



San Juan Mountains Association

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Job Announcement Seasonal Wilderness Crew Lead

BACKGROUND

Founded in 1988, San Juan Mountains Association (SJMA) is a public lands conservation non-profit working in partnership with the San Juan National Forest, Rio Grande National Forest (SJNF), Grand Mesa Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forest, and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) providing outreach, education, and stewardship throughout southwest Colorado.

JOB SUMMARY

Do you love backpacking and excel in managing a team on projects in the backcountry? The SJMA Wilderness Stewardship Crew, in partnership with the SJNF, operates as a team in rugged, remote, and beautiful backcountry Wilderness areas in Southwest Colorado. This position entails leading and managing a three-person crew to complete a variety of projects in remote backcountry locations. The position requires backpacking long distances with tools and equipment to high elevation Wilderness areas. Projects include a mix of intensive trail clearing (log-out) with cross cut saws, public education and engagement, and protocol-based monitoring of wilderness characteristics. The Crew Leader, under the direct supervision of the Stewardship Director, is responsible for communicating and coordinating with SJMA and SJNF staff to plan and implement projects, as well as ensuring the safety and productivity of the team.

Position Title: Wilderness Crew Lead

Employment Type: Seasonal, Full-time, hourly (40 hours/week)

Reports To: SJMA Stewardship Director

Status: At-will position

LOCATION

This is a field position and work will be remote and taking place on the San Juan National Forest. The office location is the SJMA's headquarters, at the SJNF Supervisors Office, in Durango Colorado.

SCHEDULE

- Seasonal, full-time (40 hours/week), non-exempt. The expected season is mid-May through early September. Typical schedule: 4 days on, 3 days off, 10-hour days (7:00 am – 5:30 pm), A limited number of 8-day hitches may be required to complete projects in remote locations.
- Weekend and evening work may be required

GENERAL DUTIES

The Crew Leader is responsible for implementing all aspects of SJMA's Wilderness Stewardship Crew season, including:

- Coordinate with SJMA and USFS staff to implement projects.
- Ensure crew safety through effective mentorship, Emergency Response Planning.
- Enforce safety protocols and use of Personal Protective Equipment while on duty
- Lead goal setting and accomplishment tracking for the Wilderness Crew.
- Complete and oversee Wilderness characteristic monitoring activities and data collection.
- Improve trail access in Wilderness areas through log removal with cross cut saws and axes.
- Ensure equipment is maintained and in good working order throughout the season and report any broken or dull equipment that needs to be replaced.
- Mentor crew in visitor engagement to increase public knowledge of Leave No Trace, Wilderness etiquette, and safety.
- Navigate to backcountry worksites and campsites via backpacking.
- Positively promote the crew experience to ensure effective team performance during potentially stressful and difficult conditions.

SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS

The successful candidate will possess a combination of the following skills/qualifications:

Core Qualifications

- Demonstrated leadership of team-based outdoor experiences.
- Extensive backpacking and backcountry camping experience is a must.
- Physical fitness - ability to lift and carry 50-75lb, and backpack up to 12 miles/day.
- Demonstrated project management and training of others.
- Strong interpersonal skills.
- Composure to manage others during strenuous physical activity in all types of weather and at high elevations.
- Knowledge of Wilderness principles, concepts, and policies.
- Map and compass, backcountry navigation, and travel.
- Tool use and safety (cross cut saw experience/certification a plus).
- Effective team leadership including mentoring others.
- Data collection, compilation, and reporting.
- Valid driver's license, clean driving record, reliable transportation.

Physical Expectations

- Ability to lift/carry 50–75 lbs,
- Hike up to 12 miles/day in all weather at high elevations
- Ability to safely use tools and equipment

EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

- High school diploma

COMPENSATION

- **Hourly Rate:** \$21-23/per hr DOE
- **Benefits Include:**
 - Simple IRA with employer 3% matching contributions
 - Uniform shirts, rain jacket, and Protective Equipment
 - End-of-season bonus for completing full field season
 - Sick time per Colorado law (1 hour per 30 hours worked)
 - USFS trainings and professional development opportunities
 - Government housing may be available
 - Wilderness First Aid certification if needed

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Applicants should submit **one PDF** containing:

- Resume
- Letter of interest which briefly describes your goals, qualifications, and interest in the position.
- Please submit your application by **March 17th 2026**. With ***Wilderness crew member*** in subject line

 Send materials to: **jobs@sjma.org**

 No phone calls, please.

SJMA is an equal opportunity employer. All offers of employment will be subject to satisfactory completion of a background check.