



*"We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children "*

## Notes from the Board

### IPWA Members & Friends of the Indian Peaks/James Peak Wilderness Areas

Welcome to our August 2015 newsletter!

A lot has transpired over the past month....

\* We are having an excellent hiking season! At our mid-point of the season, we have already made contact with more than **21,000 thousand people** as part of our presence representing the Forest Service while hiking on the trails of the IP/JP Wilderness Areas.

\* We've also helped fund and had volunteers participate in a Wildlands Restoration Volunteers (WRV) trail project at Brainard Lake on August 15.

\* Earlier this month, we held a mid-year potluck with more than 40 volunteers attending (thanks to everyone who did attend and next year we hope to see more of you!).

\* We're also continuing to focus on building out our non-profit operational infrastructure, including making continual updates to our 'members only' web-site, implementing a software accounting package, and updating our Board position descriptions and responsibilities.

\* We've begun the planning for our Fall/Winter fund raising activities (and thanks to everyone that donates to the IPWA - we are 100% volunteer organization and all funds received go to our programs and/or infrastructure needs).

\* Lastly, we are starting the planning for our Fall/Winter activities, and in particular will be moving forward with a Winter Patrol program for a select group of volunteers - more to come on this later. So, lots of good stuff!

On the not so great news, the Wilderness continues to be confronted with challenges. The first as noted below is with regards to a Forest Service proposal allowing recreational shooting in the IP/JP Wilderness Areas and all associated gateway trailheads (e.g. Brainard Lake, 4th of July, Hessie, East Portal, St Vrain Mtn, etc.). **Your Board opposes this proposal.**

The second not so great news is the proposed Eldora Ski Area expansion - and the negative impact this will have particularly on the wildlife corridor on the Middle Boulder Creek and the key Hessie Trailhead gateway leading into Jasper Lake, King Lake, Woodland Lake, etc.. The Forest Service is expected to finalize their decision on this shortly. More details on this below as well.

As a result, this newsletter will be a bit more lengthy this month to provide more details around these two issues for our readers.

So, lots done, lots left to do...

Keep it wild!

## USFS Recreational Shooting Proposal in the IP/JP Wilderness. SAY NO!

### Your help requested by saying 'NO' to recreational shooting in the wilderness!

The US Forest Service distributed an email in July with their proposed management direction for recreational sport shooting. In addition to the email text (included below) you will see on the map

below that the USFS is designating the Indian Peaks and James Peaks Wilderness Areas (and all associated trail heads) as 'land suitable for dispersed recreational shooting.' **The IPWA Board opposes this designation.** (More details on the proposal are at the end of this newsletter).

### **ACTION REQUEST #1!**

Please join the Board in providing feedback to the USFS (and the deadline for feedback has been extended to **September 9th**) by sending an email to the email address below letting the US Forest Service know that:

*"The IP/JP Wilderness Areas and associated gateway trailheads are lands **NOT** suitable for dispersed recreational shooting for safety reasons."*

[comments-rm-arapaho-roosevelt@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-rm-arapaho-roosevelt@fs.fed.us)

Or, IPWA Members/Friends can also send an objection via US Post to:

Joshua Milligan  
Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests All Units  
2150 Centre Avenue, Building E , Fort Collins, CO, 80526

### **ACTION REQUEST #2!**

In addition, in response to concerns from the public with regards to the proposal, the USFS is planning on holding a number of information sessions with the public as noted below. Please attend one of these session and let the USFS know that as a friend of the IP/JP Wilderness Areas that you are against designating these lands - and all associated gateway trail heads - as 'land suitable for dispersed recreational shooting'

#### **Monday, August 31 (5pm to 7pm)**

Nederland Community Center  
750 Highway 72 North  
Nederland CO 80466

#### **Tuesday, September 1 (5pm to 7pm)**

Clear Creek Middle School (Clear Creek School District Administration Building)  
320 Highway 103  
Idaho Springs, CO 80452

#### **Wednesday, September 2 (5pm to 7pm)**

Canyon Lakes Ranger District  
2150 Centre Avenue, Building E  
Fort Collins, CO 80526

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## **Proposed Eldora Ski Expansion - not yet finalized**

### **Daily Camera article**

Opponents of the proposed Eldora Mountain Resort expansion have received letters from the U.S. Forest Service that they believe clearly foreshadow a pending approval by the forest supervisor of the ski venue's plans.

