

San Juan Volunteer Handbook 2021 Version

San Juan Mountains Association

Table of Contents

Introduction

- Welcome Volunteers Page 1
- Volunteers Make a Difference Page 1
- What is the San Juan Mountains Association (SJMA) Page 1
- How we got started Page 2
- Mission Statement Page 2
- What we do Page 2
- SJMA Volunteer Programs and Projects Page 2

San Juan Volunteers

- Wilderness Act of 1964 Page 3
- A Brief History of Chicago Basin Page 5
- The History of San Juan Volunteers Page 6
- Activity Description San Juan Volunteers Page 7
- San Juan Volunteers Page 9
- Volunteer Requirements Page 9

Public Contact

- Meeting Visitors Page 9
- Volunteer Messages (The 4 W'S) Page 11
- WISDOM Page 13
- Trail Encounter Page 14
- Informational Supplies to Carry With You Page 15

Regulations

- Forest Wide Regulations Page 16
- Wilderness Regulations Page 16
- Needle Creek Drainage and Chicago Basin Regulations Page 17
- Other Site-Specific Regulations in Wilderness Page 17

Leave No Trace (LNT)

- Practice Leave No Trace Page 17

Additional San Juan Volunteer Information

- Be prepared Page 19
- Equipment suggestions Page 20
- Safety and weather Page 20
- Uniforms Page 23

- Trail maintenance Page 24
- Research and data collection Page 24
- Submitting Volunteer Hours Page 25
- Online volunteer form Page 25
- San Juan Volunteer patrol report Page 26

For your information

- Chicago Basin trip planning for backpackers Page 28
- Chicago Basin trip planning for mountaineers Page 28
- Ice Lakes general trip planning Page 29
- Ice Lakes trip planning for backpackers Page 30

Etc.

- Volunteers recruiting volunteers Page 31
- Contact information Page 32
- Friends & Partners of SJMA with Website Links Page 33

Overview and Wrap-up

- Overview and Wrap-up Page 35
- Activity Description for San Juan Volunteers Page 36
- Resume Builder (For students and interns) Page 37

Welcome Volunteers

We are glad that you have chosen to volunteer for the San Juan Mountains Association (SJMA) and the U.S. Forest Service (San Juan National Forest). Exciting opportunities await you as a partner in the stewardship of America's public lands! You are joining an elite team of people who annually help our agencies perform their missions. You will find many rewards and opportunities to learn new skills, meet interesting and highly motivated people who are experts in their fields, and challenge your ability to do meaningful and rewarding work. We are confident you will benefit from your volunteer experience. We will benefit from your unique background and skills.

The volunteer program is an essential component of each agency's mission. The several hundred thousand hours that volunteers donate each year make it possible for all agencies involved to complete conservation, land management, and protection work that otherwise might not get done.

The primary objective of this handbook is to give our volunteers an understanding of their role and how it fits into the agency's missions. Please contact your project supervisor or the volunteer coordinator if you have any questions or comments on your work.

Again, our sincere thanks for your help. Welcome aboard!

Volunteers Make a Difference

San Juan Volunteers have the unique opportunity to positively affect the thousands of wilderness visitors each year through interpretation, education, information, and participation. The more knowledge you have about public lands, the more information you will be able to impart to the visitors you encounter. This handbook contains information you can use to help yourself and others on public land. It includes information regarding; history, an activity description, public contact skills, regulations, Leave No Trace (LNT) ethics, and additional and helpful information as a San Juan Volunteer.

This handbook is a means to get you started whether you are a novice or expert outdoors person. The core is formed of major points that volunteers need to share with visitors on the high-use trails of the local National Forests and Weminuche Wilderness. The more you know about Leave No Trace (LNT) and local public lands, the easier it will be for you to make a positive impact on the people you meet. Please enjoy the handbook and use it as a valuable source of information.

San Juan Mountains Association (SJMA)

The San Juan Mountains Association is a non-profit 501(c)(3) based out of Durango, Colorado. Since 1988, the San Juan Mountains Association (SJMA) has established a legacy of caring for the land. SJMA empowers local residents and visitors to explore, learn about, and protect the spectacular public lands of Southwest Colorado. Side by side with our members and volunteers, we help to ensure the survival of Southwest Colorado's natural resources, public lands, and designated Wilderness areas for generations to come.

Our bookstores provide the most complete and personalized information for public lands in Southwest Colorado. Our dedicated staff and volunteers will help you with all your questions on camping, backpacking, mountain biking, hunting, fishing, horseback-riding, motor vehicle use, and otherwise experiencing the beauty of our corner of the state.

How we got started

SJMA was created in 1988 to assist the San Juan National Forest in providing education and interpretation of public lands in Southwest Colorado. SJMA has an ongoing participating agreement with the San Juan National Forest as well as intermittent agreements with adjacent National Forests and Bureau of Land Management field offices to develop educational programs, publications and volunteer projects, as well as provide interpretive services.

Mission and Action Statements

“SJMA promotes responsible care of natural and cultural resources through education and hands-on involvement that inspires respect and reverence for our lands.”

“SJMA empowers local residents and visitors to explore, learn about and protect the spectacular public lands of Southwest Colorado.”

What we do

Since 1988 the SJMA has established a legacy of caring for the land. Side by side with our members and volunteers, we help to ensure the survival of Southwest Colorado’s natural glories for generations to come. In cooperation with the San Juan National Forest and other National Forest and BLM offices, SJMA assists in providing education and interpretation of public lands in Southwest Colorado. This is done through a wide variety of Volunteer Programs and Projects that are coordinated year round. The volunteer programs help and continually educate the public on resources through interpretation, education, information and participation.

SJMA Volunteer Programs and Projects

Please note that a certain amount of training will be provided for each program / project.

This list is only the beginning! Please see our website, www.sjma.org, for a complete list.

“Adopt a Road” Program

Individual, groups or businesses can adopt roads throughout the public lands of SW Colorado. These projects are a great way for team building or an outing for the office staff.

Contact: David Taft, 860-874-5270, dtaft@sjma.org

Purgatory Resort Naturalists

Volunteers lead naturalist hikes during the summer. All programs take place at Purgatory Resort. Knowledge of the natural world is helpful.

Contact: Adriana Stimax astimax@sjma.org

Front Desk Ambassadors

Volunteers provide visitor information at SJMA bookstores located in the Public Lands Centers in Durango, Bayfield, Pagosa Springs, Dolores, and Silverton Visitor Center.

Contact: Priscilla Sherman, psherman@sjma.org, 970-385-1258

San Juan Volunteers

Volunteers greet visitors on high use trails on local Public lands - whether arriving by train in Needle Creek near the Weminuche Wilderness, up high at Ice Lakes, or any of the other millions of acres of public lands in SW Colorado - and provide educational information. Volunteers may hike, backpack, or ride horses on other trails in the Weminuche, Lizard Head, Hermosa, and South San Juan Wilderness Areas or any high-use trail on the San Juan National Forest and some adjacent National Forest lands. Horseback riders must provide their own stock.

Contact: David Taft dtaft@sjma.org 860-874-5270

Wilderness Act of 1964

As the local stewardship group for the largest wilderness area in Colorado, SJMA has always had a particular place in our hearts for wilderness. With the signing of the Wilderness Act by President Lyndon B. Johnson on September 3, 1964, the National Wilderness Preservation System was established to *"...secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness."*

Wilderness is defined as a place where the imprint of humans is substantially unnoticed. It is where natural processes are the primary influences and human activity is limited to primitive recreation and minimum tools. This allows people to experience wild places without intention to disturb or destroy natural processes.

The Wilderness Act provides criteria for determining suitability and establishes restrictions on activities that can be undertaken on a designated area. As of December 2019, over 110 million acres have been established as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System by special Acts of Congress.

Southwest Colorado is home to the Weminuche Wilderness – the state’s largest congressionally designated Wilderness (with a capital W) area - and contains 499,771 acres of untrammelled lands. Our home turf also hosts the 158,790 acre South San Juan Wilderness, the 41,496 acre Lizard Head Wilderness, and the 37,236-acre Hermosa Creek Wilderness. That’s 737,293 acres. That’s 1,152 square miles!

The Wilderness Act was passed by the U.S. congress in 1964 thanks to the tenacity of Howard Zahniser. Sure, a myriad of others contributed to the idea, but Zahniser rewrote the bill an astounding 66 times back in the age of typewriters! He often worked on it for 30 hours straight. He also patiently attended 18 public hearings involving some 16,000 pages of testimony. All of this was to create a federal land designation

never before seen in the U.S. Sadly, the stress of this killed Zahniser just months before he could see president Lyndon B. Johnson sign the act into law.

A great article on wilderness.org summarizes neatly that “Zahniser pointed out the law was intended to hold our expansionist tendencies at bay: “The nature of our civilization is such as to make wilderness preservation difficult at its best. That is the reason for wilderness legislation.” The main purpose of the Wilderness Act is to leave nature in its natural state.

Perhaps the most noticeable thing about a Wilderness area is the lack of motorized and mechanized equipment. Human entry can only be achieved on foot or horseback. There are no roads, motor vehicles, bicycles, or even wheelbarrows. (People with disabilities are allowed to enter via wheelchair). Land managers can't even use chainsaws to clear the trails. Wilderness Volunteers and partnering non-profit groups use six-foot long cross-cut saws that take two people to use. These saws are remarkably efficient and very quiet.

This lack of motorized equipment not only forces everyone to slow down and smell the flowers; it allows visitors to experience only the sounds of nature. Wildlife is more at ease. As the Wilderness Act states, Wilderness must have “outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation”.

