

2023 IMPACT 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 know before they go! With interactive and interpretive services, maps, personal advice and more, SJMA is your personal guide to the public lands of Southwest Colorado.

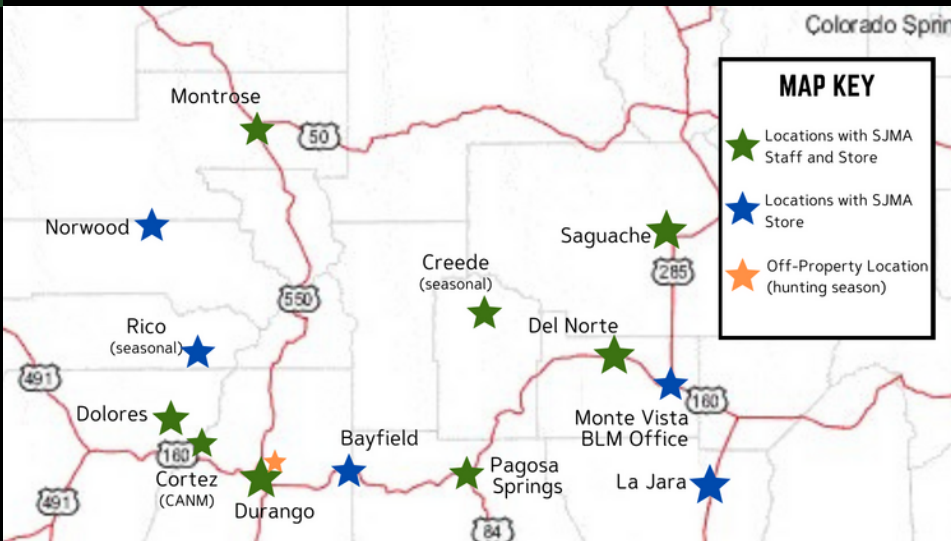
SJMA Visitor Information Services

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 (LNT), and everything in between!

SJMA Visitor Center Locations

47,978 Total Visitor Contacts made!

Public Land Agency	Phone Calls	In-person Contacts
San Juan NF	14,367	18,631
Rio Grande NF	2,705	4,169
Uncompahgre NF	4,161	3,945



With SJMA Visitor Information Specialists located in Public Lands Visitor Centers throughout Southwest Colorado, our 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 stewards.

Conservation Education



2023 marked an increase in Conservation Education programming, which necessitated a substantial increase in SJMA staffing to provide in-school, field trip, and summer camp programs for Southwest Colorado youth. We also purchased a third passenger van, thanks to donors and members!

With this increase in programming, we've also reinvigorated our educational volunteer efforts. We had an additional 175 total hours contributed between our after-school Ramblers, field trips, Mancos library programs, and internships.

SJMA's conservation education programs took place at our Nature Center in Bondad and throughout Southwest Colorado's public lands, including Sand Canyon, Canyon of the Ancients Visitor Center, Chicken Creek, Haviland Lake, Andrews Lake, Lizard Head, and many more locations.

Total Scholarships = \$12,342 to families needing assistance

Location	SJMA Ed Programs	Youth Participants	Adult Participants
Montezuma County (Mancos, Cortez)	42	1,164	423
La Plata County (Durango, Bayfield, Ignacio)	68	2,383	746
Other San Juan Mtn Locations (Silverton, Dolores, Towaoc, Telluride, Montrose, Ridgway, Aztec, and Vail)	9	484	59
Totals	119	4.031	1,228

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Outdoor Explorers Programming

This year we introduced a new program, the Outdoor Explorers Program, with our partners Alpine International Academy. This program is free outdoor enrichment for homeschool families throughout Southwest Colorado. The curriculum is an engaging combination of place-based environmental science and outdoor skills. For example, in the late fall students learned about wildfire ecology while also practicing safe campfire skills.



Interpretive Programming

Our education staff and passionate volunteers promote experiences for people of all ages to learn about the San Juan Mountains. We hosted 27 public events in 2023, including:

- *Snow Science & Socials with Mountain Studies Institute*
- *Full Moon Howlers with Durango Nordic Center*
- *Wildflower Hike @ Canyon of the Ancients National Monument (CANM)*
- *Open House @ the Nature Center*
- *Andy Gulliford Author Presentation/ Book Signing*
- *San Juan Nature Hikes on Fridays*
- *CANM Project Archaeology Workshop*
- *CANM Full Moon Hike*
- *Forest to Faucets Teacher Workshop*
- *Mushroom Hike*
- *CANM Delbert Anderson Trio*
- *CANM star party*
- *Solar Eclipse party @ the Nature Center*



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 2023, we employed a host of seasonal employees including a four-person Wilderness Crew, 12 Forest Ambassadors, a Snow Ambassador, and new in 2023, two Dolores River Ambassadors.



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, Cimarrons, Lizard Head, Engineer Mountain, and Pass Creek Trails

Number of Ambassadors: 12

Visitor Contacts: 28,673

Trash packed out: 1,292 lbs

Trail drainage structures cleaned: 1,531

Fire rings cleaned: 423

Downed trees cleared: 363

Miles of trail covered: 2,653

WAG bags and PACT kits distributed: 700+



Wilderness Crew

Weminuche, South San Juan and Lizard Head Wilderness

Number on Crew: 4

Public contacts: 306

Campsites monitored: 8

Campfire rings removed: 6

Down trees removed from trail corridors: 2,583 (!)

Miles of trail maintained: 377

Trail drainage structures cleaned: 51



River Ambassadors

Dolores River - Slick Rock Parking Lot, Gypsum Parking Lot / Boat Launch, Bradfield, Bedrock Parking Lot

Number on Crew: 2

Public contacts: 803 over 2 months



Snow Ambassador

Molas Pass/ Andrews Lake winter parking area

475 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.