Objections by numerous parties, including Boulder County commissioners, the Middle Boulder Creek Coalition, Colorado Parks and Wildlife and many private citizens, were heard at a public meeting in Fort Collins on July 17 by Acting Deputy Regional Forester Daniel McCusker and other Forest Service staff.

But Boulder-based attorney Mike Chiropoulos, who is representing both the Middle Boulder Creek Coalition and the Sierra Club Indian Peaks Group in opposition to Eldora's current plans, believes the July 30 letter indicates which way this is going. The forest supervisor "has already made up his mind to authorize the expansion," said Chiropoulos, whose clients argue that Eldora's improvements should all be made within its existing boundaries - what is known as "in-fill" alternative.

For more information, please see the link below:

[http://www.dailycamera.com/boulder-county-news/ci\\_28604954/environmentalists-wary-final-](http://www.dailycamera.com/boulder-county-news/ci_28604954/environmentalists-wary-final-)

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## IP/JP Wilderness Trail Conditions

### Public Access to Trail Conditions for Indian Peaks/James Peak Wilderness

Our main public facing web site has been a huge success this first year in providing trail condition updates to the general public on trails in the Indian Peaks and James Peak Wilderness Areas. At this point in time, almost all trails are 'dry.'

Members of the public simply can go to our (1) main web site, and (2) 'click' on the trail conditions link shown below, to get access to our summary trail conditions report information.

(1) <http://www.indianpeakswilderness.org>

(2) Trail conditions icon



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## IPWA Winter Patrols - Another new program in 2015!

### IPWA providing winter patrols for interested volunteers

Winter patrolling is a great opportunity for volunteers that wish to hike all year long. Due to the high-alpine nature of wintertime hiking or skiing we have additional training and requirements.

- \* Winter season officially starts Nov 16 and goes until the day before summer training 2016.
- \* We will have three mandatory training sessions (dates are TBD) around patrolling in the wilderness in the winter and special requirements, radio usage training and cross-cut saw training.
- \* Winter Patrollers will be required to get their Advanced First Aid certificates (two day class) and have this completed PRIOR to performing patrols.
- \* Before hiking, winter patrol volunteers must have a SPOT device, DeLorme InReach or PLB.

We're excited about the opportunities that this program presents for our volunteers and will provide more details over the next several weeks.

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## Upcoming Events

### Saturday September 26: Brainard Lake Trail Project

We will again be partnering with WRV on the Mitchell Lake connector trail. We had a number of IPWA volunteers attend the 8/15 project day. For additional information go to [WLRV.org](http://WLRV.org). To register as an IPWA volunteer please contact [jamie@wlrv.org](mailto:jamie@wlrv.org)

### Saturday October 3: James Peak Wilderness Clean-up project

We are in the early stages of planning a James Peak Wilderness fire ring removal and trail clean-up project prior to the end of the hiking season. Goal will be to get as many volunteers as we can into each of the lakes within the JP Wilderness Area and remove as many fire rings, garbage, and other debris as we can prior to the winter season. More details to follow!

### Friday October 9: End of 2015 Summer Patrol Season

Rifle season starts in the IP/JP Wilderness Areas on Saturday September 10 so our last day for formal summer patrols in the Wilderness will be on Friday October 9.

### **Saturday October 10: End of 2015 Patrol Season volunteer party**

(date to be finalized)

We're tentatively picking Saturday October 10 for our volunteer end of season party. This is always a fun event to share stories from the hiking season, meet other IPWA volunteers, and start the plans for 2016. More details to follow!

