



*"We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children "*

## Notes from the Board

### IPWA Members & Friends of the Indian Peaks/James Peak Wilderness Areas

This is a quick reminder of the upcoming US Forest Service (USFS) meetings this week and the IPWA Board's position of saying **'NO' to recreational shooting in the James Peak and Indian Peaks Wilderness Areas and all associated gateway trailheads.**

A couple of quick updates/clarifications:

\* The new USFS proposal is with regards to **'recreational shooting'** only (e.g. target practice). The proposal does not address any proposed changes to laws around bow/arrow and/or rifle hunting in the Wilderness areas. The IPWA Board's concern is not with the current rules surrounding bow/arrow and/or rifle hunting rules and regulations. We are focused on the issues associated with **recreational shooting** as outline in the new USFS proposal.

\* We've received a fair number of questions regarding the USFS recommendation. As many have stated, current federal law does NOT prohibit recreational shooting in the Wilderness. Today under Federal law, recreational shooting is allowed in the Arapaho/Roosevelt National Forest. If you visit the USDA Arapaho/Roosevelt Forest Service web site you will find the following information:

#### *Federal Rules*

*According to the Code of Federal Regulations (title 36), recreational shooting can take place on the National Forests and Grasslands under these conditions:*

1. *You are at least 150 yards from a residence, building, campsite, developed recreation area or occupied area.*
2. *You are not shooting across or on a National Forest System Road or an adjacent body of water.*
3. *You are not shooting into or within a cave.*
4. *You are not shooting in any manner or place where any person, property or resource is exposed to injury or damage as a result of such discharge.*
5. *You are not firing any tracer bullet or incendiary ammunition.*

It is the position of the IPWA that **NO** recreational shooting should be allowed in the Indian Peaks and James Peak Wilderness areas and all associated gateway trailheads. However, given the fact that Federal law today allows such shooting, our position with regards to the current proposal on recreational shooting is that:

**(1) The Forest Service SHOULD work to ensure that the Federal and State of Colorado rules and regulations are enforced in the Wilderness Areas and associated gateway trailheads to ensure the safety of the general public.** The Indian Peaks is one of the top 5 most visited wilderness areas in the state and allowing recreational shooting in these areas will put the public at risk.

**(2) The Forest Service SHOULD NOT publicly designate and promote the Indian Peaks/James Peak Wilderness Areas and associated gateway trailheads as 'land suitable for dispersed recreational shooting.'** While it may be Federal law to not prohibit such activity in the Wilderness, the Forest Service should not compound the error in this policy by publicly promoting these precious few remaining wilderness areas of the national forest. Wilderness, as defined by the 1964 Wilderness Act, is " ...where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. An area of wilderness is further defined to mean ...an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which (1)

generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable; (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude..." Allowing recreational shooting in the Wilderness is directly at odds with this piece of landmark legislation.

(3) **The Forest Service SHOULD designate and promote the Indian Peaks/James Peak Wilderness Areas and associated trailheads as 'land NOT suitable for dispersed recreational shooting due to safety reason.'** Per the USFS web site, '*...the Indian Peaks is one of the most visited Wilderness areas in the United States.*' Actively designating the Indian Peaks and James Peak Wilderness areas (and associated gateway trailheads) as land NOT SUITABLE for dispersed recreational shooting is the only way to assist in ensuring safety in the wilderness from potential accidents occurring as a result of recreational shooting.

(4) **The Forest Service SHOULD NOT designate a specific shooting area/range near the Indian Peaks/James Peak Wilderness Areas or associated gateway trailheads** (e.g. Hessie, East Portal, 4th of July, Rollins Pass, St. Vrain Mountain, Brainard Lake, etc.).

Thank you for your support

## **USFS Recreational Shooting Proposal in the IP/JP Wilderness. SAY NO!**

### **Your help requested by saying 'NO' to recreational shooting in the wilderness!**

The US Forest Service distributed an email in July with their proposed management direction for recreational sport shooting. In addition to the email text (included below) you will see on the map below that the USFS is designating the Indian Peaks and James Peaks Wilderness Areas (and all associated trail heads) as "land suitable for dispersed recreational shooting." **The IPWA Board opposes this designation.** (*More details on the proposal are at the end of this newsletter*).