The Wilderness Act also mandates that there are virtually no permanent man-made structures in designated Wilderness. “A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain.” The word “untrammelled” is often used by Wilderness devotees. Synonyms for “trammel” include drag, hobble, curb, inhibit, impede, obstruct, and encumber. Inside a Wilderness area, you will find no fences, dams, outhouses, weather stations, corrals, or shelters with the exception of some structures that existed before the area became designated Wilderness. If some sort of structure is erected, including a tent, it must be dismantled within 14 days. However, bridges are allowed where deemed necessary for safety. Other structures may be allowed on a case by case basis so long as they are “substantially unnoticeable”. For more clarification on structures in Wilderness and much more, read US Forest Service Manual chapter 2320 entitled Wilderness Management at this link: tinyurl.com/FSM2320-WildernessManagement

Here's something else to keep in mind: Many designated Wilderness areas have regulations that go beyond what is stated in the Wilderness Act. For example, campfires are not allowed in Chicago Basin and the entire Needle Creek drainage within the Weminuche Wilderness. In our four local Wilderness areas, dogs are allowed to be off leash as long as they are under voice control. However, in the Indian Peaks Wilderness west of Boulder, dogs must be on leash at all times. There are sections within other Wilderness areas where dogs are not allowed at all. Group size limits also vary. Be sure to familiarize yourself with the local regulations before visiting any swath of public lands, Wilderness or not. Often, calling the main offices and talking to a real human being is the best way to make sure you have the most up to date information. Responsible use helps keep public lands open and beautiful for future generations.

The Wilderness Act of 1964 is a law. It restricts grazing, mining, timber cutting, and mechanized vehicles in the protected areas. The wilderness areas are protected and valued for their ecological, historical, scientific, scenic, cultural and experiential resources. The law protects these values for future generations.

The National Wilderness Preservation System is managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the Fish & Wildlife Service, the U.S. Forest Service and the National Park Service (NPS). Wilderness, designated by Congress, is one layer of protection, placed on top of original federal land designation. Although federal agencies are legally responsible for managing Wilderness areas, all citizens have a role and responsibility. As visitors, your behaviors and actions should be appropriate. As citizens and volunteers, you should be aware of the impacts of our lifestyles on our country's wild lands.

A Brief History of Chicago Basin

Weminuche (pronounced whem-a-nooch) is the name of one of the seven bands of Ute people who made the Southwest Colorado Rockies their home. They hunted, fished, and held sacred the land that now bears their name.

Because of its remoteness, little entry and development in the Needle Mountains by settlers and miners occurred prior to 1877. The Animas Canyon Toll Road from Silverton to Animas City (now north Durango) was completed in 1877. The toll road opened up commerce through the Animas Canyon and resulted in a number of small developments in subsequent years. The most notable developments in the canyon were the Shaw House at Elk Park, a way station run by John and Almira Shaw whose renowned cooking was its premier attraction, and the town of Niccora at the mouth of Cascade Creek established by Frank Blackledge, which was the area's most short-lived post office (only 134 days).

A Mr. Webb bought land at Needleton and promoted the area, which accounts for the present day private land and cabins near the train stop.

The original access and development in the Chicago Basin area was apparently from Vallecito Creek to the east. A mixed party of soldiers and civilians led by Lt. C.A.H. McCauley located a route to the Needle Mountains via Johnson Creek, which they named after one of their members, Miles Johnson. The McCauley party also named several other features in the area, including McCauley Peak, Valois Peak, and Grizzly Peak. There is an interesting story behind the naming of Grizzly Gulch. One of the party members, James Smith, was an older prospector who was also rheumatic, supposedly so severe that he had to have someone help him on his horse. With such help one morning, Smith rode up one of the tributaries past a lake, slid off his horse, and started prospecting. He looked up after a short time and saw an infallible cure for rheumatism in the shape of a tremendous grizzly. Jim took off and outran the bear the mile and a half back to camp. At one point, he saw another prospector across the gulch and reportedly yelled "How far behind is he?" in lieu of turning around. The bear was right behind him, and people scattered when they reached camp, all except Lt. Valois, who weighed 250 pounds and carried a long sword. Valois swung the sword, danced around, hollered at his men, and scared the bear off. Valois Peak, a flat-topped mountain to the south, was named after the valiant lieutenant.

Miners in the party established claims in Columbine Basin and Chicago Basin. In Chicago Basin you can see small yellow/orange tailing piles on some of the hillsides, marking where miners dug prospecting holes. The mining activity in the area apparently never went much beyond the prospecting stage, because there are no signs of mechanization, e.g., a reduction mill or other ore processing machinery, and the mine dumps are relatively small. At most, the miners hand-sorted their ore and packed it out on mules. After the railroad was completed in the Animas Canyon in 1882, a trail was constructed down Needle Creek to

connect with the train at Needleton. Today, that miner's trail is the principal access to Chicago Basin.

The Beginning of the San Juan Volunteers

The San Juan Volunteers program began as the "Wilderness Information Specialists" or "WIS" program in 1989 when volunteers met backpackers boarding a Durango and Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad (D&SNGRR) bus at Rockwood, 15 miles north of Durango. The diesel-powered rail bus carried backpackers daily to and from trailheads leading into the Weminuche. They told visitors primarily about the new U.S. Forest Service ban against building campfires in Chicago Basin and Needle Creek drainage.

Later the D&SNGRR railroad cancelled the rail bus service and began to carry backpackers on the regularly scheduled passenger train between Durango and Silverton. Daily summer trains drop off and pick up backpackers at Needleton and Elk Park at the western edge of the Weminuche near where Elk Creek and Needle Creek trails lead into the Weminuche Wilderness. It stops on its way up to Silverton, then again on its return to Durango.

The novel experience of riding a 130+ year old coal fired steam train combined with backpacking through spectacular Rocky Mountain backcountry has increasingly hooked the imagination of vacationers since the Weminuche Wilderness designation in 1975. Unfortunately, the accompanying increase in wild land travel and camping has threatened to damage the Wilderness's pristine characteristics. Backpackers, outfitters, and horseback riders have increasingly impinged on wildlife habitat, depleted firewood supplies, and trampled vegetation until the soil has become too hard packed to grow even a single blade of grass.

In order to alleviate some of the pressure, volunteers began riding the train and contacting Wilderness travelers unloading from the train at Needleton to trek into the Wilderness. Volunteers told every visitor of the official ban against campfires in Chicago Basin and Needle Creek Drainage. But soon visitors were asking volunteers about other regulations, wilderness, wildlife, directions, and the weather. Suddenly, volunteers were challenged to learn more themselves in order to answer visitor questions. In turn, the program's coordinators were challenged to prepare volunteers more completely for the multitude of questions awaiting them.

Needle Creek Trail is one of the busiest backpacking trails in the Weminuche. The trail leads to Chicago Basin, an alpine meadow encircled by the massive, jagged peaks of Windom, Sunlight, and Eolus, which is the destination of hundreds of campers each summer. Snow can make the peaks and high trails inaccessible without special equipment until late June or early July. Typically, visitors camp 2 or 3 days while longer visits last a week or more. Sometimes, as many as 100 people camp in and around Chicago Basin. Stands of sub-alpine fir hide many from view of the trail.

Once it was realized just how important these WIS volunteers were, the program expanded to include more areas on local public lands. Other high-use Weminuche trails include Vallecito, Pine River, Lake Fork (Emerald Lake), Elk Creek, and Highland Mary trails. Outside the Weminuche, San Juan Volunteers' educational information is critical along the Ice Lakes, Pass Creek, and Colorado Trails, just to name a few!

History of the Ghost Riders – now combined with the San Juan Volunteers: Realizing that at times it was

difficult for the on foot backpacker to speak with and relate to horsemen/horsewomen riding on wilderness trails, the idea of training accomplished mounted volunteers in Leave No Trace (LNT) and low impact stock use was born. The Ghost Rider was the solution.

The Ghost Riders program began in 1995. These volunteers were the horse mounted counterpart to the Wilderness Information Specialists. The Ghost Rider program began through the collaborative efforts of the U.S. Forest Service and the San Juan Mountains Association (SJMA). Biff Stransky, U.S. Forest Service, Penny Roeder, former U.S. Forest Service and Jan Lewis-Stransky former Education Coordinator for SJMA were the principal authors of the Ghost Riders program. Tess Lewis-Stransky was the first coordinator of the program. In the first three years over 50 mounted volunteers were trained to be Ghost Rider volunteers.

Ghost Riders carried the same educational messages as the Wilderness Information Specialists to wilderness visitors. Mounted San Juan Volunteers now travel all over the public lands of SW Colorado. In addition they talk with other horseback riders about low impact stock use. These mounted Wilderness Volunteers serve as role models and goodwill ambassadors to horseback riders and other visitors in the backcountry. They are specifically trained for their duties as mounted volunteers.

Activity Description for San Juan Volunteers

Title: San Juan Volunteer

Report to: David Taft at the San Juan Mountains Association (SJMA)

Key Responsibilities:

Communicate with Wilderness and public lands visitors in a positive non-confrontational manner about:

- The 4 W'S
- Forest-wide regulations:
- Wilderness regulations:
- Leave No Trace Principles, ethics, and techniques.

Volunteers:

- Will be prepared to practice Leave No Trace (LNT) principles.
- Will wear authorized uniforms and nametags.
- Will complete required on-line reports.
- Membership in SJMA is recommended.

