

Wilderness.net's Greenhorn Mountain Wilderness Fact Sheet

Introduction

The United States Congress designated the Greenhorn Mountain Wilderness in 1993 and it now has a total of 23,116 acres. All of the wilderness is in Colorado and is managed by the Forest Service.

Description

Soaring dramatically from the plains of Colorado, Greenhorn Mountain rises from 7,600 to 12,347 feet in the center of the northern section. Its summit is the highest point in the Wilderness, and nowhere else in the state provides such a vivid and dramatic change from plains to mountains. About two-thirds of the area is forested, and as you hike along, you'll pass quickly from dry oakbrush and ponderosa pine country (or pinion-juniper in some places) through aspen, fir, and spruce, and on to alpine tundra. Most of the east-facing slopes are steep, rocky, and generally bare. Unusual for Colorado, Greenhorn Mountain Wilderness has no lakes and no towering alpine peaks--and, consequently, few human visitors. Numerous small canyons and sharp ridges are the dominant geological features. A few streams descending from the mountain furnish a habitat for threatened greenback cutthroat trout. With relatively little snow, the area attracts bighorn sheep, elk, and mule deer. Only 11 miles of trail cross the Wilderness, all in the northern half. The southern half, remote and rugged and waterless, probably has fewer human visitors than any other area of the state. If you're willing to brave the dense woodlands and rough topography, you'll find few places with as much solitude.

Leave No Trace

How to follow the seven standard Leave No Trace principles differs in different parts of the country (desert vs. Rocky Mountains). Click on any of the principles listed below to learn more about how they apply in the Greenhorn Mountain Wilderness.

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](#)

For more information on Leave No Trace, [Visit the Leave No Trace, Inc. website.](#)

Area Management

The Greenhorn Mountain Wilderness is part of the 109 million acre National Wilderness Preservation System. This System of lands provides clean air, water, and habitat critical for rare and

endangered plants and animals. In wilderness, you can enjoy challenging recreational activities like hiking, backpacking, climbing, kayaking, canoeing, rafting, horse packing, bird watching, stargazing, and extraordinary opportunities for solitude. You play an important role in helping to *"secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness"* as called for by the Congress of the United States through the Wilderness Act of 1964. Please follow the requirements outlined below and use Leave No Trace techniques when visiting the Greenhorn Mountain Wilderness to ensure protection of this unique area.

General Wilderness Prohibitions

Motorized equipment and equipment used for mechanical transport is generally prohibited on all federal lands designated as wilderness. This includes the use of motor vehicles, motorboats, motorized equipment, bicycles, hang gliders, wagons, carts, portage wheels, and the landing of aircraft including helicopters, unless provided for in specific legislation.

In a few areas some exceptions allowing the use of motorized equipment or mechanical transport are described in the special regulations in effect for a specific area. Contact the Forest Service office or visit the websites listed below for more specific information.

These general prohibitions have been implemented for all national forest wildernesses in order to implement the provisions of the Wilderness Act of 1964. The Wilderness Act requires management of human-caused impacts and protection of the area's wilderness character to insure that it is "unimpaired for the future use and enjoyment as wilderness." Use of the equipment listed as prohibited in wilderness is inconsistent with the provision in the Wilderness Act which mandates opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation and that wilderness is a place that is in contrast with areas where people and their works are dominant.

Wilderness-Specific Regulations

Wilderness managers often need to take action to limit the impacts caused by visitor activities in order to protect the natural conditions of wilderness as required by the Wilderness Act of 1964. Managers typically implement 'indirect' types of actions such as information and education measures before selecting more restrictive measures. When regulations are necessary, they are implemented with the specific intent of balancing the need to preserve the character of the wilderness while providing for the use and enjoyment of wilderness.

The following wilderness regulations are in effect for this area. Not all regulations are in effect for every wilderness. Contact the Forest Service office or visit the websites listed on the 'Links' tab for more specific information about the regulations listed.

ALL VISITORS

Group Size

Size is limited to 25, including pack and saddle animals, with no more than 15 people in any one party.

***This minimizes resource damage and improves opportunities for solitude for Wilderness visitors.

Camping/Trails

Camping is not permitted within 300 feet of lakes and 100 feet of streams or trails.

Obey posted signs prohibiting camping or other activities. Some campsites may be closed to allow the area to recover from overuse.

Before leaving, "naturalize" your campsite by removing signs of your use.

Cutting switchbacks in trails is prohibited.

***Shortcuts cause severe erosion, eventually destroying the trail.

Campfires

A lightweight backpacking stove is recommended.

Campfires should be at least 300 feet from lakes, streams and trails. If a campfire is desired, build it in a manner that minimizes impact.

Collect only dead and down wood, that is less than three inches in diameter. Remember: if you can't break it by hand, don't use it.

Do not build a fire on exposed rock surfaces to prevent scarring.

If possible, use a fire blanket or a fire pan (like a pan used to change motor oil). Place several inches of soil in the bottom of the pan and build the fire on this.

Always use extreme caution and avoid building fires in dry or windy conditions.

Leave Wilderness unspoiled for your self and others by packing-out all of your garbage. It is NEVER acceptable to bury trash. Follow the rule: "if you pack it in, then pack it out."

SANITATION - DIG A CAT HOLE

Nature has provided a system of "biological disposers" that work to decompose organic material such as human waste in the top 6 to 8 inches of soil. Human waste should be disposed of in the following manner:

Select a suitable location at least 300 feet away from any open water, trail or campsite;

Dig a hole, 6 to 8 inches deep;

Bury your waste and refill the hole with the removed soil.

Wash your dishes, and your self, at least 300 feet away from any water and discard dirty water in bushes. BIODEGRADABLE SOAP CAN CONTAMINATE A PRISTINE STREAM.

Do not graze or picket animals within 300 feet of lakes or 100 feet of streams.

To minimize damage to vegetation and prevent erosion, keep stock in single file on the trail and avoid cutting switchbacks.

Tie a highline between two trees and tether your horses to it.

Hobbling or loose grazing your horses will prevent the "ring" appearance caused when horses are tied to trees.

Restraining or grazing of recreational livestock is not permitted within 300 feet of lakes or 100 feet of streams.

If you bring feed for your livestock, **ONLY CERTIFIED WEED-FREE HAY OR PELLETIZED FOOD IS ALLOWED.**

With increasing visitor use in the Sangre de Cristo Wilderness, the Forest Service

is considering a self-issuing permit system. Please contact the San Carlos Ranger District (719) 269-8500.

Contacts

San Carlos Ranger District
3028 EAST MAIN STREET
CANON CITY, CO 81212

Phone: 719-269-8500

Links to Other Websites

[Greenhorn Mountain Wilderness](#)

Links on Wilderness.net

[National, Regional and Local Wilderness Organizations \(NGOs\)](#)

A listing of societies, organizations, coalitions and other wilderness-related advocacy and stewardship groups.

[Career and Volunteer Opportunities](#)

A listing of sites providing information about wilderness- and environmentally-related career and volunteer opportunities.

Applicable Wilderness Law(s)

Law	Date	Acreage Change (in acres)
Public Law 103-77	August 13, 1993	22,040

Colorado Wilderness Act of 1993 - Public Law 103-77 (8/13/1993) Colorado Wilderness Act of 1993

— [download 103-77](#)

