

# Wilderness.net's Rawah Wilderness Fact Sheet



## Introduction

The United States Congress designated the Rawah Wilderness in 1964 and it now has a total of 74,595 acres. All of the wilderness is in Colorado and is managed by the Forest Service.

## Description

Just before the Front Range of the Colorado Rockies fades into Wyoming's Medicine Bow Mountains, the Rawah Wilderness protects a scenic high country of U-shaped glacier-carved valleys and peaks reaching

12,951 feet. To the south and west of the area lies an almost roadless Colorado State Forest, an unofficial extension of the Wilderness. Melting snow fills 26 lakes within the area. On the upper forested slopes of the mountains, especially in the southern section, clusters of old-growth spruce and fir abound. You can expend energy on more than 75 miles of trails. Take the Link Trail in the north for nine miles to join the Rawah Trail. Take the Rawah Trail across Grassy Pass and continue on down to the West Branch Trail. Take the West Branch Trail up, then turn south on the Blue Lake Trail and continue to the trailhead. You will have accomplished a cross-Wilderness hike of 24 miles that presents a taste of everything this area has to offer. Fall attracts many deer and elk hunters. Bighorn sheep are occasionally spotted, and moose that were reintroduced in the 1970s are now doing well.

## 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 Rawah 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 Rawah 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 Rawah 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 a combination of 12 people and/or pack or saddle stock. Larger groups must obtain a permit prior to entering the Wilderness.

-- Dogs must be leashed at all times.

-- All campfires (other than a self-contained chemical stove) are prohibited within the Alpine closure area, or within 200 feet of any lake, stream, or trail.

-- Mechanical transportation (including wagons, game carts, or other vehicles) is prohibited.

## OVERNIGHT VISITORS

--Camping is prohibited within 200 feet of any lake, stream, or trail.

-- Camping within the Blue Lake closure area (1/4 mile surrounding Blue Lake and Hang Lake) is prohibited.

## STOCK USERS

-- Possessing or using pack or saddle stock within the Blue Lake closure area between May 15 and September 16 is prohibited.

-- Corralling, hobbling, tethering, or picketing pack or saddle stock is prohibited within 200 feet of any lake, stream, or trail.

## Contacts

### Canyon Lakes Ranger District

2150 CENTRE AVE

BLDG E

FORT COLLINS, CO 80526

Remarks: Our office hours are from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday thru Friday.

Phone: 970-295-6700

## Links to Other Websites

[Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forest, Rawah 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)
<b>Public Law 88-577</b>	<b>September 3, 1964</b>	<b>25,579</b>

The Wilderness Act - Public law 88-577 (9/3/1964) To establish a National Wilderness Preservation System for the permanent good of the whole people, and for other purposes

 [download 88-577](#)

**Public Law 96-560**

**December 22, 1980**

**48,930**

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](#)