

Wilderness.net's Ptarmigan Peak Wilderness Fact Sheet

Introduction

The United States Congress designated the Ptarmigan Peak Wilderness in 1993 and it now has a total of 12,606 acres. All of the wilderness is in Colorado and is managed by the Forest Service.

Description

The Williams Fork Mountains leap up and away into Ptarmigan Peak Wilderness from just below the western entrance to the Eisenhower Tunnel on Interstate 70, virtually unnoticed in winter as skiers rush to many nearby developed ski areas. The south slope of the mountains, dominated by Ptarmigan Peak at 12,458 feet, is where you'll find the designated land. A typical lodgepole-pine forest rises to Engelmann spruce and subalpine fir and then on to alpine tundra at the highest elevations. From the boundary along the top of the mountain ridgeline, the terrain drops into the wet, lush, and lovely drainages of the South and Middle Forks of the Williams Fork Rivers. You will not find many miles of trails in this Wilderness. The Ptarmigan Peak Trail just outside Silverthorne crosses Ptarmigan Pass into the drainages to the northeast, a one-way journey of seven miles. The Ute Pass Trail follows the ridgeline boundary from Ptarmigan Pass north to Ute Peak (12,303 feet) and on to Ute Pass, a total distance of about 10 miles.

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 Ptarmigan Peak 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 Ptarmigan Peak Wilderness is part of the 110 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 Ptarmigan Peak 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 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 for more specific information about the regulations listed.

ALL VISITORS

- Group size is limited to no more than 15 people per group.
- Campfires are prohibited within 1/4 miles of any lake or treeline, above treeline, or within 100 feet of any stream or trail.
- Storing equipment, personal property, or supplies (caching) for longer than 72 hours is prohibited.
- Do not cut switchbacks.
- Dogs must be leashed at all times and leashes may not exceed 6 feet in length.
- Mechanical transportation (including wagons, game carts, wheelbarrows, or other vehicles) is

prohibited.

OVERNIGHT VISITORS

-- Camping is prohibited within 100 feet of any lake, stream, trail, or “No Camping/Wilderness Restoration Site” sign.

STOCK USERS

-- Group size is limited to no more than a combination of 25 people and pack or saddle stock, with the maximum number of people being 15.

-- Possessing, storing, or transporting any plant material (with the exception of pelletized feed and rolled grains) is prohibited.

-- Hitching, tethering, or hobbling pack or saddle stock is prohibited within 100 feet of any lake, stream, or trail.

Contacts

East Zone/Dillon Ranger District
680 RIVER PARKWAY
SILVERTHORNE, CO 80498

Phone: 970-468-5400

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	13,175
Colorado Wilderness Act of 1993 - Public Law 103-77 (8/13/1993) Colorado Wilderness Act of 1993		

 [download 103-77](#)