Other responsibilities may include:

Perform light trail, campsite, and trailhead maintenance which may include:

- Repairing water bars
- Removing trail obstacles such as trees, rocks, or litter.
- Cleaning up campfire rings.
- Replenishing information at the trailheads: including informational signs and registration forms.
- Perform monitoring, surveying, and data collection as needed by the U.S. Forest Service.
- Assist with community outreach such as presentations or volunteer recruiting.

Qualifications:

- Volunteers are representatives of SJMA and the U.S. Forest Service and will maintain a positive, friendly, non-confrontational attitude with the community and/or visitors they contact while volunteering. They will be very clear about the difference between an ethical suggestion and actual forest and wilderness regulations.
- Volunteers must complete required trainings.
- Volunteers must be healthy and able to perform duties on or at trails and trailheads. This may include standing, lifting up to 50 pounds, hiking, camping, all in rough terrain at high elevations that range from 8,000 feet to 13,000 feet and optionally over 14,000 feet.

Time commitment: After appropriate training, volunteers will commit to a minimum of 3 days of volunteering. This is equivalent to 24 hours of uniformed duties that can include: Trail Encounters, Trail Maintenance, and Research and Data Collection.

Volunteers will provide:

- Transportation to and from trailheads
- Personal gear, such as hiking, backpacking, or horse packing gear and boots
- Stock if needed
- Food
- Contact information for emergency contact point person

SJMA will provide:

- Uniforms
- Nametags
- Informational and training sessions

SJMA may terminate this agreement at any time by notifying the other party in writing.

| |
|----------------------------|
| San Juan Volunteers |
|----------------------------|

The San Juan Volunteers play a very vital role in education and the preservation of designated wilderness areas and adjacent public lands. San Juan Volunteers (both hiking and mounted volunteers) are representatives of San Juan Mountains Association (SJMA) and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). Many wilderness travelers will never encounter a USFS Wilderness Volunteer and you may be the only person whom they will meet that represents the SJMA and the USFS.

Overuse of Needle Creek, Chicago Basin, Ice Lakes Basins, and other areas continues, but San Juan Volunteers help alleviate the pressure by educating visitors about Leave No Trace (LNT) skills and ethics and reminding them of Forest-wide, Wilderness, and local regulations.

Volunteer Requirements

It is important for any volunteer to be able to comprehend the volunteer handbook. Once the volunteer handbook is understood and you have completed the mandatory volunteer training(s) there are specific requirements that must be met as a San Juan Wilderness Volunteer. You must commit to a minimum of 3 days of volunteering per season. This is equivalent to 24 hours of uniformed duties that can include: trail encounters, trail maintenance, or research and data collection, in addition to educating the public regarding the 4 W'S, forest-wide regulations, wilderness regulations, site-specific regulations, and Leave No Trace (LNT) ethics.

Attending the annual basecamp setup in the lower Chicago Basin in June is a great way to familiarize yourself with the location and help you adjust to the climate in which you will be volunteering. Other day trips and overnights can be set up with SJMA's backcountry staff. The annual camp-setup and/or other training trips helps volunteers to recognize and become familiar with the busier locations that see moderate to high use throughout the summer months. While attending the basecamp setup or other organized learning sessions, a volunteer will also have the opportunity to learn and practice many of the things that were taught in the handbook and training document. The things that can be practiced in these trips include the 4 W'S in action, how and where to meet visitors arriving by train, LNT principles, trail maintenance, and other valid subjects that are an integral part of this volunteer handbook. You will also have the opportunity to meet other volunteers, many of whom have been volunteers for a number of years and will be able to share a wide variety of recommendations and past experiences in their many different and rewarding circumstances.

Meeting Visitors

Meeting Visitors

SJMA public contact programs operate under a philosophy called the "good-will ambassador", which means we try to treat each visitor or contact as an invited or welcome guest. Remember, as a San Juan Wilderness Volunteer you are a representative of SJMA and the USFS. All your interactions with the public must be educational and non-confrontational. You are a good-will ambassador. Take pride in doing a good job of serving the public.

DO

Keep in mind our #1 role is to provide information about history, regulations, LNT ethics, public land stewardship, and other important information.

Three key factors when making a contact:

1. Your approach.

Be friendly and conversational. Start with some small talk.

Examples:

- Hi, I am a volunteer.
- How is your hike/ride going today?
- Are you enjoying your visit to the Wilderness/National Forest?

Then you may lead into an important message.

Examples:

- Have you been here before? (Previous visitors may be more aware of regulations and we don't want to talk down to anyone. Be sure to tailor your questions accordingly so as not to insult anyone's intelligence.)
- May I share some information with you?
- Are you aware of the goats and marmots in Chicago Basin?
- Are you aware of the potential for afternoon lightning storms?
- Have you ever heard of Leave No Trace?
- For your dog's safety and wildlife protection please keep them close to you.
- Would you like more information about Wilderness?

2. Your attitude.

Be positive, friendly and interested in the visitor you contact. Focus on finding out what the visitor may have to offer to you as well as what you may offer them.

Example:

- Have you been here before / how often?
- Do you live in the area?
- How far are you traveling today?

3. The impression you leave with the contact.

Leave a feeling of having left the visitor with informative and important information that will make theirs' and other's experiences in wilderness more enjoyable.

Example:

You have provided them with some stewardship information that they can pass along to friends and family. Wilderness brochure, LNT card, or "Reasons to Leash Your Dog in the Backcountry". The visitor is happy that someone is out and about providing helpful information.

Other Do's

- Remove your sunglasses when you begin speaking with a visitor. Eye contact is important. (If it is really sunny outside, you can put your sunglasses on after a little while.)
- Stand shoulder to shoulder when sharing information rather than face to face. You will be less threatening.
- Lead up to a situation that you wish to address and avoid being abrupt.
- Keep your contact on a positive note.
- Be a good listener!
- Ask the visitors if you can share some important information with them about being a good steward in Wilderness.
- Focus on the "Authority of the Resource" not the authority of the agency or the regulations. Example: explain that camping too close to a water source can discourage wildlife from drinking there and damage fragile riparian vegetation that wildlife might feed on or use for cover. This is instead of focusing on the fact that it's illegal to camp within 100 feet of a water source. Remember, we have no policing or law enforcement capability. Our work is to provide information in a friendly non-confrontational manner.
- Answer all questions if possible. Refer to maps/GPS if necessary.

- Avoid dangerous situations or confrontational visitors. Just say have a nice day and walk away if you feel threatened. Document the situation via writing and/or surreptitious photos and give it to your program leader or the law enforcement officer.

Don't....

- Get into the visitors face or space.
- Display an overbearing attitude.
- Be critical or sharp.
- Be self-righteous.
- Assume a threatening or aggressive posture (crossing your arms or pointing a finger).
- Lose your cool.
- Respond to abusive language in anger.
- Be an elitist.
- Talk politics or be negative about the agencies.

Note: See **WISDOM** section for further details to enhance your public contact skills and personal safety.

Volunteer Messages (The 4 W'S)

The basic message that San Juan Volunteers are asked to deliver is simple – to inform and educate. The information you provide is information you must know well. You will need to memorize a few of the following items before you meet visitors. After a few encounters you will easily remember the information. Then you will appear relaxed and knowledgeable. Detailed information and guidelines are available in the publication entitled “Trip Planning: Weminuche Wilderness” available at Public Land Centers or at fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprd3792895.pdf.

“The 4 W’S” (note the S!) – Water, Waste, Weather, Wildlife, and Snags

Water

Camp a minimum of 100 feet or more away from water sources. A water source is anywhere that water flows from or is stored. During the early season when snowmelt is running off or creates temporary holding ponds, camping options may be limited. A good rule of thumb is 200 feet or about 60 adult paces. Horses cannot be restrained within 100 feet of water sources. Bathe 200 feet or more away from water sources. Remember, this is for the sake of the resource – fragile vegetation and soil, food and water sources for wildlife. They live here, people don’t. Treat all water for drinking using a filtering system or stove for boiling. This is to avoid water-borne illnesses such as Giardia and Cryptosporidium.

Waste

LNT ethics recommend that people do everything - wash, camp, deposit human waste – at least 200 feet from water sources. Pack out toilet paper, wet wipes, tampons, and other personal sanitation supplies. Never bury them. Animals love to dig this stuff up. (Yes, seriously. For some reason they will leave plain old poop alone but they will dig up other things). Preferably, use a human waste disposal bag that will be packed out. These bags may be available for free at certain high-use trailheads. Otherwise, use the cat-hole method: Deposit solid human waste in holes dug 6 to 8 inches deep and 4 inches wide at least 200

feet from water, camp, and trails. The rationale here is that so many people use these campsites that if waste is exposed, it will create an unsightly and smelly mess. Do not wash dishes in water sources. Subtle changes in aquatic ecosystems will occur that can damage the aquatic ecosystem. Studies have speculated that these changes result from increases in the concentration of limited nutrients as a result of camping, bathing, washing, and other recreational activities that occur close to water sources. Wildlife may be disrupted and unable to get their water. Pack it in, Pack it out. Pack out everything you pack in including trash and leftover food.

Weather

Afternoon thunderstorms are the normal weather pattern in summertime – especially July and August. Being off the peaks and other areas above timberline by noon as a good rule of thumb in order to avoid adverse effects from electrical storms and rain. See the “**Safety and Weather**” section for more details.

Wildlife

Marmots and mountain goats like the salt in clothing, packs, trekking pole handles, and human urine. Marmots are a problem almost anywhere above 8,500 feet and mountain goats are especially a problem in Chicago Basin and the surrounding areas above 10,000 feet. Hang all gear at least 5 feet up in a tree. Marmots and mountain goats do not climb trees. If you are camping above treeline or an area where the trees aren't tall enough, store everything inside your tent or travel with it. It is highly unlikely that marmots or goats will tear into a tent although anything is possible.