### **Saturday October 17: Winter Patrol training date**

(date to be finalized)

We are excited to announce that we will be commencing formal winter patrols in the IP/JP Wilderness Areas this winter! We are in the midst of finalizing the training plans and requirements for those interested in helping patrols these areas during the winter months. Be on the look out for more details on this as well!

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## **Newsletter Appendix:USFS Recreational Shooting Proposal Details**

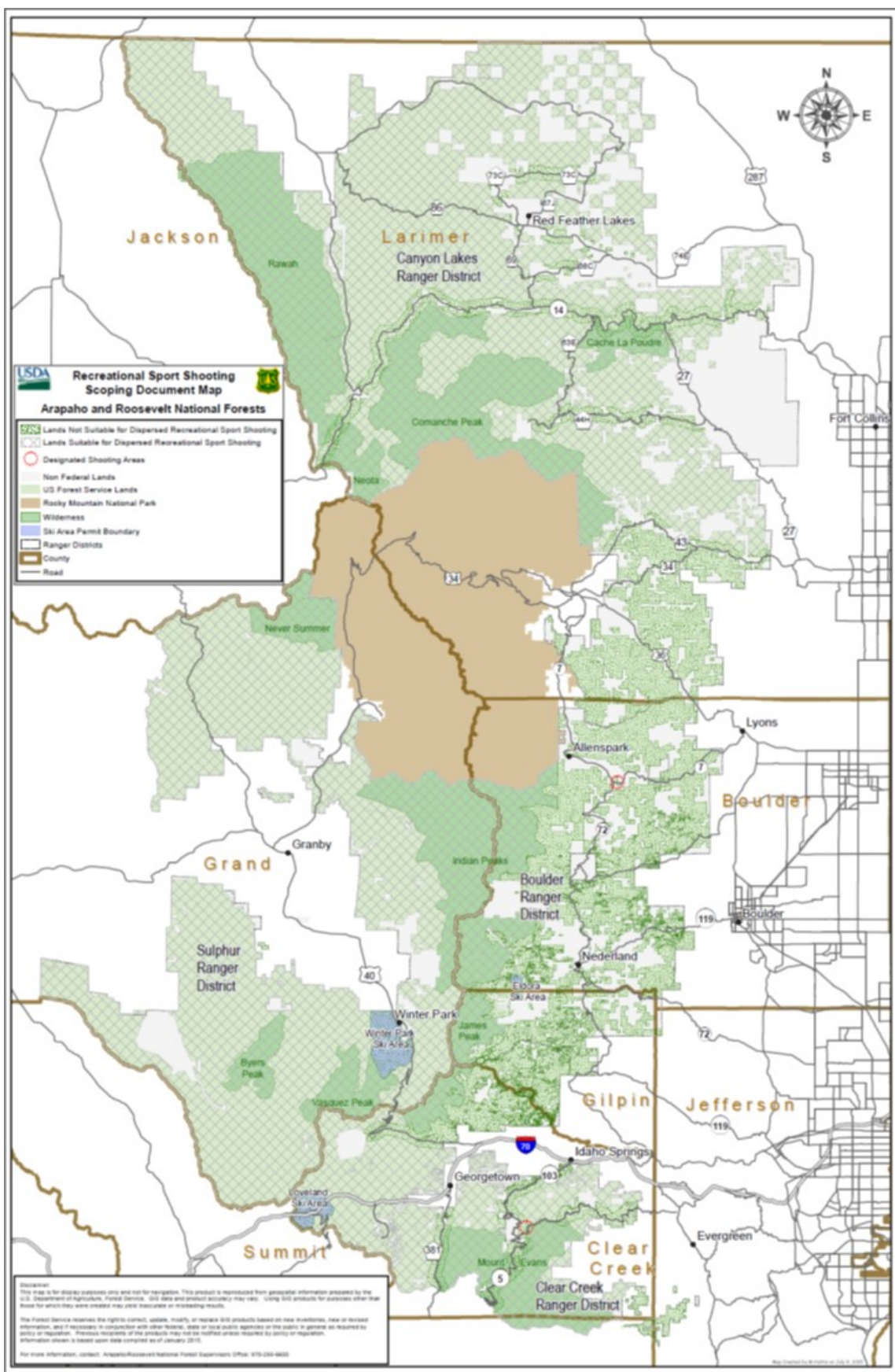
### **USFS Recreational Shooting Proposal - Map**

