

COMMON SCENARIOS - TOP REASONS FOR SHARING WITH VISITORS

Dogs On Leash, Picking Up Pet Waste

- Whether or not your dog has a high prey drive, animals big and small will see your dog as a predator, which may cause them to flee. Doing so can cause wildlife to be injured or use critical energy they need to survive. Keeping dogs on leash reduces the “impact corridor” dogs have on wildlife.
- We regularly count up to 50 dogs in just a few hours of patrolling. Having all those dogs off leash would take away from the experience other visitors are hoping to have while spending time outside.
- Off leash dogs are the number one reason for moose attacks in the Indian Peaks Wilderness. If your dog’s natural instincts do kick in, chasing wildlife may cause injuries to you and your pup.
- A very large number of people and dogs visit the Indian Peaks and James Peaks Wilderness Areas, making it difficult to avoid interactions with other visitors and dogs who may not like dogs, even friendly ones.
- Studies have shown that pets off leash increases the probability of pet waste being left behind. Pet waste that isn’t picked up can pollute local water sources and can carry disease that can be transmitted to humans, other dogs or wildlife
- Unlike a bear or moose’s poop, dog food and therefore dog waste contains things that are not natural to this environment and can be introduced when pet waste is left behind.

Wildlife Interactions

- While wildlife may not look bothered by your presence, they are wild and can be unpredictable. Giving them plenty of space helps keep you and others safe!
- Feeding wildlife or allowing them access to our food not only puts us at risk but can change wildlife behavior. When animals have regular access to food they lose their fear of people and become dangerous. Animals, bears specifically, that have too many conflicts with people may have to be put down.
- Animals who are used to getting human food may lose their natural foraging abilities and may become malnourished when visitors are no longer feeding them.

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Picking Wildflowers

- Picking wildflowers takes away food and resources from pollinators. If plants aren't pollinated they will not regrow next year.
- Butterflies and other insects, small birds, and animals depend on seeds, nectar, and pollen for their food supply and life support system
- These trails see thousands of visitors each week. Even a small percentage of "flower pickers" can mean many less flowers for others to enjoy.
- Wildflowers are fragile and will likely wilt and perish after being picked. Take a photo instead - it will last longer!

Camping Issues (Designated Site, Correct Backcountry Zone, 100 ft from Lakes)

- Camping in designated sites helps keep the impact from tents confined to one area in places that see heavy usage. This protects sensitive vegetation and prevents new campsites from forming.
- Camping within your permitted backcountry zone helps protect the Wilderness by preventing vegetation loss, erosion, compaction of soil, and creation of new campsites. It also allows visitors to still feel like they can enjoy solitude even within a heavily visited outdoor area.
- Camping 100 ft (35 big steps) away from water helps prevent pollution of water sources, protects sensitive shoreline vegetation and allows wildlife access to water sources.