



## POUDRE WILDERNESS VOLUNTEERS 2020 FACT SHEET

Poudre Wilderness Volunteers (PWV) is a Larimer County, Colorado nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization founded in 1996 to assist the Canyon Lakes Ranger District of the United States Forest Service in managing and protecting the wilderness and backcountry areas within its jurisdiction. To achieve this mission, PWV recruits, trains, equips, and fields citizen volunteers to serve as wilderness rangers and hosts for the purpose of educating the public, and provides other appropriate support to these wild areas. PWV has grown substantially and diversified since its founding and is considered to be one of the largest, most effective organizations of its kind in the nation.



### The Need

Federal appropriations for the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) are not sufficient to cover the costs of forest management and conservation. Furthermore, the USFS doesn't have enough staff to adequately patrol and monitor the Wilderness and backcountry trails in our area.

### Contact:

Visit our website: [www.pwv.org](http://www.pwv.org)  
Find us on  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/  
PoudreWildernessVolunteers](https://www.facebook.com/PoudreWildernessVolunteers)

Backcountry use continues to rise, reflecting population growth and demographic changes along the Front Range and elsewhere in the nation. A National Survey on Recreation (2000-2007) indicates that participation in outdoor recreation activities increased by 25-31% and that Americans' interest in nature and nature-based recreation is changing. Activities such as birdwatching and nature photography have increased by 19 to 26%, and kayaking has increased by 63%. In 2015, the Arapaho & Roosevelt National Forests were visited by six million people, the second highest number of visits to a National Forest in the nation.

### The Concept

Most duties of a USFS ranger can be accomplished by carefully chosen, well-trained citizen volunteers. PWV recruits local citizens who care about and use the region's outdoor resources. Members commit to a minimum of six days of service each year "hiking or riding with a purpose."

PWV members have no law enforcement authority but use education and diplomacy to promote compliance with Wilderness and backcountry regulations and Leave No Trace principles.

PWV members wear uniform shirts with identifying patches and name badges that make them a highly visible non-official USFS presence on the trails. They are trained to handle various emergency situations that might be encountered in the backcountry.

PWV is an all-volunteer organization with no paid staff.

**Since 2005, PWV has donated a total of 347,781 volunteer hours, worth \$9,070,932 to the USFS.**



## The Results

PWV has grown from 105 founding members in 1996 to 300 active members in 2020. Poudre Wilderness Volunteers patrol about 286 miles along 69 system trails in 650,000 acres of Wilderness and general National Forest and National Grassland lands. PWV's efforts include:

- Establishing a Trail Crew when there were insufficient USFS funds or personnel to clear trails in the summer.
- Establishing a Weed Crew when the USFS was unable to meet its goals for locating, controlling, and eradicating noxious weeds.
- Establishing a Kids in Nature Program when the USFS added a Kids in the Woods emphasis.
- Establishing a Restoration Program when wildfires and floods ravaged the Canyon Lakes Ranger District.
- Finding lost hikers and averting potential forest fires.
- Educating dog owners on Wilderness trails about leash benefits and regulations.
- Providing the most informative statistics on trail and Wilderness use of the Canyon Lakes Ranger District.

## In 2020

2020 was a difficult year for PWV due to the COVID pandemic and then the Cameron Peak Fire. PWV was not allowed to patrol until July 1 due to the pandemic and then after the fire started the majority of our trails were closed. Due to these issues, our metrics from past years have decreased.

## PWV:

- Conducted a total of 438 trail patrols (1,733 on-trail hours) and had meaningful contacts with 4,308 of the 7,441 backcountry trail users seen (= 58%)
- Removed 83 illegal fire rings and downsized 2 improper or oversized fire rings.
- Reported 440 violations and contacted 73 violators using the *Authority of the Resource Technique* and explaining *Leave No Trace* or other reasons for the regulations.
- Removed 1,188 fallen trees across trails.
- Contributed 259 hours toward pulling noxious weeds on eight different trails in National Forest Lands.
- Conducted 5 PWV-only workdays (124 hours), supervised The Rocky Mountain Conservancy trail crew during a four-day work effort (160 hours) thanks to the PWV Restoration Program.
- Contributed environmental stewardship and public outreach via the activities of other PWV programs (e.g., Adopt-a-Trail and Adopt-a-Highway).
- Contributed a total of 16,516 volunteer hours worth \$449,235 to the USFS.

PWV expenditures in 2020 totaled \$22,480.26, and the value of PWV volunteer hours to the USFS was \$637,708. **Every dollar spent by PWV provided \$28.37 of value to the USFS.**

## The Future

As population growth along the Front Range results in more backcountry use by the public, PWV needs to keep pace by recruiting and training new volunteers each year to ensure adequate coverage of the District's many popular trails throughout the summer. We continue to seek public and corporate support to meet our modest operating costs and provide volunteers with appropriate training, essential equipment and emergency gear, and uniforms, which identify members while on patrol. In the near future assisting the Forest Service in recovering from the Cameron Peak fire will be a major effort on the part of PWV.

## A Successful and Different Organization

PWV has gained regional and national recognition for its contributions, including the Larimer County Environmental Stewardship Award, Take Pride in America Award for Non-profit Organizations, and the USFS Volunteer Group Award. PWV has no political or hidden agendas. Our single purpose is to protect the region's Wilderness and backcountry areas through on-trail service and public education. We are not an environmental advocacy group. PWV has a rigorous and comprehensive training program for its recruits and veteran members. No other organization providing volunteer rangers for the U.S. Forest Service has as many members, provides as many hours on the trail, or does so much without any paid staff.

[PWV federal tax ID and Colorado State Tax Exempt # available on request]