

*We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children.*



To all of the "Friends of Colorado Wilderness" (which is a name I came up with for all of our various Friends Groups around the state so let me know if it works!).

THANK YOU ALL for attending the event that Ralph put on this past Thur/Fri in Lakewood. I was wonderful to meet all of you, make new friendships, and hear all the awesome things that we have going on the our friends community across Colorado.

I especially appreciate all of you letting me get on my proverbial soap box and discuss the issue of recreational sport shooting in Colorado. It is an issue that I am passionate about with regards to working to ensure that our wilderness lands have as limited recreational shooting as possible (due to all the reasons below).

As a follow on to our meeting this past week, I'm doing a number of things on my end with the IPWA:

1) I will be meeting with Scott Miller from the Wilderness Society (will 'cc' him on this email) Monday. As you recall, Scott spoke to our group on Friday and I will be meeting with him to discuss how to build out a grass roots effort - and quickly - to try to get in front of the USFS stating that the IP/JP Wilderness areas are designated as suitable for rec shooting.

2) I have calls into the Boulder County Commissioners office along with the coordinator of the overall rec shooting project in Boulder County to get an update from them on the status. I believe that the USFS is looking to issue a regulation sometime this Spring/Summer (e.g. soon!)

While stating what we are opposed to, as Scott mention I believe that our path to success in this endeavor lies in creating as broad a coalition as possible. Hence, we also need to state what we are for which is my mind is:

- \* The wise use of our natural resources on public lands (e.g. mining, timbering, ski leases, etc.)
- \* **Hunting** within our Wilderness (rifle, bow and arrow)
- \* **Fishing** within our Wilderness areas
- \* **Horseback riding and backcountry** use of pack animals in our wilderness areas.
- \* The use of Wilderness areas to assist rural areas with **businesses & economic development** as tourists use to 'get away' from it all - while preserving the wilderness character of the land

I will keep this group of 'Friends' posted on developments as they are taking place in the Arapaho/Roosevelt Forest. If we would like to NOT receive this email for whatever reason, simply 'opt out' at the bottom of this email and your name will be removed from our email distribution.

Thank you again for our discussion and hearing my concerns. It was great to see unanimous consent among all the Friends group in the room that we need to be addressing and understanding the issue of recreational shooting in the wilderness areas that we help to preserve and protect.

This email/newsletter will be sent to everyone that was part of a Friends Group on the email distribution list that Ralph supplied to us on Thursday. I'll discuss with Ralph if he believes we should/should not also forward to all the USFS representatives that attend

*the session. As an aside, this email is a copy of an email that we sent out to our roughly 1500 member email list last year (I believe that the comment period is over and that the links no longer work!)*

*Thanks again.*

*Stuart*

*Stuart Dodd  
Board Chair  
Indian Peaks Wilderness Alliance  
720 272 6595*

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## IPWA Volunteers/Members/Friends:

**Please TAKE ACTION TODAY and tell the USFS that the IP/JP Wilderness Areas should be designated as **"NOT SUITABLE"** for recreational shooting!**

[Say "NO" to designating the wilderness as suitable for recreational shooting \(at this Sport Shooting Partners link\)!](#)

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## ISSUE

**The USFS has proposed designating the IP/JP Wilderness Areas as **"SUITABLE"** for recreational shooting.**

IPWA Volunteers, Members, and Friends:

The USFS is proposing to designate the Indian Peaks (IP) and James Peak (JP) Wilderness Areas as 'suitable' for recreational shooting. **Your IPWA Board is in unanimous opposition to this designation.**

It is important to note that the IPWA Board is not opposed to the legitimate use of the IP/JP Wilderness Areas for hunting, nor the 2nd amendment right to bear arms. Hunting in the wilderness has been allowed as part of the original 1964 Wilderness Act and the IPWA Board fully supports this position. It is the specific promotion and designation of the IP/JP Wilderness Area as suitable for recreational shooting that we oppose.

Please click on the link below TODAY to enter your comments and voice your opposition to this designation:

[Say NO to designating the wilderness as suitable for recreational shooting \(at this Sport Shooting Partners link\)!](#)

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## BACKGROUND

The USFS has been working since 2013 to propose solutions to the challenges of 'recreational sport shooting' (RSS) on public lands and specifically challenges with managing RSS on the Arapaho/Roosevelt National Forest. The USFS has been working with Boulder, Clear Creek, Gilpin and Larimer counties, and the Colorado Parks and Wildlife (known as the **Northern Front Range Sport Shooting Management Partnership** or '**Partnership**' or '**Sport Shooting Partners**') to develop possible management strategies for RSS in these two national forests. The strategies include identifying those lands that may be suitable/not suitable for RSS, along with identifying locations that would be conducive to building developed shooting ranges.

This Partnership provided an original recommendation on lands to designate as suitable/not suitable for RSS in 2015. At that time, the original proposal designated both the IP/JP Wilderness Areas as 'suitable' for RSS. Your IPWA Board was in unanimous opposition to this designation. We shared our concerns with the USFS with the hope that these lands would be designated as 'not suitable' for RSS.