Mountain goats in Chicago Basin and adjacent basins WILL bother people in established camps. And the higher people camp, the more likely it is that they will be bothered by goats. We DO NOT want the goats to become habituated to humans. It is acceptable to scare them out of camp by yelling, chasing them, and throwing sticks (no rocks, please). Be careful while peeing. Pee on rocks or logs so the goats don't dig up the vegetation trying to get to the salts. It is not uncommon for goats to approach people while they are peeing and use them like a “drinking fountain”. Warn visitors that while it is safe to sleep outside of a tent in areas inhabited by goats, they run the risk of waking in the middle of the night to a goat literally staring them in the face. Goats will not let you touch them, but they will get closer to you than a snotty little brother after you have made it clear that you don't want to be touched.

Be aware of bears and the potential of attracting them with food smells, etc. Never leave food unattended. Use a bear hang – at least 10 feet up a tree and 4 feet out from the trunk - or bear proof container for food and trash or any smelly items such as toothpaste or lotions that may attract bears. If you are camped well above treeline, bears will not be present. Use caution in areas where trees do not accommodate a 10 foot high bear hang. Regardless, respect wildlife habitat. They live here. People don't.

Snags

Snags are standing dead trees. Snags are generally important in a forest because they create habitat for a variety of important bugs and animals. Everything from ants to weasels can make their home in a snag! But since the spruce beetle infestation began making its way across the area, there are far more snags than necessary. These standing dead trees pose a hazard for campers, especially during periods of high wind or heavy snowfall. Campers should be advised to scope out their camp spot to minimize the risk of dead trees falling on their tent or livestock. The increase of dead trees will lead to a natural shift in viable camp spots. Some visitors might have “their spot” that they have used for 20+ years but it may now be dangerous or already covered by fallen trees. Naturally attractive campsites might move out into meadows where more

vegetation will be compacted and destroyed. We all need to use our best judgment on where new campsites are acceptable. We don't want anyone to feel like they have to camp under a widow maker! (A "widow maker" is a tree that may fall down and take a life!)

WISDOM

WISDOM is a six step, systematic process for effective backcountry public contacts and Wilderness Volunteer safety. It is a consistent, professional approach to positive public contacts.

- W** **Where are you coming from?**
- I** **introduce yourself**
- S** **Size up the situation**
- D** **Decide on a course of action**
- O** **Outline and explain the violation**
- M** **Make a positive impression**

Where are you coming from?

- Don't bring your "baggage" into the public contact.
- Be aware of your mood, disposition, and attitude.
- Begin each new contact fresh, no carryovers.

Introduce Yourself

- Be considerate of one's privacy and space.
- Be sure you are acknowledged before entering camp.
- Formally introduce yourself, state your title.
- Do not initiate a handshake, but reciprocate if one is offered.

Size up the situation

- Email david@sjma.org letting them know where you are before you begin public contact.
- Begin sizing up the camp and visitors long before entering camp or introductions.
- Make quick, mental observations; note the red flags.
- Use the eyes in the back of your head; listen to your inner voice.

Decide on a course of action

- Once decided, stay with your professional judgment and instincts.
- If the infraction deserves a violation notice, then state it and inform the violators that although you are a volunteer, if a wilderness volunteer were to identify the infraction a ticket could be given.
- 99% of the time, stick to your decision. If, however, circumstances clearly warrant changing your decision, do so.

Outline and explain the violation

- Clearly explain the violation in question.
- State the regulation and the intent behind the regulation.
- If confrontational, back out of the situation. Do not compromise your safety.

Make a positive impression

- Be courteous and professional.
- Treat all visitors fairly and consistently without bias.
- Represent yourself and your agency with dignity and grace.
- Make a difference; make a positive impression.

Trail Encounter

Hopefully your first encounter will be an amazing experience. You have learned a great amount of information and now must put that information to use. It is important that all of your public contacts are handled in a professional manner. Skill and professionalism will be your primary focus while volunteering for SJMA. The people whom you encounter will see you as a representative of SJMA and the USFS.

Meeting visitors entails incorporating a few fundamentals. Your personality will guide the conversation. Each contact you meet will be different because each individual you meet will be different. Each encounter will improve your skills. Don't expect to be perfect on the first day. There will be questions that you may not have the answers to. Tell the truth and let your encounters be aware that you are a volunteer and if they require further information then they may contact SJMA for the answers to their questions.

Your primary goal as a volunteer is to be informational and educational. Educational opportunities exist in almost each and every encounter that you will have as a volunteer. Remember, your job is to inform and educate while helping to maintain our precious natural resources for future generations. By helping the public change their current philosophies and behaviors, you are helping to maintain the historic, cultural and natural sites, and the wilderness for years to follow.

When you meet visitors you will have only one chance to make a first impression. This will set the stage for the entire conversation. Always be courteous and friendly while retaining a professional appearance. Your goal is to make positive contacts and non-confrontational conversations. Begin by introducing yourself by name and explain what you are doing. "Hello, my name is Chris and I am a volunteer for the San Juan Mountains Association". After introducing yourself, it is sometimes helpful to ask them a few questions to learn more about them. "Where are you from?" or "Have you been here before?" or relate to them by giving them a compliment. "That's a nice looking backpack. What brand is it?" Be sure to listen to their reply. If they do not feel the need to continue the conversation, briefly remind them of pertinent regulations and Leave No Trace (LNT) ethics. Keep it brief and finish by telling them to have a safe journey.

As a volunteer, and possibly the only representative they will meet, it is critical to keep a professional, friendly manner regardless of your personal feelings. Be complete and accurate with the information that you convey. Keep the contact professional. If the visitor becomes particularly difficult, withdraw and make sure to enter your observations about the encounter in your trip report that you send into SJMA.

It is important to remember that volunteers are not actual Wilderness Volunteers or law enforcement personnel. As a volunteer you do have the right to collect information and convey that information in a trip report. Listen and take careful notes specifying the location, time of the encounter, and other relevant information. Remember the volunteer's primary job is to kindly educate. Volunteers do not enforce the law.

How much should you tell the visitors?

Only tell people what you know. If you do not know the answer to their question, tell them so. If possible, offer to assist them in finding the answer by looking at a map or giving them materials that may help, such as a handout. **Volunteers are not expected to be travel guides.** Our main focus is to take care of the land and to provide Wilderness and public lands education.

Informational Supplies to Carry With You

First and foremost you need to be prepared before going into the wilderness. A basic equipment list can be viewed under the “**Equipment Suggestions**” section. In addition to the items on the suggestions list, a San Juan Wilderness Volunteer should carry up to date information including;

- “Trip Planning: Weminuche Wilderness” available at Public Land Centers or printed at home from fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprd3792895.pdf.
- Forest-wide regulations brochure
- Wilderness regulations
- LNT principle cards
- Weminuche Wilderness or applicable area map (this is easier to share with visitors than a tiny GPS screen)
- Pencil/pen and paper
- Plastic bags to hand out to trail users so they can easily pack out their toilet paper, etc.

As a volunteer you should have all of this information readily available in addition to any other up-to-date information that is provided by the SJMA or USFS.

SJNF Forest-Wide Regulations

The following regulations are in effect in the entire San Juan National Forest. Violators may be cited and fined. A complete listing of official orders is available for review in Forest and District offices.

Stock Feed - All feed must be weed-free certified in Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nebraska, Wyoming, or Utah and marked with certified twine, packing or transit certificate.

Fires - Do not leave campfires unattended. Make sure fires are out / ashes are cold. Dead and down wood may be collected for firewood where fires are permitted. No fireworks of any kind are allowed, ever. Always know up-to-date fire restrictions / bans.

Trash - Pack out and properly dispose of trash / refuse. Deposit and bury human waste in a cat-hole dug 6-8" deep at least 200' from water. Pack out toilet paper.

Caches - Caches or stashing of equipment for more than 14 days is not permitted. This includes parked vehicles.

Trees - Cutting or damaging trees without a permit is prohibited.

Trails - Do not shortcut switchbacks. Do not block or interfere with the use of roads, trails or gates.

Occupancy and Use – After 14 consecutive days in one location, you must move beyond a 3-mile radius. Possession or use of marijuana is illegal.

Outfitter and Guides - Must have or currently be under valid permit.

Hunting - Hunting is permitted under regulation by the Colorado Parks and Wildlife.

Firearms – Weapons CANNOT be discharged within 150 yards of a building, campsite or otherwise occupied area; on or across a road, trail or body of water; in a manner or place that may expose a person or property to injury or damage. On federal lands, firearms cannot be concealed and must be carried in plain sight.

Wilderness Regulations

DESIGNATED WILDERNESS

(Weminuche, South San Juan, Lizard Head, and Hermosa Wilderness Areas)

- Motor vehicles, motorboats and motorized equipment are prohibited.
- Hang gliders and bicycles are prohibited.
- You cannot possess or use a wagon, cart or other vehicle.
- Landing of aircraft (including helicopters) is prohibited.
- Dropping off or picking up of materials or people by means of aircraft is prohibited.
- Possessing, launching, and/or landing of drones is not permitted at any time.

- You cannot store or cache equipment, personal property or supplies.
- The maximum group number must not exceed 15 people.
- A combination of people and livestock in a group must not exceed 25 (with the number of people still not above 15).