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

Volunteers

We can’t say enough about our growing team of dedicated volunteers! Since 1988, volunteers have been a critical asset to all of SJMA’s programs. 2023 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, maintaining the Junction Creek bathrooms, adopting US Forest Service roads, contributing to fundraisers, and more.



TOTAL VOLUNTEERS = 727

TOTAL VOLUNTEER HOURS = 5,762

VALUE OF VOLUNTEER TIME (Independent Sector) = \$183,231



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Volunteer Event	Description	Volunteers	Hours Contributed
Christmas Trees for Conservation Fundraiser	Cut and transported white fir, organized and tended the tree lot by selling trees, wreaths, gifts and spreading good cheer	141	1,027 hours
Chicago Basin Basecamp	Engaged the public to help spread LNT practices in this increasingly popular location (1,265 contacts)	24	738 hours
Blue Lakes / Mt. Sneffels Wilderness	Engaged the public to help inspire much-needed LNT practices (1,714 contacts)	10	116 hours
Ice Lake	Public engagement and education at trailhead, on trail and at the lakes (9,033 contacts)	24	508 hours
Weminuche Solitude Monitoring	Followed USFS monitoring protocols to help ensure wilderness qualities are retained	30	476 hours
Education Programs: Youth	Aided educators on school field trips & after-school programs	20	475 hours
Ed Programs: Interpretive	Guided interpretive events such as Nature Hikes, and Snow Science & Socials	32	344 hours
Adopt-a-Road	Keeping Forest Roads (FR) clean!	56 FR	800 hours
Snow Ambassadors (Molas Pass)	Educated the public on best practices, stewardship, and safety throughout winter	12	150 hours
Nature Center	Improved the area through work projects	16	84 hours

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Communications

- Bi-weekly enews: 5,700 subscribers (average 50% open rate)
- Social media updates: 6,500 Facebook and 2,400 Instagram followers
- Biannual Newsletter Mailings: 1,054
- Website increased use by ~25%

*THIS SUMMER THE NATURE CENTER
IS OPENING TO THE PUBLIC!*

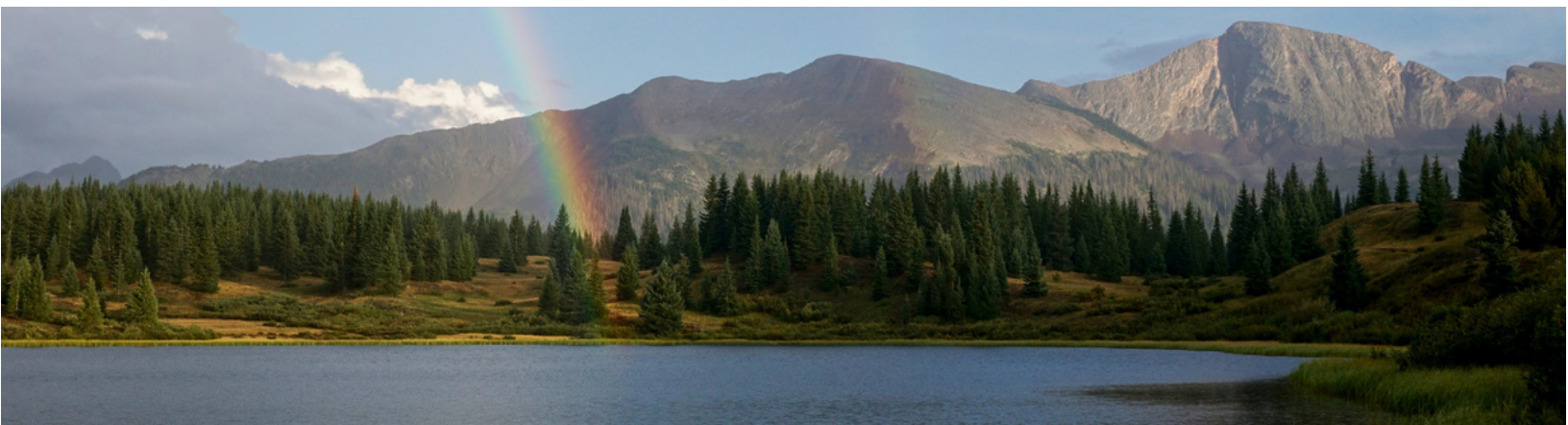


Collaborations

- Convening a new Regional Partnership to bring conservation and recreation stakeholders together - the Southwest Colorado Conservation & Outdoor Recreation Roundtable (SCCORR)
- Sustainable Tourism: San Juan Skyway Byway Commission, Central San Juan High Alpine Communities, Visit Durango Sustainability Committee
- Forest Health: Rocky Mountain Restoration Initiative, Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Plan
- Education: Southwest Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education, Montezuma Inspire Coalition, La Plata County Wellness in Nature

Community Events (just a sample)

- Hardrock 100
- Animas River Days
- Durango Earth Day
- Monte Vista Cinco de Mayo Celebration
- Ouray Ice Fest
- Clean up at CANM's Painted Hands



YOUR SUPPORT

We cannot do all that we do without the generous financial support from our partners, sponsors, members, and grantors.

2023 SJMA Members (including Donors)

919

2023 Grantors

Great Outdoors Colorado, Telluray Foundation, Community Foundation serving Southwest Colorado, Borman Family Foundation, Moniker Foundation, La Plata County, Colorado Parks & Wildlife, Colorado Department of Human Services, National Forest Foundation

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

2023 Corporate Sponsors

