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# 2020 ANNUAL PROGRAM REPORT



*San Juan Mountains  
Association*

EXPLORE ♦ LEARN ♦ PROTECT

# A YEAR OF MANY CHALLENGES

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## AND CREATIVE SOLUTIONS

This year will go down as one of the most unique in SJMA's history for the unique set of challenges and consequent solutions. Just as volunteer programs and our visitation season was beginning to ramp up, the COVID19 virus began sweeping across the world and promptly shut down businesses and organizations everywhere. Following the widespread closures, as things opened up and quarantine fatigue set in, people flocked to the mountains from all over the country for a much needed escape. By our count, visitation rose as much as 50-100% over previous years, and many of these visitors has little experience recreating in the mountains.

Just as we have done for over 30 years, we responded by sending volunteers and staff (under strict virus management protocols) out to educate visitors, maintain trails, and track land management issues on behalf of the agencies. In spite of the challenges, we pushed forward on these efforts, launched our partnership with Durango Nature Studies, and successfully continued to have a positive impact our community and the lands we hold dear.





**TOTAL  
VOLUNTEER  
HOURS**

**3522  
HOURS**

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## Season Highlights

Adopt a Road	725 Hours
Wilderness Volunteers	904 Hours
Ice Lakes Basecamp	458 Hours
National Public Lands Day	96 Hours
Colorado Public Lands Day	88 Hours



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Notably - We did not gain approval to host volunteer activities in the SJNF until late June. This caused us to cancel our National Trails Day and Alternative Spring Break activities.

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# Conservation Education and Stewardship



## Wilderness Volunteers

This year we continued the long running Wilderness Information Specialists program as Wilderness Volunteers. This year volunteers contributed over 900 hours and contacted roughly 4,400 visitor contacts.

## Ice Lakes Educational Basecamp

In response to overwhelming increases in visitation, we mobilized almost 500 hours of volunteer services hours at Ice Lakes. Volunteers cleaned up trash, improved trail issues, and encouraged hikers to minimize their impacts on the landscape

## Adopt a Road

Our Adopt a Road program has kept SJNF roads clear of trash and obstructions for many years and 2020 was no exception. Led by SJMA's Patti Brady, AAR racked up 675 hours of patrol work.

## Service Days

### National Public Lands Day

We did our first ever virtual volunteer event. Eleven volunteers contributed 96 hours of service to haul 500 cu ft of trash from transient camp sites around Durango

### Colorado Public Lands Day

Retired Wilderness Ranger Anne Dal Vera led a crosscut saw certification class to increase our forest's capacity to keep trails clear and open. We had 11 participants for a total of 8 hours, including a field session in small, socially distanced groups.



# Education Programs

## Big merger!

2020 was the year SJMA merged with Durango Nature Studies, combining two of Southwest Colorado's longest running environmental education institutions.

Despite the challenges presented by COVID19, our education team successfully continued longrunning SJMA programs like Forest to Faucets as well as launching new programs such as Forest Fridays in Montezuma County and San Juan Ramblers in Durango



## Program Totals

**Students Served Virtually:**  
**2,345**

**Students Served in Person:**  
**629**

**Total Participants:**  
**2,974**

**Teachers Served:**  
**46**

**Total Volunteer Hours:**  
**121**

## Adapting to the Times

With schools largely operating virtually, our staff flexed their creativity to design virtual programs, creating online videos and live events covering topics as diverse as Watersheds of the Weminuche and How to Pack your Backpack. After school programs were a big hit as well, providing meaningful programming and offering parents and youth options.