- You cannot camp or build a campfire within 100' of streams, lakes or other water sources.
- Human waste and wash water must be disposed of at least 200' from any water source.

- Dogs must be leashed or under voice control and within sight at all times.
- You cannot graze stock in areas posted as closed to grazing.
- Recreational livestock are prohibited from being restrained within 100 feet of lakeshores and streams or within riparian areas.

- To lessen erosion, shortcutting of switchbacks is prohibited.

- Obey site-specific regulations regarding campfire bans, camping distance from water, and livestock use.

The *Forest Wide Regulations* and *Wilderness Regulations* are current as of 2020.

Regulations Specific to Needle Creek Drainage and Chicago Basin

These regulations are in addition to the above Wilderness Regulations:

- Camping is not allowed in the Twin Lakes Basin. There is a sign indicating the boundary above Chicago Basin. This is in order to protect fragile tundra vegetation.
- Campfires are not allowed in the Needle Creek drainage, including Chicago Basin. Use a camp stove.

Other Site-Specific Regulations in Wilderness

There regulations are in addition to the above Wilderness Regulations for other sites in designated Wilderness areas – specifically certain lakes. Look online here:

fs.usda.gov/detail/sanjuan/specialplaces/?cid=stelprd3808113

Practice Leave No Trace (LNT)

Leave No Trace (LNT) is a national education program dedicated to promoting and inspiring responsible recreational practices through education, research, and partnerships. The Leave No Trace program is a partnership of federal land management agencies, outdoor educators, conservation groups, manufacturers, outdoor retailers, user groups and individuals who share a commitment to preserving and protecting our public lands.

Leave No Trace (LNT) has established seven principles to offer recreational visitors behavioral guidelines for their travels. The principles apply to everyone-overnight campers, day hikers, sightseers, bird watchers, stock users or anyone who enjoys the outdoors. Although some principles are more suitable for certain activities than others, they should still help you prepare for a safe, low impact outdoor experience.

1. Plan Ahead and Prepare

- Know the regulations and special concerns for the area you will visit. Check with land managing agencies, rangers, or park staff about area regulations.
- Tell someone where you are going and when you plan to return.
- Prepare for extreme weather, hazards, and emergencies
- Schedule your trip to avoid times of high use
- Visit in small groups. Split larger parties into groups of 4 - 6
- Repackage food in reusable containers to minimize waste
- Always carry a map, food, water, extra clothing layers, and raingear

2. Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces

- When hiking or riding use existing trails and stay on them.
- Do not cut switchbacks.
- Camp in established sites or already impacted sites.
- Camp or restrain stock at least 200 feet from water sources.
- Protect riparian areas by camping at least 200 feet away from lakes and streams.
- If you must make a camp in a pristine, non-impacted place, be sure to only camp there for one night. Also, choose a different path every time you walk through camp so that no new trails are created.
- Do not keep stock in pristine camps.
- Good campsites are found, not made. Altering a site is not necessary.

In popular areas

- Walk single file in the middle of the trail, even when wet or muddy.
- Keep campsites small. Focus activity in areas where vegetation is absent.

In pristine areas

- Disperse use to prevent the creation of campsites and trails.
- Avoid places where impacts are just beginning.

3. Dispose of Waste Properly - Pack it in, Pack it out

- Inspect your campsite and rest areas for trash or spilled foods.
- Pack out all trash, leftover food, and litter.
- Take responsibility for your disposables and pick up what others left behind.
- Deposit solid human waste in cat-holes dug 6 to 8 inches deep at least 200 feet from water, camp, and trails.
- Cover and disguise the cat-hole when finished.
- Pack out toilet paper and hygiene products.
- To wash yourself, your dishes, or clothes, carry water 200 feet away from lakes or streams and use small amounts of biodegradable soap.
- Scatter strained dishwater.

4. Leave What You Find

- Leave plants, wildlife, and other natural items in their place.
- Do not pick plants or remove rocks as souvenirs
- Preserve the past, observe but do not touch, cultural or historic artifacts.
- Leave rocks, plants and other natural objects as you find them.
- Avoid introducing or transporting non-native species.
- Do not build structures, furniture, or dig trenches.
- Leave the land and its resources intact for the future.

5. Minimize Campfire Impacts

- Campfires can cause lasting impacts to the backcountry. Avoid them whenever possible, especially above tree line.
- Use a lightweight stove for cooking and enjoy a lantern for light.
- Where fires are permitted, use established fire rings, fire pans or mound fires.
- Keep fires small. Only use sticks from the ground that can be broken by hand.

- Pack out trash from your campfire.
- Break up multiple fire rings and naturalize the area.
- Burn all wood and coals to ash, put out campfires completely, scatter cool ashes.

6. Respect Wildlife

- Observe wildlife from a distance. Do not follow or approach them.
- Never feed animals. Feeding wildlife damages their health, alters natural behaviors, and exposes them to predators and other dangers.
- Protect wildlife and your food by storing rations and trash securely.
- Control pets at all times or leave them at home.
- Avoid wildlife during sensitive times: mating, nesting, raising young, or winter.
- Camp away from animal water sources.

7. Be Considerate of Other Visitors

- Respect other visitors and protect the quality of their experience.
- Be courteous and yield to other users on the trail. Mountain bikes should yield to hikers and horses.
- Step to the downhill side of the trail when encountering pack stock.
- Yield to horses and talk quietly to calm the horses. Let them know that you are human.
- Take breaks and camp away from trails and other visitors.
- Let nature's sounds prevail. Avoid loud voices, noises, and music.

Be Prepared

When visiting the backcountry - whether for half a day or weeks on-end - it is important to always be prepared before going into the wilderness. Following is a basic equipment suggestion list for any visitor to the wilderness. Although these items may not ensure survival, will definitely prolong your survival time in the backcountry.

Equipment Suggestions

- Sturdy Rain gear – test it in the shower beforehand
- Compass or GPS w/ extra batteries / charger
- Toilet Paper or wet wipes (unless you are well schooled in “Nature’s toilet papers”)
- Mirror or emergency locator device
- Insect repellent
- Headlamp
- Extra Batteries
- Matches (storm proof, in a watertight container)
- Knife (multi-use camp tool)
- Signal Whistle – an absolute must!
- Paper (well, plastic) topographic map of the area
- Sleeping bag
- Sunglasses

- Sun screen
- Hat
- Water Bottle
- Water Filter
- Food Storage
- Extra clothing
- Bandana -104 different uses!
- First Aid Kit that includes: blister supplies, anti-inflammatory pills, bandages, tape, etc.

For a more in-depth packing list with recommended necessities and optional items for overnight trips, contact dtaft@sjma.org.

Safety and Weather

Travel Tips

- Be observant. Watch the trail and remember your route. Note landmarks, streams, mountains and the lay of the land.
- Keep track of time and weather.
- Be alert for loose rocks, ledges, standing dead trees (beetle kill!) and other hazards.
- Only travel alone if you have experience in the woods. On the trail, keep your group together and don't let anyone lag behind.
- Make camp before dark. Traveling in darkness or during a storm could lead to tragedy.
- Hydrate yourself. DRINK LOTS OF WATER!

Survival Tips

- Exposure to the elements is more dangerous than hunger and thirst. You may live more than a week without food, for three days without water, but for only a few hours in severe weather.
- Get out of the wind. Move from exposed ridges or flats. Go to the leeward side (sheltered from the wind side) of a mountain, behind trees, rocks, or other natural barriers. Find natural shelter in rock formations, caves, dense evergreen forest, behind large logs. In winter, be sure that snow from overhead branches will not fall into your fire.
- If you cannot find a natural shelter, build a lean to with poles and evergreen thatch. If unable to do this, make a windbreak of evergreen boughs stuck into the ground or snow.
- DO NOT camp in a gulch or ravine bottom. A sudden storm could wash you out.

Important Reminders

- Plan your route.
- Carry essential equipment.
- **Tell someone where you are going and when you plan to return. (Please tell you emergency contact person – a friend or family member).**
- Be observant.
- Stay calm if you do get lost.
- Stop, sit down, and think.
- Learn to read and understand topographical maps of the area you are in or be familiar with a GPS and have a way to keep the batteries charged.

Storms

Lightning storms can be severe in the high country. Storms can appear without notice, blowing in over the mountain tops. When lightning is imminent, don't take chances. Do the following;

- Sit or lie down if in open country. Avoid clustering together.
- Avoid large or lone trees.
- Get away from horses and stock.
- Avoid tops of ridges, hill tops, wide open spaces, ledges, outcroppings of rock and sheds or shelters in exposed locations.
- Keep away from wire fences, telephones lines, and metal tools.
- If outdoors in a lightning storm, the safest place is in an area of smaller trees surrounded by taller trees. Otherwise, seek low ground such as ravines but be careful of the potential for flash floods.

Hypothermia

Hypothermia is the rapid, progressive mental and physical collapse that occurs when a person's body is chilled to the core. It is caused by exposure to cold, aggravated by wet, wind, and exhaustion. It occurs most often when the temperature is between 30 and 50 degrees—making it hard for people to accept its danger.

Cold kills in two distinct steps: (1) exposure and exhaustion and (2) hypothermia. Exposure occurs when your body begins to lose heat faster than it produces it. To compensate for loss of heat, you can either exercise to stay warm or your body will make involuntary adjustments to preserve natural temperature in the vital organs. Either of these responses drains your energy reserves until they are rapidly exhausted.