#### **ACTION REQUEST #1!**

Please join the Board in providing feedback to the USFS (and the deadline for feedback has been extended to **September 9th**) by sending an email to the email address below letting the US Forest Service know that:

*"The IP/JP Wilderness Areas and associated gateway trailheads are lands **NOT** suitable for dispersed recreational shooting for safety reasons."*

[comments-rm-arapaho-roosevelt@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-rm-arapaho-roosevelt@fs.fed.us)

Or, IPWA Members/Friends can also send an objection via US Post to:

Joshua Milligan  
Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests All Units  
2150 Centre Avenue, Building E , Fort Collins, CO, 80526

#### **ACTION REQUEST #2!**

In addition, in response to concerns from the public with regards to the proposal, the USFS is planning on holding a number of information sessions with the public as noted below. Please attend one of these session and let the USFS know that as a friend of the IP/JP Wilderness Areas that you are against designating these lands - and all associated gateway trail heads - as 'land suitable for dispersed recreational shooting'

#### **Monday, August 31 (5pm to 7pm)**

Nederland Community Center  
750 Highway 72 North  
Nederland CO 80466

#### **Tuesday, September 1 (5pm to 7pm)**

Clear Creek Middle School (Clear Creek School District Administration Building)  
320 Highway 103  
Idaho Springs, CO 80452

#### **Wednesday, September 2 (5pm to 7pm)**

Canyon Lakes Ranger District  
2150 Centre Avenue, Building E  
Fort Collins, CO 80526

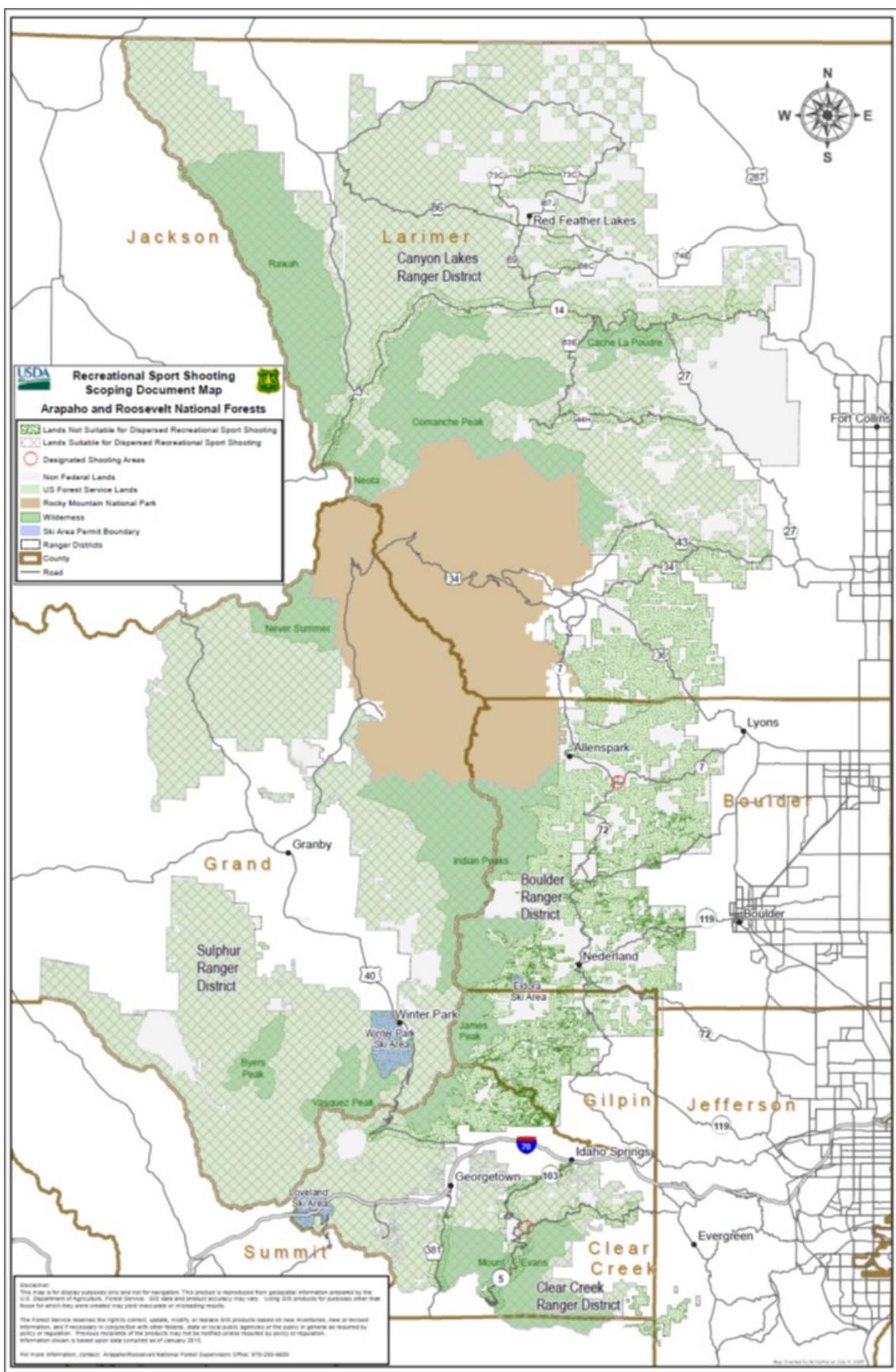
## USFS Recreational Shooting Proposal - Map

