



*San Juan Mountains
Association*

EXPLORE ♦ LEARN ♦ PROTECT



2025
IMPACT REPORT

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

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

SJMA Visitor Information Services (VIS) Specialists are located in Public Lands Centers throughout Southwest Colorado, serving as educational entry points to our public lands. Working with the US Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management, our Specialists help visitors and locals plan their outdoor adventures, provide maps and guidebooks, keep them up-to-date on forest regulations and fire restrictions, all while encouraging Leave No Trace (LNT) principles.

SJMA Visitor Center Locations

59,336 Total Visitor Contacts made in 2025!

Public Land Agency	Phone Calls Answered	In-person Connections
San Juan NF	11,262	13,390
Rio Grande NF	3,725	5,009
BLM (Canyons of the Ancients National Monument & Silverton)	1,715	22,497
BLM (Gunnison)	1,059	679

NOTE: These numbers were affected by the 43-day government shutdown which occurred during the area's busy hunting season as well as the October flood which affected multiple roads and trails within the San Juan National Forest.

Despite the fluctuations in federal budgets and the longest government shut down in history, our SJMA Visitor Information Specialists held strong. In winter, they had to shift roles and hours due to changes in federal staff, then adapt to dramatic cuts in hours during the government shutdown. Thanks to the dedication of our specialists, we are now back in action across Southwest CO!



LEARN!

SJMA engages 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

SJMA is strategically expanding our Conservation Education outreach. By adding interpretive events and school programs in the northern region, specifically Ridgway and Ouray, we are reaching a broader audience while continuing to serve our established communities.

Location	Ed Programs	Youth	Adult
La Plata County (Durango, Nature Center, Bayfield, Ignacio)	95	2,645	959
Montezuma County (Mancos, Dolores, Cortez, Towaoc)	53	629	233
Archuleta County (Pagosa Springs)	31	730	386
Top of the Pines (Ridgway)	11	95	22
Other San Juan Mtn Locations (Aztec, Dove Creek, Farmington, Montrose, Ridgway, Telluride)	24	347	166
Totals	214	4,446	1,766

2025 Scholarships = \$12,038 to kids in need

NEW to 2025! Top of the Pines

Programming

In Ridgway, SJMA is now offering naturalist awareness and wilderness skill programs to school groups, families, and adults. Through experience and sensory connection we teach how to be in relationship with our natural surroundings. From this foundation, our skilled and knowledgeable naturalist guides introduce science and natural history concepts.



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SJMA's conservation education programs took place at our Nature Center and throughout Southwest Colorado's public lands: Canyon of the Ancients National Monument (CANM), Haviland Lake, Andrews Lake, Vallecito Creek Trail, Piedra River Trail, Piedra Falls Trail, Buckles Lake Trail, Durango Nordic Center, and Ouray County's Top of the Pines.

Interpretive Programming

Our education staff and passionate volunteers promote experiences for people of all ages to learn about the San Juan Mountains.



New this year, we expanded our popular interpretive hikes in the Pagosa area:

- *Full Moon Hike at Coyote Hill*
- *Arboglyph Hike at Buckle Lake*
- *Geology Hikes at Vallecito Creek & Piedra Falls*
- *Bird Outing with Audubon Society*

In addition, we brought back our popular interpretive events, many led by knowledgeable volunteers.

- *Snow Science & Socials with Mountain Studies Institute*
- *Full Moon Howlers with Durango Nordic Center*
- *San Juan Nature Hikes*
- *Pagosa Geology Hikes at Piedra River Trail*
- *Durango Nature Center Events: Opening Day, Bird Outings, Star Parties, Nature Walks, & Creepy Crawly Fall Fest*



Our continued partnership with Canyons of the Ancients National Monument results in many shared events full of history, ecology, beauty and wonder.

- *Wildflower Hike*
- *Star Party*
- *Full Moon Hike*

Teacher Workshops

Held annually with Mountains Studies Institute, Forest to Faucets Teacher Workshop is offered to local educators so they have tools to teach their students about local watersheds and where their water comes from. Fifteen teachers from across the region joined us in 2025.