Hypothermia Symptoms

When your energy reserves are exhausted, lowered body temperature affects the brain, depriving you of judgment and reasoning power. (You do not realize this is happening.) You may have uncontrollable fits of shivering; vague, slow or slurred speech, memory lapse, or incoherence, fumbling hands; frequent stumbling, drowsiness, apparent exhaustion, and inability to get up after rest. This is hypothermia. Your internal temperature is sliding downward. Without timely treatment, this slide leads to stupor, collapse and death.

Hypothermia Treatment

Treatment must be immediate and drastic. The victim may deny being in trouble. Believe their symptoms rather than their denials. Get them out of the wind and rain and strip off all wet clothes. If they are only mildly impaired, give them warm drinks, keep them awake, get them into dry clothes and a warm sleeping bag with another person, who is also stripped. If possible, put victim between two warmth donors.

Hypothermia Defense

The best defense against hypothermia is to avoid exposure and stay hydrated. Recognize hypothermia weather and dress for it. Stay dry and protected. Avoid cotton clothing, such as jeans and cotton thermals. Wear fabrics that wick moisture and dry fast, like Capilene, polypropylene, fleece, and wool. If you cannot stay dry and warm under existing weather conditions with the clothes and equipment you have, get out of the weather. Make camp while you still have reserves of energy, drink lots of fluids (hot), and put on dry clothes. Build a fire if you have to.

Stream Crossings

There can be many stream crossings in wilderness with no bridges or logs available to cross on. Most stream crossings must be accomplished by rock hopping, using a fallen log as a bridge, or wading. Extreme care should be used with either method since rocks and logs around streams can be very slippery. Occasionally it may be necessary to wade across the stream, particularly during times of high water. When crossing a stream, do the following; Pick a spot with the least rapids or current. It may not necessarily be the shallowest or narrowest spot. **Cross streams whose source is in snowfield or glaciers in the early morning when their flow is lower.**

Wear your pack in a normal position, but with the waistband unfastened and shoulder straps loosened. In case of a fall the pack can be easily removed if necessary. Use a trekking poles or a stick for balance. Face upstream placing the pole into the river bottom while moving sideways, and forward at an angle.

Keep your hiking footwear on to prevent injury to your feet. If you are wearing waterproof or leather boots that will take a long time to dry out, consider bringing river shoes or tennis shoes for stream crossings. Do not attempt crossing barefoot. Consider removing socks. Once across, wipe out the inside of the boots with a cloth, bandana, or sock top before putting them back on. (This is your chance to clean out your boots.) Getting your boots wet will not hurt them if they are dried properly.

If you are on your horse, be sure you have contact on the reins. Do not inhibit the horse's movement with your legs; keep them out of the way if the stream is deep. Normally horses will pick their way through the rocks. Try to enter and exist on hardened surfaces so as not to impact or destroy the fragile stream bank.

Altitude

Acclimatization to high altitude involves complex changes in the body. Breathing is more rapid, and the blood increases its concentration of oxygen-carrying blood cells by reducing the amount of plasma in the blood. At high altitudes the amount of oxygen available diminishes. Your body starts adapting to this lack of oxygen. About 90% of acclimatization occurs in 10 days and 98% occurs in 6 weeks. Symptoms that indicate you are not acclimatized are; shortness of breath, tiredness, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, and a headache. Mountain sickness usually results from ascending too rapidly. Some people become weak and pale with shallow breathing followed by rapid breaths. Sleep may be difficult. Resting during the first 24 hours at a new altitude is helpful. Take a lay-over day or go down in elevation for a day or two. A good rule of thumb is to go down at least 2,000 feet. Usually symptoms go away after 24-48 hours. Proper diet and fluid intake is also very important. Drink at least 2 quarts of water per day, 4 is preferable. Be sure to include electrolytes in your diet so that your body will better absorb the water. Also be aware of the symptoms of HAPE (High Altitude Pulmonary Edema) and HACE (High Altitude Cerebral Edema). Both of these are extremely dangerous and may cause death. **The only treatment for both is RAPID DESCENT.**

Water Purification

Giardia lamblia is becoming a serious problem in outdoor waters. Boil water to kill any protozoa and amoebas. Chemical treatments for water, such as chlorine tablets or iodine, are not as dependable, although extending the time between treatment and consumption reduces the chances of infection. Some people experience problems with long-term use of chemical water treatments.

Although filters have been used effectively by Wilderness Volunteers, they can be expensive and may not filter out all microorganisms. Look for the “absolute” rating of a filter. The absolute rating means no particles larger than the rated size will pass through the filter. To reliably remove the *Giardia* cyst, a maximum pore size of four microns is recommended. A filter size of 0.2 microns should remove bacteria as well. There are several new filters on the market that are both affordable and effective.

A Steri-pen is another option but is only effective with very clear water. Cloudy water will need to be filtered first using a piece of cloth or a water filter system. Steri-pens can help eliminate viruses in the water and other things that filtering alone cannot. Consult with an expert in outdoor equipment to make the best choices.

Uniforms

Depending on your particular assignment you will be provided with a San Juan Wilderness Volunteer shirt and name tag to wear when you are working. This will give you a professional appearance that will help you fit into the role of a San Juan Mountains Association and U.S. Forest Service representative. The uniform is a good icebreaker for people who have questions or need help. It also helps you to approach people more easily and talk to them as an official volunteer. Be sure to wear the shirt and your supplied name tag whenever you are on the trail on duty. It is not necessary to wear it in camp. An SJMA or SJNF hat is also recommended. These are available at our bookstores.

You will need to provide your own pants. Preferably a shade of green with pockets to easily access supplies such as garbage bags, notebook and pencil, and maps. Remember to dress professionally. No cutoffs, swim shorts, or jogging shorts. If you look good you will feel good and you will do a professional job.

Unless you need the support from heavy, stiff boots, the lighter the footwear the better for both your legs and the trail. Many people have walked thousands of miles in lightweight trail running shoes. No matter what footwear you use for hiking, be sure to have light-soled footwear for when you are in camp so as to keep impact to a minimum. Walking from kitchen to sleeping tent inevitably creates a trail, but if you walk lightly it will be barely noticeable and will rehabilitate more easily.

A note on etiquette: If you must make a camp in a pristine, non-impacted place, be sure to only camp there for one night. Also, choose a different path every time you walk through camp so that no new trails are created.

Please wash and return your shirt to the SJMA office within 2 days after your return. It is possible that some of you may check out a shirt for the season, depending on how many days per week you will be volunteering. There is a limited supply of shirts.

Trail Maintenance

Trail maintenance is a necessity in the backcountry. In order to minimize new trails and trail erosion we must try to maintain the trails to the best of our ability. This may include moving small trees, rocks, or other items that may be blocking the existing trail. It can also include placing broken branches or other

barriers to deter cross cutting of existing trails. We also rely on you as a volunteer to report any type of major obstruction, cross cutting, or maintenance that may require personnel with the proper equipment to correct the trail issue. In your trip report, list any and all details of occurrence(s) that you may have encountered on the trail which you volunteered. Your information helps maintain the trails.

To receive further trail maintenance training , please contact David Taft, David@sjma.org.

Research and Data Collection

How many people visit the Weminuche Wilderness, Ice Lakes, and other areas of the San Juan National Forest each year? Where do they come from and how long do they stay? Were they given information prior to their trip? Where did their information come from? Do they know LNT ethics? These questions and accurate answers can help SJMA and the U.S. Forest Service gain a better understanding of how to manage the Weminuche Wilderness. It becomes more important as the numbers increase to try to understand what is happening on trails within wilderness areas. As their popularity continues to increase rapidly, we can aid the agencies management decisions by providing accurate data. Volunteers will be expected to gather information as they speak with wilderness visitors. The information gathered will be obtained through observation skills as well as leading questions, though it is not to be confused with a survey. A popular way of gathering information is simply asking questions through the conversation that will give you the data you are looking for and jotting down the information after the contact. This is an important part of the volunteer program as we are the eyes and ears of the agency. We give them guidance in their management goals through accurate data collection.

One of the most important things that you can do as a volunteer is to document your experiences in a daily log and later transfer that information to the **online volunteer form**. Be sure to also **submit your volunteer hours** by logging in a sjma.org. Listing the tasks you perform for the day, describing your encounters with visitors and writing your observations about them will help in a number of ways. First, it records tasks performed, such as trail work, for future volunteers to keep abreast of trouble spots on the trail and conditions in general. Second, if an encounter with an individual or group of visitors does not go well, journal entries can give accurate accounts of what happened. For this reason you should keep a note pad and pencil with you at all times and jot down your observations while they are still fresh in your mind.

Submitting Volunteer Hours

Please submit your hours by logging onto your account at sjma.org. Your account is your email address that you used when you signed up to volunteer for SJMA. The first time you log in, select “forgot password” and enter your email address on the next page. You will receive an email that will help you create your own password. If your email address is not recognized, contact dtaft@sjma.org to have your volunteer account created.

Submit volunteer hours according to the correct program. There are San Juan Wilderness Volunteer (SJR) categories for each district of the forest and some sub-areas. There are also categories for Adopt-a-road, Purgatory Naturalists, and each of the many other programs where you can volunteer with SJMA. If you do not see the correct program on your list, contact SJMA to have it assigned to you.

Online volunteer form

The online volunteer form is one of the most important ways for us to calculate the time that volunteers put in each year. The on-line form also helps us to evaluate areas that may need specific attention to resolve any existing problems. Once the form is submitted, it helps tally all the info provided. In order to access the on-line volunteer form go to:

<https://forms.gle/7drEamjWGZid7ahR6>

Example of the Online Form

*This form is subject to change! Please use the link to access and submit it online.