#### **Recreational Sport Shooting Scoping Document Map for the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests (showing that the Indian Peaks and James Peak Wilderness Areas are lands currently designated for dispersed recreational sport shooting)**

Designating the Indian Peaks and James Peak Wilderness areas (and associated gateway trailheads) as appropriate for dispersed shooting would have collective and significant human impacts on the wilderness areas and their respective access points.

The 1964 Wilderness Act describes Wilderness as "where the earth and its community are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain." People use Wilderness areas for solitude, as safe havens and respites from noise. Designating them as appropriate for "dispersed recreational shooting" runs counter to these goals. The Act limits uses to those consistent with its mandate that each Wilderness area be administered to preserve the "wilderness character of the area."

The sound of shooting carries great distances and would directly impact hikers and winter users, and there would potentially be significant impacts to wildlife including moose, elk, deer, and countless other species. Furthermore, recreational shooters may not get very far from vehicles and roads and while outside the wilderness areas, gateway trailheads to the James Peak Wilderness such as the Kingston Peak Road, Rollins Pass, Forest Lakes, and the East Portal areas would be likely impromptu shooting sites. Similarly, gateway trailheads in the Indian Peaks Wilderness such as Hessie, Fourth of July, Coney Flats Road west of Beaver Reservoir, Rollins Pass above Bob and Betty Lakes and the Brainard areas would also likely be impacted by shooters parking and heading into the Wilderness area.



## USFS Recreational Shooting Proposal - Items in the news

### USA Today (8/11/15)

Interestingly enough, there was an article on the front page of the 8/11/15 copy of 'USA TODAY' with a front page titled 'Forests grapple with 8,500 gun incidents.' Our very own Arapaho & Roosevelt National Forest is mentioned stating that there have been "374 incidents (or gun shots/recreational shooting) reported since 2010." This Board member personally can attest to one example of such an incident when a recreational shooter decided to discharge dozens of rounds

from his/her firearm at 1:00 AM in the morning while camping at Jasper Lake (approximately a 4 mile hike into the IP Wilderness Area). When hiking out the following morning I came across of family with young children that was clearly frightened and concerned that recreational shooting was allowed in the wilderness.

You can find that article US Today here:

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2015/08/10/forests-grapple-8500-gun-incidents/30903483>

### **New York Times (8/18/15)**

Another article of interest was posted online on 8/18 with the New York Times.

"America's cultural divide over guns has gone into the woods. As growing numbers of hikers and backpackers flood national forests and backcountry trails searching for solitude, they are increasingly clashing with recreational target shooters, out for the weekend to plug rounds into trees, targets and mountainsides. Hiking groups and conservationists say policies that broadly allow shooting and a scarcity of enforcement officers have turned many national forests and millions of Western acres run by the Bureau of Land Management into free-fire zones. People complain about finding shot-up couches and cars deep in forests, or of being pinned down by gunfire where a hiking or biking trail crosses a makeshift target range.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/19/us/a-culture-clash-over-guns-infiltrates-the-backcountry.html>

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## **USFS Recreational Shooting Proposal - Notifications**

### **July email from US Forest Services announcing the proposed plans**

FORT COLLINS, Colo. - The Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests released the proposed Forest Plan Management Direction for recreational sport shooting activities on National Forest System lands in Boulder, Clear Creek, Gilpin, Grand, Jefferson, Larimer and Park counties. The proposed Forest Plan direction includes two goals and four objectives for recreational sport shooting. A map displays this proposed direction on the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests identifying the National Forest lands suitable for dispersed recreational sport shooting using current regulations, not suitable for dispersed recreational sport shooting, and proposed as designated shooting areas.