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

For the fifth year in a row, our organization hired seasonal staff focused on local recreation and natural resources. In 2025, we employed a host of seasonal employees including a four-person Wilderness Crew, seven Forest Ambassadors, two Snow Ambassadors, and two Alpine Ambassadors. In addition, *new this year*, two seasonal staff joined the Dolores Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) trail crew to work on a variety of projects to improve forest trails.



Forest Ambassadors

Number of Ambassadors: 7
Number of SJNF trails: 22
Number of GMUG trails: 7
Visitor Contacts: 20,490
Trash packed out: 850 lbs

Trail drainages cleaned: 393
Fire rings naturalized: 90
Downed trees cleared: 250
Miles of trail covered: 2,600
WAG bags and PACT kits distributed: 258



Weminuche Wilderness Crew

Number on Crew: 4
Number of Wilderness trails: 10
Public contacts: 173
Campsites monitored: 111

Campfire rings naturalized: 10
Down trees removed from trail corridors: 627 (!!)
Miles of social trail monitored: 201



Alpine Ambassadors

Silverton BLM office, Animas Forks, Alpine Loop
Number of Ambassadors: 2
Visitor Contacts: 16,994
Trash Packed Out: 1,600 lbs
Fire rings naturalized: 12

Campsites cleaned: 362
Bathrooms regularly cleaned & restocked: 5
WAG bags distributed: 162



Snow Ambassadors

Molas Pass/ Andrews Lake winter parking area, Red Mountain Pass, Grand Mesa, & Blue Lakes/Sneffels area (promoting LNT & avalanche awareness)
Molas Pass Area Visitor Contacts: 2,969
Grand Mesa & Uncompahgre Visitor Contact: 1,018
Number of individuals on SJMA's winter, interpretive hikes: 76

CONNECT!

Recognizing that we are “stronger together,” SJMA actively connects with people who are interested in volunteering throughout Southwest Colorado.

Volunteers

Since 1988, volunteers have been a critical asset to all of SJMA’s programs: stewardship, youth education, interpretive events, visitor information services, and SJMA’s biggest fundraiser of the year, Christmas Trees for Conservation. Each year our loyal volunteers and new, enthusiastic volunteers donate their time to expand our positive impact on our surrounding public lands.

TOTAL VOLUNTEERS = 273

TOTAL VOLUNTEER HOURS = 6,160

VALUE OF VOLUNTEER TIME (Independent Sector) = \$ 214,306



Volunteer Crew helping with Forest Road clean up project

Wreath-making crew who made record-breaking 140 wreaths for sale at tree lot

Dedicated volunteer helping with new Volunteer Project along Pine River Trail

Volunteer Project: Education, VIS, & Other	Description	Volunteers	Hours
Education Programs: Interpretive	Guided interpretive events such as Nature Hikes, and Snow Science & Socials	29	456
Education Programs: Youth	Aided educators on school field trips & after-school programs	14	119
Visitor Information: Ambassadors	Public engagement and education at visitor center / ranger district offices across SW CO	6	355
Board of Directors	Guide SJMA’s strategic direction in alignment with our mission	9	1,080

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Volunteer Project: Stewardship	Description	Volunteers	Hours
Adopt-a-Road	Kept Forest Roads (FR) clean - San Juan & Rio Grande National Forests	13 groups; 42 individuals	505
Chicago Basin Basecamp/Trail Ambassador	Engaged the public to help spread LNT practices in this increasingly popular location	25	826
Christmas Trees for Conservation	Cut and transported white fir, organized and tended the tree lot by selling trees, & wreaths	163	1,414
Colorado Trail	Adopted Segment 25.1 to keep the trail clean and well-maintained	13	418
Hardrock Fire Ring Clean Up	Removal and naturalization of unnecessary fire rings along South Mineral Creek	7	35
Ice Lake Basecamp/Trail Ambassador	Public engagement and education at trailhead, on trail and at the lakes	31	325
Nature Center Site Committee	Dedicated time and energy to caring for SJMA's 140-acre nature preserve all year long	30	171
Pine River Trail Work Project	Brushing/lopping to open the width of the trail corridor, particularly near the intersection with Flint Creek	7	204
Weminuche Solitude Monitoring	Followed USFS monitoring protocols to help ensure wilderness qualities are retained	30	252

Photo by Rachelle Fish, Communications Director

CONNECT!