San Juan Ranger Trip Report

This form helps SJMA to tally forest visitors, stay abreast on issues with trails and/or encounters, and provides us insight to volunteer satisfaction. Please be as thorough as you can. We appreciate your time! Speaking of time, please submit your volunteer hours by logging into your [sjma.org](#) account. Questions? Email mk@sjma.org and david@sjma.org

Email address *

Valid email address

This form is collecting email addresses. [Change settings](#)

Your Name / Group Name *

Short answer text

Start Date of Trip

Month, day, year



Number of days out

Short answer text

Which trail did you patrol?

Short answer text

How many overnight users (backpackers, horse packers, bike packers, etc.) did you encounter?

Short answer text

How many day day trippers (hikers, runners, horseback, bike, etc.)?

Short answer text

How many dogs?

Short answer text



How many dogs were off leash? (estimate if needed)

Short answer text
.....

How many stock animals?

Short answer text
.....

Where were the trail users encountered from? (State is sufficient)

Short answer text
.....

What (if any) trail work or restoration did you do?

Long answer text
.....

Were there any notable issues with the trails? (downed trees, blow outs, tread issues, avalanche paths, etc)

Long answer text
.....

Any notable wildlife sightings?

Long answer text
.....

Where did the trail users encountered get pretrip information?

Short answer text
.....

Challenging encounters with users?

Long answer text
.....

Anything else to add? Thanks so much!

Long answer text
.....

Trip Planning for Backpackers and the Chicago Basin Trip Planning Guide

If you are planning a trip to Chicago Basin, or anywhere in the Weminuche Wilderness or San Juan Mountains, please contact the San Juan Mountains Association by phone. This is the best way to get quick, detailed, and up to date information. Call 970-385-1210. This information will help you – particularly if you need to educate a group on wilderness camping and ethics before you leave home - making your trip easier once you arrive.

Chicago Basin is situated between 10,800 and 11,200 feet elevation (timberline is ~ 11,800 and 12,000 feet), and is snow-free from mid - late June to mid-September most years. The peak period of visitation is July 4th through Labor Day weekend. During this period it is not unusual for 50 or more people to be dropped off at Needleton on a single day (although the train does limit the number of parties dropped off per day), and to have 75-150 people camping in the Basin at any one time.

Weather: The San Juan Mountains have an afternoon thunderstorm season that generally begins in early July and lasts until late August or early September. Some years it starts earlier and/or continues later. Afternoon thunderstorms are almost a daily occurrence in the mountains during this period. At times, it can rain continuously for days. Check the long-term weather forecast before you leave. If you go to weather.gov and enter “Chicago Basin, CO”, you can get a pinpoint forecast for the Basin at 12,287 feet, near Columbine Pass. (You can pan the map and get pinpoint forecast for anywhere you want!)

The entire Chicago Basin Trip Planning Guide (CBTPG) can be found at www.sjma.org and is a priceless resource for visitors before they do to Chicago Basin. Just follow the links on the homepage to garner more information on maps and guidebooks, altitude, organized groups, hiking up the Needle Creek Trail, camping in Chicago Basin, wildlife encounters, and livestock.

Trip Planning for Mountaineers overview from The Chicago Basin Trip Planning Guide

Half of the visitors to Chicago Basin plan to climb the nearby “Fourteeners”: Mount Eolus (14,083'), Windom Peak (14,082'), and Sunlight Peak (14,059'). The information in the “Trip Planning for Mountaineers” section of the CBTPG at www.sjma.org provides information to help you plan a safe climb.

How Difficult Are They? All 3 of the 14'ers will get your heart pounding—in other words they are NOT easy. Climbing these peaks safely requires careful planning, good judgment, and extreme caution. It is strongly recommended that you consult mountaineering guidebooks before attempting these peaks so you are knowledgeable of the climbing routes and risks. The Forest Service does not maintain trails up the peaks or recommend climbing routes. The average person requires 3 to 5 days to make the trip to Chicago Basin and climb the three 14'ers. Consult guidebooks and maps for distances and elevation gains.

Consult the website for in-depth information regarding guidebooks, weather hazards, recommended base camp locations, approach trails to the 14'ers.

Maps: For hiking to and around Chicago Basin, it is highly recommended that you obtain the 7.5-minute Apogee Mapping maps for the area: Mountain View Crest, Columbine Pass, and Storm King Peak. Not all trails are signed, and a topo map is very useful for general navigation and for day hiking in the area. Another map suitable for trip planning is San Juan Mountains Maps *Map of the Mountains between Durango and Silverton*. Maps and guidebooks for the Chicago Basin area are available by phone, mail, or online from the San Juan Mountains Association (SJMA) Bookstore. In Durango, stop by the SJMA bookstore inside the SJNF supervisor’s office at 15 Burnett Ct. It is open weekdays, 8am to 4:30pm.

Approximate mileage for Mountaineers and Backpackers.

| | |
|---|----------------------|
| Needleton Bridge to the Needleton Trail Head sign-in. | ¾ mile (one way) |
| Needleton Trailhead sign-in to Chicago Basin. | 5- 6 miles (one way) |
| Chicago Basin to Mount Eolus (14,083’) | 7 miles (round trip) |
| Chicago Basin to Sunlight Peak (14,059’) | 7 miles (round trip) |
| Chicago Basin to Windom Peak (14,082’) | 6 miles (round trip) |

Please refer to the “**Safety and Weather**” section for safety tips and safe returns.

Source: San Juan Mountains Association website <http://sjma.org> with permission from the authors, Will Rietveld, Janet Reichl, with information updated by MK Gunn in January 2020.

**Ice Lakes Trip Planning
Info for All Visitors**

Camping in the area: Overnight camping is not allowed at the Ice Lakes Basin trailhead parking lot. There are 26 first come first serve sites at South Mineral Campground which is a fee area across the road from the Ice Lakes Basin trailhead parking lot. In addition, there are 4 camping areas with outhouses in the first 2.6 miles of FS 585 (Kendall on the left at .6 miles, Anvil and Sultan on the right at 1 mile and Golden Horn on the left at 2.6 miles. In addition, there are about 7 slight pull outs with single camping spaces between 1.4 and 4.6 miles.

There are no trash containers, potable water or restroom facilities at the trailhead. There are vault toilets, trash containers and potable water at the South Mineral Campground, however, campers there pay a fee to have the convenience of using them and while you wouldn’t be banned from using them, doing so is frowned upon and it would be best if you took care of your needs elsewhere. There are restrooms at the Visitor Center in Silverton. The Silverton Visitor Center is also where you can get information on the Public Lands in the Silverton area. There is a sign at the South Mineral Campground that states “Non-campground users are limited to 5-gallons of water.”

There is a sign-in box at the trailhead. Please sign in.

This trail is too steep for most small children.

The wildflowers are most abundant starting about two miles up the trail to the Ice Lake. The flowers are at their peak mid-July through the end of August.

You may get your feet wet or muddy.

Biting flies can be a nuisance.

If you are afraid of heights or unsteady, there is a steep climb just before the upper basin that may require extra caution and the use of your hands as you navigate over the rocks.

Safety information:

- Take rain gear, even if the skies are bright blue in Silverton and the forecast is clear. Especially during summer “monsoon” season, storms can suddenly appear, bringing cold winds, rain, flurries, sleet, or all of the above.
- If lightning is present, the higher you are the more vulnerable you are. Head to lower ground -for safely.
- Bring high SPF sunscreen, SPF lip balm and sunglasses because the UV rays are more intense at high altitudes.
- Treat any water you might take from streams
- Be aware that even minimal physical exertion can be quite taxing at high elevation. Drink lots of water and take breaks.
- If you visit the area in winter, Forest Road 585 may be closed, so be prepared to hike, snowshoe or ski 9 extra miles roundtrip.

Of note, the Hardrock 100 race course crosses the Ice Lakes Trail and it can be extra busy around race time. The Hardrock race is held in mid-July.

Source: San Juan Mountains Association website <http://sjma.org> with permission from the authors, Will Rietveld, Janet Reichl, with information updated by MK Gunn in January 2020

Ice Lakes Trip Planning Additional Info for Backpackers

Choosing a campsite:

Most people camp in the Lower Ice Lake Basin where there are more trees for protection and hanging food. If you cross the wide creek and wander around where there are trees to the south of the basin, you’ll find a number of campsites. When camping in the lower basin, it’s best to filter water from the “clear” (non-chalky) stream from Fuller Lake.

Camping is suggested and encouraged in the lower basin. Please preserve the alpine tundra around the upper lakes.

Camping is allowed in Upper Ice Lake Basin but doing so might not be the best choice for several reasons:

- You are exposed to storms and strong winds.
- Digging a cat hole is very difficult in the alpine tundra and there’s very little privacy in the area.

- The alpine vegetation is fragile, so Leave No Trace recommends moving your tent if you plan to camp more than one night.
- If you want a fire, there's no wood to burn up that high. It is illegal to take wood from the dilapidated cabins up high. They are historical sites protected by the Antiquities Act.

If you do decide to camp in the upper basin, remember Leave No Trace Principles recommend that you camp at least 200' from lakes and streams.

Human waste:

Because it's almost impossible to dig a cat hole in alpine tundra, and because the Ice Lakes area is a heavy use area, it is highly recommended that you use a human waste bag such as a Restop2, Cleanwaste, or Biffy Bag. Using these bags is actually easier than digging a cathole.

If you do dig a cathole, be sure you dig at least 100' (approximately 35 adult steps) away from any water sources. One-hundred feet is the regulation in a Wilderness area, however Leave No Trace Principles recommend 200' (approximately 70 adult steps). Make sure your hole is 6-8 inches deep and pack out your toilet paper.

