Emily Herrington - Board Secretary

At-Large Board Members:

- Faith Overall - Training Coordinator
- Alexa Carollo - Volunteer Coordinator
- Peter Fellenz – Mentor Coordinator
- Andy Gup - Winter Patrol & Sawyer Coordinator
- CJ Gup - Quartermaster (Uniforms and Gear)
- Reghan Gilman - Communications & Newsletter Coordinator
- Aaron Swain - Summer Patrol Coordinator
- Yonah Cohen - Web Designer & IT Support



Thank You

Photo Credit: Iona Binnie



Indian Peaks Wilderness Alliance (IPWA)

www.indianpeakswilderness.org