### **Recreational Sport Shooting Scoping Document Map for the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests (showing that the Indian Peaks and James Peak Wilderness Areas are lands currently designated for dispersed recreational sport shooting)**

Designating the Indian Peaks and James Peak Wilderness areas (and associated gateway trailheads) as appropriate for dispersed shooting would have collective and significant human impacts on the wilderness areas and their respective access points.

The 1964 Wilderness Act describes Wilderness as "where the earth and its community are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain." People use Wilderness areas for solitude, as safe havens and respites from noise. Designating them as appropriate for "dispersed recreational shooting" runs counter to these goals. The Act limits uses to those consistent with its mandate that each Wilderness area be administered to preserve the "wilderness character of the area."

The sound of shooting carries great distances and would directly impact hikers and winter users, and there would potentially be significant impacts to wildlife including moose, elk, deer, and countless other species. Furthermore, recreational shooters may not get very far from vehicles and roads and while outside the wilderness areas, gateway trailheads to the James Peak Wilderness such as the Kingston Peak Road, Rollins Pass, Forest Lakes, and the East Portal areas would be likely impromptu shooting sites. Similarly, gateway trailheads in the Indian Peaks Wilderness such as Hessie, Fourth of July, Coney Flats Road west of Beaver Reservoir, Rollins Pass above Bob and Betty Lakes and the Brainard areas would also likely be impacted by shooters parking and heading into the Wilderness area.



## USFS Recreational Shooting Proposal - Items in the news

### USA Today (8/11/15)

Interestingly enough, there was an article on the front page of the 8/11/15 copy of 'USA TODAY' with a front page titled 'Forests grapple with 8,500 gun incidents.' Our very own Arapaho & Roosevelt National Forest is mentioned stating that there have been "374 incidents (or gun shots/recreational shooting) reported since 2010." This Board member personally can attest to one example of such an incident when a recreational shooter decided to discharge dozens of rounds

from his/her firearm at 1:00 AM in the morning while camping at Jasper Lake (approximately a 4 mile hike into the IP Wilderness Area). When hiking out the following morning I came across of family with young children that was clearly frightened and concerned that recreational shooting was allowed in the wilderness.

You can find that article US Today here:

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2015/08/10/forests-grapple-8500-gun-incidents/30903483>

### **New York Times (8/18/15)**

Another article of interest was posted online on 8/18 with the New York Times.

"America's cultural divide over guns has gone into the woods. As growing numbers of hikers and backpackers flood national forests and backcountry trails searching for solitude, they are increasingly clashing with recreational target shooters, out for the weekend to plug rounds into trees, targets and mountainsides. Hiking groups and conservationists say policies that broadly allow shooting and a scarcity of enforcement officers have turned many national forests and millions of Western acres run by the Bureau of Land Management into free-fire zones. People complain about finding shot-up couches and cars deep in forests, or of being pinned down by gunfire where a hiking or biking trail crosses a makeshift target range.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/19/us/a-culture-clash-over-guns-infiltrates-the-backcountry.html>

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## **USFS Recreational Shooting Proposal - Notifications**

### **July email from US Forest Services announcing the proposed plans**

FORT COLLINS, Colo. - The Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests released the proposed Forest Plan Management Direction for recreational sport shooting activities on National Forest System lands in Boulder, Clear Creek, Gilpin, Grand, Jefferson, Larimer and Park counties. The proposed Forest Plan direction includes two goals and four objectives for recreational sport shooting. A map displays this proposed direction on the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests identifying the National Forest lands suitable for dispersed recreational sport shooting using current regulations, not suitable for dispersed recreational sport shooting, and proposed as designated shooting areas.

