
2022 ANNUAL PROGRAM REPORT

*Inspire and empower connection to and responsible use
of the spectacular public lands of southwest Colorado*



*San Juan Mountains
Association*

EXPLORE ♦ LEARN ♦ PROTECT

EXPLORE!


SJMA connects with people so they can know before they go! With interactive and interpretive services, maps, personal advice and more, SJMA is your personal guide to the spectacular public lands of Southwest Colorado.

SJMA Visitor Information Services

Our Visitor Information Centers serve as educational entry points to your public lands in Southwest Colorado. SJMA Visitor Information Specialists provide maps, advice, merchandise, information on recreation sites, fire restrictions, Leave No Trace, and everything in between!

SJMA Visitor Center Locations

48,347 Total Visitor Contacts made!

Public Land Agency	Phone Calls	In-person Contacts	
San Juan NF	18,816	14,679	
Rio Grande NF	2,803	3,802	
Montrose PLC	4,416	3,831	

With SJMA Visitor Information Specialists housed in Public Lands Visitor Centers throughout southwest Colorado, our team of expert staff works with the US Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management to provide information and knowledge to keep visitors and locals safe, knowledgeable, and recreating responsibly.



LEARN!

SJMA engages youth and people of all ages to learn about history, the natural environment and ecology, through programs and hands-on exploration. We focus on immersive and comprehensive education to inspire the next generation of conservationists.



Conservation Education

2022 marked a full return to in-person Conservation Education programming in the wake of the pandemic, which necessitated a substantial increase in SJMA staffing to promote school-based programs, field trips, and summer camps for youth in Southwest Colorado.

Total Student Hours = 22,600

Total Scholarships = \$10,000 to 22 families in need

Location	Number of SJMA Ed Programs	Youth Participants	Adult Participants
Montezuma County	64	822	245
La Plata County	55	245	104
Durango Nature Center (La Plata County)	41	821	114
Other Locations throughout the San Juan Mtns	32	554	551
Totals	192	2,442	1,014

Interpretive Programming

Our education staff and passionate volunteers promote experiences for people of all ages to learn about the San Juan Mountains. We hosted 24 events for all ages including *Snow Science*, *Full Moon Howlers*, *San Juan Nature Hikes*, *Sand Canyon Spring Wildflower Hike*, & *Fall Tarantula Migration*.



PROTECT!

SJMA ensures our shared resources are protected through volunteer and staff engagement in projects and public education throughout the San Juans. SJMA encourages the public to explore and protect their public lands through educational and hands-on stewardship.

Stewardship

While volunteers continue to be at the heart of SJMA's stewardship initiatives, our organization is evolving- creating local recreation and natural resource job opportunities. In 2022, we sustained a variety of seasonal positions including our Wilderness Crew, Forest Ambassadors, an Alpine Loop Ambassador, and Snow Ambassador program.



Forest Ambassadors

Cross Mountain, Navajo Lake, Junction Creek, Chicken Creek, Boggy Draw, Bear Creek, Highland Mary Lakes, Ice Lakes, Vallecito, Pine, Purgatory Flats, Andrews Lake, Molas Lake, Blue Lakes

Number of Ambassadors: 8

Visitor Contacts: 14,000

Trash packed out: 470 lbs

Trail drainage structures cleaned: 813

Fire rings cleaned: 148

Downed trees cleared: 64

Miles of trail covered: 1,249



Wilderness Crew

Weminuche, South San Juan and Lizard Head Wilderness

Number on Crew: 5

Public contacts: 300

Campsites monitored: 570

Campfire rings removed: 57

Down trees removed from trail corridors: 666

Miles of trail maintained: 17

Signs inventoried: 57

Miles of trail covered: 392



Alpine Ambassador

Alpine Loop above Silverton and Ouray, CO

including Ophir Pass, American Basin, Animas Forks & Stony Pass

Visitor contacts (promoting LNT, Stay the trail): 1,896

Fire rings removed/naturalized: 11

Fire rings cleaned: 56

Trash packed out: 1,259 lbs

Bathrooms regularly cleaned & re-stocked: 5



Snow Ambassador

Molas Pass/ Andrews Lake winter parking area

2,700 visitor contacts (promoting LNT and avalanche awareness)

CONNECT!