Since 2015, the Partnership created additional proposals and recommendations and recently presented four RSS alternatives in public sessions. The four alternatives are posted on the web site below. Three of the alternatives designate the IP/JP Wilderness Areas as 'suitable' for RSS. The only alternative that does not is the alternative that does not provide for dispersed shooting anywhere on the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests.

These four proposals were presented and discussed at a recent meeting at the Boulder County Courthouse (attended by volunteers of the IPWA). ***When asked why the USFS was designating these lands as 'suitable' for recreational shooting – which appears completely contrary to concerns for citizen safety along with wilderness character challenges – the response from the USFS representative was that “we do not view recreational shooting as incompatible with the concept of wilderness.”***

*The IPWA Board respectively disagrees with this assertion.*

## [Recreational Sport Shooting Partnership Web Site and Proposals](#)

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## **Recreational Sport Shooting Defined and Challenges**

One of the challenges that the IPWA Board sees with the USFS position is the lack of clarity around the definition of Recreational Sport Shooting. The IPWA is not clear on the specific definition that the USFS intends with the use of this terminology and believes that further defining RSS may be of benefit to the public. The Sportsmen Heritage Act of 2012 (H.R 4089), Section 103(4) defines recreational shooting as 'any form of sport, training, competition, or pastime, whether formal or informal, that involves the discharge of a rifle, handgun, or shotgun, or the use of a bow and arrow.' This definition would appear to include hunting (which the IPWA Board agrees with) along with shooting ranges, informal target practice, and war reenactments both formal and informal (which the IPWA Board opposes).

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## **IPWA BOARD POSITION**

**The Board of the IPWA is in unanimous opposition to designating any areas of the IP/JP Wilderness Areas as 'Suitable' for RSS. Furthermore, the Board believes that these lands should be specifically designated as 'Not Suitable' for RSS for the following reasons:**

**Public Safety – RSS in the wilderness is contrary to public safety needs.**

We believe allowing RSS in the wilderness is contrary to public safety needs. The Partnership themselves recognize that Colorado's population has been increasing by 100,000 annually, with 80% of the growth in the Front Range. Furthermore, the IP/JP Wilderness by the USFS own statistics is one of the top five visited wilderness areas in the country. Over the past two years, the IPWA has made contact with on average 35,000 members of the public while performing our wilderness patrols in these two wilderness areas. Furthermore, by having the USFS actively designate these lands as suitable for RSS, we fear that recreational shooters will gravitate to these lands as other forest service lands are closed to recreational shooting and individuals are displaced to lands that are designated as suitable for RSS. *The IPWA Board believes allowing RSS in these lands with such a high use by the public will result in tragedy.*

**Wilderness Character – RSS in the wilderness is contrary to the USFS definition of wilderness character.**

The USFS own web site ([USFS Wilderness Definition](#)) states that "Commonly understood policies for wilderness management include...area is managed for primitive and unconfined recreation with outstanding opportunities for solitude." Clearly, the sound of individuals shooting at targets in the wilderness can carry a great distance, thereby significantly diminishing the opportunities for solitude sought by other members of the public. Our own organization has assisted the USFS in performing wilderness solitude monitoring, with individuals collecting information on the sounds of airplanes flying over wilderness areas and making note how often flights occur. Imagine recreational shooting taking place just down the trail and the negative impact on the wilderness characteristic of solitude.

**USFS management guidelines – RSS in the wilderness is contrary to the USFS own guidelines.**

The USFS Manual (FSM 2300 – Recreation, Wilderness, and Related Resource Management) defines how the USFS should interpret legislation in managing public lands. Section 2320 of this manual defines guidelines for Wilderness Management. Specifically, Section 2320.2 "Objectives" states that the USFS should..."Protect and perpetuate wilderness character and public values including... opportunities for solitude..." *The IPWA Board believes that RSS in the IP/JP Wilderness Areas is contrary to this objective.*

Section 2320.3 "Policy" states that the USF should "Where there are alternatives among management decisions, wilderness values shall dominate over all other regulations except where limited by the Wilderness Act.." *The IPWA Board believes that RSS in the IP/JP Wilderness Areas is contrary to this policy.*

Section 2320.6 "Wilderness Management Model and the Wilderness Act" states that "Where a choice must be made between wilderness values and visitor or any other activity, preserving the wilderness resource is the overriding value." *The IPWA Board believes that RSS in the IP/JP Wilderness in contradictory to this model*

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## **CALL TO ACTION - TODAY!:**

**PLEASE VOICE YOUR CONCERNS TODAY BY CLICKING ON THE LINK BELOW AND TELLING THE USFS THAT YOU ARE OPPOSED TO DESIGNATING THE IP/JP WILDERNESS AREAS AS SUITABLE FOR RECREATIONAL SHOOTING!**

**[I am opposed to designating the Indian Peaks and James Peak Wilderness Areas as suitable for recreational shooting \(at this Sports Shooting Partners link\)](#)**

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## Thank you!

Again, thank you for the fantastic year! As always, reach out to us with any questions, comments, or thoughts on how we can make our organization an even better one. As a 501(c)3 non-profit volunteer organization, we rely on members, volunteers, local businesses, and grants for 100% of our funding needs. **We are also a 100% volunteer managed organization with no paid staff positions.** All funding we receive goes directly to our programs and operations. Any financial assistance is greatly appreciated!

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