In general, suitable lands for recreational sport shooting included areas that were further than one-half mile from residential subdivisions or concentrated high use recreation areas. Approximately 1.1 million acres (or 80% of the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests) are proposed as suitable for recreational sport shooting. Conversely, areas that were not suitable for recreational sport shooting were generally within one-half mile of residential subdivisions and concentrated recreation use areas. Approximately 287,000 acres (or 20% of the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests) are proposed as not suitable for recreational sport shooting.

Two designated shooting areas are also identified; one at Allenspark in Boulder County and one at Devils Nose in Clear Creek County. However, the proposed Forest Plan direction includes an objective that additional designated shooting areas will be identified in other counties within the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests.

Proposed management direction does not include any change in management for lawful hunting activities.

The proposal has two primary purposes (1) protecting public health and safety and (2) providing guidance and management for an important and growing use of the National Forests. As population along the Front Range has increased, so has the number of people who live near and use the National Forest. In urban interface areas, housing development within a quarter mile of National Forest System lands has increased by as much as 29% since 1989. In addition, the participation rate in recreational sport shooting and other recreation activities has increased. The mixing of recreational sport shooting activities on National Forest lands in close proximity to residences and other high use public areas is causing safety concerns.

Developing Forest Plan direction specifically for recreational sport shooting will explicitly address this use and provide a framework for management. This framework will also direct the Forest to coordinate and cooperate with the counties and Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) to identify designated shooting areas. These areas may occur on National Forest System lands or other

public lands and will be set aside and publically available for recreational sport shooting.

This proposed action follows the May 2, 2015, requested for comments on an initial proposal for Forest Plan direction for recreational sport shooting. While the initial proposal did not include specific Forest Plan direction, comments were helpful in understanding the public's view on the need for direction. Approximately 300 comments were received and along with other data helped in the development of this proposal.

The U.S. Forest Service is requesting comments on this proposal for 30 days from the date of the publication notice in the Fort Collins Coloradoan published July 10, 2015. Public comments will help shape the Forest Service's proposal and identify issues and concerns during environmental review. Comments can be submitted electronically at [comments-rm-arapaho-roosevelt@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-rm-arapaho-roosevelt@fs.fed.us). Information about this project and how to comment can be found at: [www.fs.usda.gov/goto/arp/recshootingmgt](http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/arp/recshootingmgt). For more information about recreational sport shooting visit: [www.fs.usda.gov/goto/arp/targetshooting](http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/arp/targetshooting).

After considering comments, the U.S. Forest Service will prepare an environmental assessment and may develop reasonable alternatives to this proposal. The environmental assessment will disclose the social and environmental impacts of the proposed direction and any alternatives. The environmental assessment will also be circulated for public comment.

### **August follow-on email from US Forest Service**

In response to a high level of interest in the proposed Forest Plan Direction for recreational sport shooting on the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests, the Forest Service is extending the scoping comment period to September 9, 2015, to provide additional time for review and comment on the proposal.

The proposed direction includes:

- (1) Adding Forest Plan goals and objectives for recreational sport shooting.
- (2) Identifying lands as suitable for dispersed recreational sport shooting.
- (3) Identifying lands as not suitable for dispersed recreational sport shooting for safety reasons.
- (4) Identifying sites that are suitable as designated shooting areas.

or contact:

Joshua Milligan  
Acting Group Leader- Recreation, Planning, Design, and Heritage  
Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland  
970-295-6761  
[jmilligan@fs.fed.us](mailto:jmilligan@fs.fed.us)

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Indian Peaks Wilderness Alliance | [hikers@indianpeakswilderness.org](mailto:hikers@indianpeakswilderness.org) |

[www.indianpeakswilderness.org](http://www.indianpeakswilderness.org)