Recognizing that we are “stronger together,” SJMA actively connects with communities and connects community members to the San Juan Mountains.

Volunteers

We can't say enough about our growing team of rock star volunteers! Since 1988, volunteers have been a critical asset to all of SJMA's programs. 2022 saw increased numbers of volunteers helping with education programs at the Durango Nature Center, staffing the Chicago Basin Basecamp, Ice Lake Basecamp, Blue Lakes Basecamp, monitoring Wilderness use and trails, adopting a US Forest Service road, contributing to fundraisers, and more. In 2022, SJMA also transitioned to a volunteer management platform which streamlined our communications and data collection.



TOTAL VOLUNTEERS = 504

TOTAL VOLUNTEER HOURS = 7,565

↑ 50% in 2022, compared to 2021

VALUE OF VOLUNTEER TIME (Independent Sector) = \$226,572



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Volunteer Event Highlights

Volunteer Event	Description	Volunteers	Hours Contributed
Christmas Trees for Conservation Fundraiser	Helped cut and transport white fir, organize and tend the tree lot, sell trees, wreaths, goodies and spread good cheer!	185	1,334 hours
Chicago Basin Basecamp	Back by popular demand in 2022! Made visitor contacts to help spread LNT practices in this increasingly popular location	25	678 hours
Blue Lakes	Public engagement and education on the Blue Lakes trail and at the trailhead into the Mt. Sneffels Wilderness	12	66 hours
Ice Lakes	Public engagement and education at Ice Lakes trailhead, on the trail and at the lakes	11	211 hours
Solitude Monitoring	New in 2022! Followed USFS monitoring protocols to help ensure wilderness qualities are retained in the Weminuche Wilderness. Completed 73 hours of training, logging 868 visitor encounters at locations such as Vallecito Creek, Needle Creek and beyond.	34	530 hours
Conservation Ed Programs	Aid educators in many programs from school field trips to after-school to interpretive events	37	646 hours
Durango Nature Center	A wide array of community members came together to continue to care for this treasured learning laboratory.	97	768 hours

CONNECT!

Through volunteer engagement, outreach and communication, participation in collaborative efforts, and participation in partners' events, we help activate the broader community.

Communications

- Bi-weekly enews: 5,500 subscribers (with an average 50% open rate)
- Social media updates: 6,000 Facebook and 2,100 Instagram followers; posting 3-5 times per week
- Biannual Newsletter Mailings: 1,342

Collaborations

- Sustainable Tourism: Central San Juan High Alpine Communities, Visit Durango Sustainability Committee
- Forest Health: Rocky Mountain Restoration Initiative, Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Plan, Dolores Watershed Resilient Forest Collaborative, Southwest Colorado Trails Roundtable
- Education: Southwest Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education, Montezuma Inspire Coalition

Community Events (just a sample)

- Hardrock 100
- Animas River Days
- Durango Earth Day
- 10th Anniversary of Chimney Rock NM
- Ouray Ice Fest
- Monte Vista Cinco de Mayo Celebration

INTRODUCING OUR NEW MOBILE BASECAMP



Keep your eyes out for SJMA's new Mobile Basecamp, which provides a basecamp for our Snow Ambassador, Forest Ambassadors, and volunteers throughout the year at popular trailheads and events!



YOUR SUPPORT

We can't do all of that we do without the generous financial support from our partners, sponsors, members, and grantors.

2022 SJMA Members / Donors

769

2022 Grantors

Athletic Brewing Company, Ballentine Family Foundation, Borman Family Foundation, Community Foundation serving Southwest Colorado, Great Outdoors Colorado, National Recreation Foundation, Yamaha Outdoor Access Initiative

Agency Partners

San Juan National Forest, Rio Grande National Forest, Grand Mesa Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forest, Gunnison Bureau of Land Management, Canyon of the Ancients National Monument (Tres Rios Bureau of Land Management), Uncompahgre Bureau of Land Management

2022 Sponsors

