

Wilderness.net's Platte River Wilderness Fact Sheet

Introduction

The United States Congress designated the Platte River Wilderness in 1984 and it now has a total of 23,301 acres. Colorado contains approximately 743 acres. Wyoming contains approximately 22,558 acres. It is managed by the Forest Service.

Description

About 36 square miles of forested land lying primarily north and east of the North Platte River is included in this Wyoming Wilderness, with a small segment in Colorado's Routt National Forest. On the Colorado side, no Wilderness covers less acreage. The North Platte River enters Routt National Forest about four miles south of the Wyoming state line and flows north through a portion of the Wilderness and North Gate Canyon, a popular white-water rafting section of water. Elevations average 7,700 feet with the wide and relatively flat Platte Ridge rising in the middle of the area between the river and Douglas Creek. Elk and deer winter here. Both the creek and the river are noted for their excellent trout fishing opportunities. The Platte River Trail gently parallels the river on the west bank after a steep descent from the Platte River Trailhead. During high water, the trail dead-ends after five miles. During low water (usually in late July and August), you can ford the river and continue on the east bank. The Douglas Creek Trail follows the creek for 9.5 miles through an open canyon with trailheads at both ends. You can hike a loop from the Pelton Creek Trailhead by exiting the Douglas Creek Trail to return via the Platte River Trail.

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 Platte River 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 Platte River 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 Platte River 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 25 heartbeats; that is, a maximum of 15 people and 10 head of pack or saddle stock.

-- Storing or leaving any equipment, personal property, or supplies unattended for more than 24 hours is prohibited.

-- Dogs and other pets must be under control at all times to prevent harassment or disturbance to wildlife, people, personal property, and stock.

-- Human waste must be deposited in a 6 inch deep hole at least 100 feet from any lake, stream, or trail.

-- As with all designated Wilderness areas, mechanical transportation (including wagons, game carts, wheelbarrows, bicycles, and other vehicles) is prohibited.

OVERNIGHT VISITORS

-- Camping is prohibited within 100 feet of any lake, stream, or trail.

-- Overnight visitors may not camp, store equipment at, or otherwise occupy any single location for more than 16 days within any 30-day period. After 16 days any group, individual, or equipment must relocate at least 3 miles the previous location.

-- It is illegal to construct permanent camping structures. All temporary camp structures (e.g. tent frames, meat poles, etc.) must be completely dismantled after use and before leaving a campsite.

STOCK USERS

--Only certified weed-free hay or supplemental feed (such as alfalfa pellets or treated grain) may be possessed, transported, or used for feed or bedding within the Wilderness boundary. Note: Certified weed-free hay is required for all Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest Lands.

Contacts

Laramie Ranger District
2468 JACKSON STEET
LARAMIE, WY 82070

Phone: 307-745-2300

Links to Other Websites

[Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest Website](#)

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 98-550	October 30, 1984	23,000

Wyoming Wilderness Act of 1984 - Public law 98-550 (10/30/1984) To designate certain lands in the state of Wyoming for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System, to release other forest lands for multiple use management, to withdraw designated wilderness areas in Wyoming from minerals activity, and for other purposes

NOTE: Public law acreage includes CO and WY acreage.

— [download 98-550](#)