

Wilderness.net's Lizard Head Wilderness Fact Sheet



Introduction

The United States Congress designated the Lizard Head Wilderness in 1980 and it now has a total of 41,525 acres. All of the wilderness is in Colorado and is managed by the Forest Service.

Description

Lizard Head Peak (13,113 feet), stands spire-like on the eastern side of the Lizard Head Wilderness shadowed by 14,000-foot peaks, Mount Wilson and Wilson Peak. Not far to the west, you'll find El Diente (or the tooth, in English), the westernmost of the state's "fourteeners". The province of more experienced climbers, Mount Wilson and El Diente are connected by a famous knife-edged ridge and considered difficult ascents. The summit of Lizard Head Peak, a 400-foot-tall tower of rotten rock, has been voted as one of Colorado's most dangerous and difficult climbs. Dolores Peak (13,290 feet) stands in the most western portion of the Wilderness. On a clear day you can stand in snow on any of the area's high peaks and see the red rock canyon lands of southern Utah to the west. Lizard Head Wilderness is a land of ragged mountain splendor, with lovely cirque lakes, swift mountain streams that often plunge over dramatic waterfalls, and a spruce-fir forest opened by expanses of alpine vegetation. Magnificent golden aspen blanket the lower slopes in vast unbroken reaches every fall. Human use is moderate to light on the 37 miles of trails.

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 Lizard Head 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 Lizard Head 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 Lizard Head 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 is limited to no more than 15 people.
- Campfires are prohibited at the following locations:
 1. within 100 feet of any lake, stream, or trail
 2. above treeline

3. within Navajo Basin

- Caching equipment, personal property, or supplies for longer than 3 days is prohibited.
- Dogs must be under direct verbal control or leashed at all times.

STOCK USERS

- Group size is limited to no more than 25 heartbeats, including people and pack or saddle stock, with no more than 15 people.
- Confining stock (including picketing, corralling, hitching, tethering, and high-lining) is prohibited within 100 feet of any lake, stream, or trail.

Contacts

Mancos-Dolores Ranger District
DOLORES PUBLIC LANDS OFFICE
29211 HIGHWAY 184
DOLORES, CO 81323

Phone: 970-882-7296

Phone: 970-327-4261

Norwood Ranger District
PO BOX 388
1150 FOREST
NORWOOD, CO 81423

Links to Other Websites

[Grande Mesa, Uncompagne, Gunnison National Forest, Lizard Head 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 96-560	December 22, 1980	40,000

Colorado Wilderness Act - Public Law 96-560 (12/22/1980) To designate certain National Forest System lands in the States of Colorado, South Dakota, Missouri, South Carolina, and Louisiana for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System

— [download 96-560](#)