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

Communications

- Bi-weekly E-news: 5,488 subscribers (average 55% open rate)
- Social media updates: 7.5K Facebook (up 6%) and 3.3K Instagram (up 17%)
- Biannual Newsletter Mailings: Sent to a total of 1,397 supporters
- Monthly Newspaper Column *Stewards of the Land*: Durango Herald, Cortez Journal, & Silverton Standard

Community Collaborations

- Regional Partnership Initiative: Continue to facilitate Southwest Colorado Conservation & Outdoor Recreation Roundtable (SCCORR)
- Education: Southwest Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education, Montezuma Inspire Coalition
- Sustainable Tourism: San Juan Skyway Byway Committee, Visit Durango's *Care for Durango* Coalition
- Forest Health: Rocky Mountain Restoration Initiative, Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Plan



SCCMA facilitating SCCORR meeting, Feb. 2025

Community Events

Why do these events matter? These events bring people together across generations and backgrounds, while strengthening partnerships with local organizations and ties to multiple communities across the entire Southwest Colorado.

- Boggy Draw Prescribed Burn Event
- Durango Earth Day
- Durango Ed Foundation Family Resource Fair
- Durango Farmer's Market
- Durango Green Drink
- Fort Lewis College Children's Water Fest
- Fort Lewis College Sustainability summit
- Hardrock 100
- Gunnison Night of Lights
- Montezuma Inspire Coalition (MIC) Winter, Summer, and Fall Family Day
- Monte Vista Crane Festival
- Mountain Studies Institute Futures Fair
- CANM National Public Land Day clean up
- Ouray Ice Festival
- Pagosa Springs Farmer's Market
- Ridgway Riverfest
- Silverton Farmer's Market
- Silverton Summer Sounds
- Towaoc Spring Fair



MIC Winter and Fall Family Days in Mancos & Dolores

YOUR SUPPORT

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

2025 Agency Partners

- BLM - Canyons of the Ancients National Monument
- BLM - Gunnison Field Office
- Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, & Gunnison (GMUG) National Forest
- Rio Grande National Forest
- San Juan National Forest

2025 Grantors

- Borman Family Foundation
- Bridging Nations Foundation
- Colorado Department of Human Services
- Colorado Parks & Wildlife
- Colorado Tourism Office
- Great Outdoors Colorado
- Hardrock 100 Endurance Run
- Katz Family Fund
- National Forest Foundation
- San Juan County
- United Way
- Visit Durango

2025 Corporate Sponsors



Photo by Chris Blackshear, SJMA Supporter

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2025 SJMA Supporters - 1,009

SJMA has surpassed 1,000 financial supporters!
Your contributions have real impacts.

"I wanted to extend my extreme gratitude to you and your team for all you have done and do across the San Juan's. Ice Lakes has a special place for me since it led to me packing up my life and moving from the Midwest. I was very happy to see it was still just as clean and well-maintained as the day I hiked it seven years ago. Please pass on my gratitude to your team because I'm sure they don't receive enough for all the hard work and education they do with the public." - Brett P.



"This was my child's first time attending any kind of summer camp, and he had a great time! If it weren't for the scholarship, he would not have been able to attend. His week at SJMA enriched his life so much, and he's still talking about everything he did while there. The only thing he said was that he wished he were able to attend the sleep-away camp because it's a longer and more immersive experience. Overall our family is so grateful for the scholarship that we were given, and we want to thank all the donors. You changed a little boy's life for the better this summer, and for that we can't thank you enough!" - Scholarship Recipient

If you are not an SJMA supporter, donate today!