In general, suitable lands for recreational sport shooting included areas that were further than one-half mile from residential subdivisions or concentrated high use recreation areas. Approximately 1.1 million acres (or 80% of the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests) are proposed as suitable for recreational sport shooting. Conversely, areas that were not suitable for recreational sport shooting were generally within one-half mile of residential subdivisions and concentrated recreation use areas. Approximately 287,000 acres (or 20% of the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests) are proposed as not suitable for recreational sport shooting.

Two designated shooting areas are also identified; one at Allenspark in Boulder County and one at Devils Nose in Clear Creek County. However, the proposed Forest Plan direction includes an objective that additional designated shooting areas will be identified in other counties within the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests.

Proposed management direction does not include any change in management for lawful hunting activities.

The proposal has two primary purposes (1) protecting public health and safety and (2) providing guidance and management for an important and growing use of the National Forests. As population along the Front Range has increased, so has the number of people who live near and use the National Forest. In urban interface areas, housing development within a quarter mile of National Forest System lands has increased by as much as 29% since 1989. In addition, the participation rate in recreational sport shooting and other recreation activities has increased. The mixing of recreational sport shooting activities on National Forest lands in close proximity to residences and other high use public areas is causing safety concerns.

Developing Forest Plan direction specifically for recreational sport shooting will explicitly address this use and provide a framework for management. This framework will also direct the Forest to coordinate and cooperate with the counties and Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) to identify designated shooting areas. These areas may occur on National Forest System lands or other

public lands and will be set aside and publically available for recreational sport shooting.

This proposed action follows the May 2, 2015, requested for comments on an initial proposal for Forest Plan direction for recreational sport shooting. While the initial proposal did not include specific Forest Plan direction, comments were helpful in understanding the public's view on the need for direction. Approximately 300 comments were received and along with other data helped in the development of this proposal.

The U.S. Forest Service is requesting comments on this proposal for 30 days from the date of the publication notice in the Fort Collins Coloradoan published July 10, 2015. Public comments will help shape the Forest Service's proposal and identify issues and concerns during environmental review. Comments can be submitted electronically at [comments-rm-arapaho-roosevelt@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-rm-arapaho-roosevelt@fs.fed.us). Information about this project and how to comment can be found at: [www.fs.usda.gov/goto/arp/recshootingmgt](http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/arp/recshootingmgt). For more information about recreational sport shooting visit: [www.fs.usda.gov/goto/arp/targetshooting](http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/arp/targetshooting).

After considering comments, the U.S. Forest Service will prepare an environmental assessment and may develop reasonable alternatives to this proposal. The environmental assessment will disclose the social and environmental impacts of the proposed direction and any alternatives. The environmental assessment will also be circulated for public comment.

### **August follow-on email from US Forest Service**

In response to a high level of interest in the proposed Forest Plan Direction for recreational sport shooting on the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests, the Forest Service is extending the scoping comment period to September 9, 2015, to provide additional time for review and comment on the proposal.

The proposed direction includes:

- (1) Adding Forest Plan goals and objectives for recreational sport shooting.
- (2) Identifying lands as suitable for dispersed recreational sport shooting.
- (3) Identifying lands as not suitable for dispersed recreational sport shooting for safety reasons.
- (4) Identifying sites that are suitable as designated shooting areas.

or contact:

Joshua Milligan  
Acting Group Leader- Recreation, Planning, Design, and Heritage  
Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland  
970-295-6761  
[jmilligan@fs.fed.us](mailto:jmilligan@fs.fed.us)

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Indian Peaks Wilderness Alliance | [hikers@indianpeakswilderness.org](mailto:hikers@indianpeakswilderness.org) |

[www.indianpeakswilderness.org](http://www.indianpeakswilderness.org)