Source: San Juan Mountains Association website <http://sjma.org> with permission from the authors, Will Rietveld, Janet Reichl, with information updated by MK Gunn in January 2020

For the complete Planning Guide for Ice Lakes Basin, visit: <https://sjma.org/places/ice-lakes-basin-trip-planning-guide/>

Volunteers Recruiting Volunteers

We are glad that you have chosen to volunteer SJMA, and the USFS. Thank you! You have experience to assist in preservation of the public lands through interpretation, education, information and participation. You are now a part of our elite team of people who annually help our agencies perform their missions. You have experienced many rewarding opportunities and have learned new skills, met interesting and highly motivated people and now you want to share this opportunity with others that are an integral part of your life. This is your opportunity to bring others whom you think will benefit from the volunteer experience, to join the team.

Once again the volunteer program is an essential component of each agency's mission. The several hundred thousand hours volunteers donate each year make it possible for all agencies involved to complete conservation, land management, and protection work that otherwise might not get done.

Help others experience and fall in love with the Southwest, Colorado landscape.

Contact Information

San Juan Mountains Association (SJMA)

David Taft
Conservation Director
dtaft@sjma.org

PO Box 2261
Durango, CO 81302
970-385-1210
www.sjma.org

Brent Schoradt, SJMA Executive Director, 970-385-1312

U.S. Forest Service

San Juan National Forest Supervisor's Office
Kara Chadwick - Forest Supervisor
15 Burnett Court
Durango, CO 81301
(970) 247-4874
TDD: (970) 385-1257
www.fs.usda.gov/sanjuan

Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

BLM Tres Rios Field Office
Connie Clementson – field manager
29211 Highway 184
Dolores, CO 81323
Phone: 970-882-1120
Fax: 970-882-6841
www.blm.gov/office/tres-rios-field-office

Emergency: 911

Durango Interagency Fire Dispatch (for reporting potential wildfires)
970-386-1324

Durango Police Department

990 E 2nd Avenue
Dispatch (non-emergency)
221 Turner
Durango, CO. 81301
(970) 385-2900

Durango Fire Department
Durango Fire and Rescue
City Station #2
1235 Camino Del Rio
Durango, CO. 81301
(970) 382-5940

Friends & Partners of SJMA with Website Links



Thank you Alpine Bank for being SJMA's 2019-2020 Corporate Partner

We are very proud to partner with the following organizations:

Platinum Founders Circle:

- **Alpine Bank**
- **Backcountry Experience**
- **Dental Associates of the Southwest**

Gold Champions:

- **Durango Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad**
- **Ska Brewing Co**

Silver Champions:

- **Adventure Pro Magazine**
- **Four Corners Endodontics**
- **Durango Outdoor Exchange**
- **Fresh off the Press**

And other important partners and friends:

- **San Juan National Forest**
- **Rio Grande National Forest**
- **Pine Needle**
- **Outdoor Research**
- **Steamworks Brewing Co.**
- **Purgatory Resort**
- **Sustainability Alliance of Southwest Colorado (SASCO)**
- **Durango Running Club**
- **Montezuma Inspire Coalition**

- **GoCo**
- **Colorado Gives Day**
- **Durango Herald**
- **Cortez Journal**
- **Turtle Lake Refuge**
- **Des Moines County Conservation**
- **Mancos Trails Group**
- **Southwest Conservation Corps**
- **Pagosa Area Trails**
- **Montezuma Land Conservancy**
- **San Juan Outdoor Club**
- **Four Corners Backcountry Horsemen**
- **Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado**
- **A Affordable Storage**
- **Priscilla Sherman Photography**
- **Southwest Ultralight Backpacking**
- **Osprey Packs**
- **Mild to Wild**
- **Colorado Outdoor Recreation SEARCH and RESCUE CARD**
- **Pagosa Springs Area Guide**
- **Mancos Valley Visitor Center**
- **Creeper Jeepers**
- **Fire Ready**
- **Fort Lewis College Environmental Center**
- **Colorado Business Directory in Colorado**
- **Mountain Studies Institute**
- **Chimney Rock Interpretive Association**
- **Southwest Colorado Fire Information**
- **Redwood Llamas**
- **Durango Area Chamber of Commerce**
- **Leave No Trace, Inc.**
- **Colorado State Parks**
- **Colorado Division of Wildlife**
- **Anasazi Heritage Center**
- **National Outdoor Leadership School**
- **Seniors Outdoors**
- **Southwest Colorado Wildflowers**
- **Mesa Verde Backcountry Horsemen**
- **Trails 2000**
- **Centennial Canoe Outfitters**
- **Brunton Gear and Gadgets**
- **City of Durango, Colorado**
- **Southwest Water Conservation District**
- **Trout Unlimited**
- **The Garden Project of Southwest Colorado**

**San Juan Mountains Association (SJMA)
San Juan Volunteers
Overview and Wrap-up**

Hike or Ride
Greet visitors
Monitor trail conditions
Monitor use
Eyes and Ears
Goodwill Ambassadors

- San Juan Volunteers is a joint SJMA and SJNF public contact program.
- The majority of monitoring is to take place on wilderness trails.
- The main focus areas of the San Juan Volunteers is Needle Creek, Chicago Basin, West Fork of the San Juan River, Ice Lakes area, Pine River, Vallecito, and other high-use areas.
- San Juan Volunteers are welcome to hike or ride SJNF trails and report observations.
- Volunteers must e-mail program coordinator(s) before going into the field. Volunteers must also contact their personal emergency contact and provide that contact info to SJMA.
- Volunteers must wear their uniform with the name tags clearly displayed.
- If wearing a coat, have name tag on outside of coat.
- Volunteers should provide the program coordinator(s) with a detailed trip report and submit the number of public contacts using online form.
- Volunteers must submit their hours using their sjma.org account.
- In Needle Creek and Chicago Basin we prefer that you stay a minimum of 2 nights especially if you stay at base camp.

While volunteering: only bring your dog if s/he is very well behaved. No fire-arms.

Notes:

San Juan Mountains Association (SJMA) San Juan Volunteers Activity Description

Title: San Juan Wilderness Volunteer

Report to: David Taft at the San Juan Mountains Association (SJMA)

Key Responsibilities:

Communicate with Wilderness and public lands visitors in a positive non-confrontational manner about:

- The 4 W'S
- Forest-wide regulations:
- Wilderness regulations:
- Leave No Trace Principles, ethics, and techniques.

Volunteers:

- Will be prepared to practice Leave No Trace (LNT) principles.
- Will wear authorized uniforms and nametags.
- Will complete required on-line reports.
- Membership in SJMA is recommended.

Other responsibilities may include:

Perform light trail, campsite, and trailhead maintenance which may include:

- Repairing water bars
- Removing trail obstacles such as trees, rocks, or litter.
- Cleaning up campfire rings.
- Replenishing information at the trailheads: including informational signs and registration forms.
- Perform monitoring, surveying, and data collection as needed by the U.S. Forest Service.
- Assist with community outreach such as presentations or volunteer recruiting.

Qualifications:

- Volunteers are representatives of SJMA and the U.S. Forest Service and will maintain a positive, friendly, non-confrontational attitude with the community and/or visitors they contact while volunteering. They will be very clear about the difference between an ethical suggestion and actual forest and wilderness regulations.
- Volunteers must complete required trainings.
- Volunteers must be healthy and able to perform duties on or at trails and trailheads. This may include standing, lifting up to 50 pounds, hiking, camping, all in rough terrain at high elevations that range from 8,000 feet to 13,000 feet and optionally over 14,000 feet.

Time commitment: After appropriate training, volunteers will commit to a minimum of 3 days of volunteering. This is equivalent to 24 hours of uniformed duties that can include:

Trail Encounters, Trail Maintenance, and Research and Data Collection.

Volunteers will provide:

- Transportation to and from trailheads
- Personal gear, such as hiking, backpacking, or horse packing gear and boots
- Food
- Contact information for emergency contact point person

SJMA will provide:

- Uniforms
- Nametags
- Informational and training sessions

SJMA may terminate this agreement at any time by notifying the other party in writing.

Resume Builder (Students and Interns)

Many volunteers who are entering the career field may not realize how important it is to list volunteer experience on their resume(s). The volunteer experience that you will receive while being a San Juan Volunteer for (SJMA) and the Forest Service is multifunctional, dealing with many professional and educational aspects. Here are a few examples of key phrases and/or words that can be written on any resume in addition to other hints that will guide you in obtaining the career you want.

- As a San Juan Volunteer, I had the unique opportunity to empower thousands of visitors and local residents to explore, learn about, and protect the spectacular public lands of Southwest Colorado. I achieved this through education and hands-on involvement that inspired respect and reverence for our lands.
- By utilizing my public contact skills, I made a positive impact on the people I met by educating them on natural history, the US Forest Service, Wilderness regulations, Leave No Trace ethics, and other information in order to help preserve the public lands of Southwest Colorado for future generations.
- For the summer season of 2020, I was a volunteer for the San Juan Mountains Association and the U.S. Forest Service. I helped improve trail and campsite conditions, and documented wildlife, flora, campsites, and Forest Service sign conditions.

Additional things to keep in consideration:

Build a strong relationship with your volunteer supervisor. Not only will you build a lasting relationship but you may also request a letter of recommendation, which is highly effective in giving you that additional edge in acquiring that career position that you are applying for.

Volunteer for a variety of programs. This will help you build your skills and will increase your chances of becoming the applicant that stands out from all the other applicants.