



## POUDRE WILDERNESS VOLUNTEERS 2021 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.



### 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/Poudre  
Wilderness Volunteers](https://www.facebook.com/PoudreWildernessVolunteers)

### The Concept

Many 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 371,233 volunteer hours, worth \$10,594,989 to the USFS.**

### The Results

PWV has grown from 105 founding members in 1996 to 270 active members in 2021. 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.
- Establishing a Weed Crew to help the USFS in 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.
- Educating dog owners on Wilderness trails about leash benefits and regulations.



## In 2021 PWV

2021 was a difficult year for PWV due to the COVID pandemic and the Cameron Peak Fire recovery effort. PWV was not allowed to patrol many of the trails in the burn area until August 27 due to the dangers in the fire scar. Due to these issues, our metrics from past years have decreased.

## PWV:

- Conducted a total of 688 trail patrols (4,235 on-trail hours) and had meaningful contacts with 9,049 of 14,169 backcountry trail users seen (= 64%)
- Removed 46 illegal fire rings and downsized 13 improper or oversized fire rings.
- Reported 467 violations
- Removed 3,348 fallen trees across trails.
- Contributed 377 hours toward pulling noxious weeds on 15 different trails in National Forest Lands.
- A great deal of PWV's work this year was in efforts to assist the Forest Service in recovery from the Cameron Peak Fire. The fire covered 209,000 acres and involved 120 miles of 20 Forest trails. During the summer PWV worked on 13 of these trails both clearing trees and performing drainage work. The majority of the work was removing nearly 3000 trees from these trails. This cleared 60 miles of trail to allow access. PWV also worked on the drainage on 11 miles of trail. The fire destroyed the vegetation which caused increased erosion which damages the trails. Improving the drainage will stop much of the trail erosion in the future. This work was done by both PWV members and public volunteers. PWV held 12 public work days where we invited members of the public to come out and work with us on the trails. We also had 4 days where companies or organizations joined us for work. We had over 200 folks come and join us on these work days. We also had 28 PWV only work days where our members did some of the more challenging tasks. Working in the black is dirty work. Everything is charred and the ground is covered in ash. As you work you stir up the ash which can irritate your breathing. After a workday everyone is covered in black but feels good about what has been accomplished.
- This Past year was successful in raising substantial funds. This money will be used in the next 2 years for tools, bridge material, supporting Public work days and hiring (young) work crews.
- Contributed environmental stewardship and public outreach via the activities of other PWV programs (e.g., Adopt-a-Trail and Adopt-a-Highway).
- PWV expenditures in 2021 totaled \$15,736, and PWV contributed a total of 19,231 volunteer hours worth \$637,708. **Every dollar spent by PWV provided \$40.53 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]*