



2016 Wilderness Program Report

Aspen Sopsris Ranger District

White River National Forest

The Wilderness field crew this season consisted of 2 paid rangers and 4 volunteer interns. A mix of allocated, grant and donation funds supported the program. Injuries and an overall smaller crew size limited operations for the majority of the summer yet we still accomplished an impressive amount of work! Visitor education, trail maintenance, resource monitoring and long term planning were the Wilderness program priorities in 2016.

The Aspen-Sopris program stewards 316,000 acres across 5 designated Wilderness areas with 289 miles of trail.

Significant Accomplishments

1. Development of the Maroon Bells – Snowmass Wilderness (MBSW) Overnight Visitor Use Management Plan
2. Bear resistant food storage compliance and NO bear-human conflicts
3. Intensive visitor education campaign reinforced by a robust enforcement effort
4. Implementation of new long term monitoring protocols for campsites and camp encounters
5. Major reduction in detrimental campfire practices



FIGURE 1 RANGER TRAINING INCLUDED TRAIL CREW MEMBERS

Visitor Education

Ethics education prevents degradation of the physical and social Wilderness resource by uninformed visitors. Education is the Wilderness program priority.



FIGURE 2 TRAVELING LNT BOOTH AT MAROON LAKE

- ☑ 9,611 visitors contacted/educated by Wilderness rangers (5,927-day hikers/3,684-overnight campers)
- ☑ Bear canister compliance and education was a primary goal
- ☑ High Use emphasis had rangers in the MBSW 82% of patrol hours
- ☑ Public outreach to local retailers and third party websites
- ☑ Local and national press supported our education outreach efforts:

[Aspen Times](#), [APR](#), and [NPR](#)

[Check out this Aspen Times video featuring one of our Wilderness Rangers](#)

FIGURE 3 BEAR CANISTER EDUCATION



New 2016 MBSW Order Implementation

After two years of emergency orders, bear canister compliance increased greatly in 2016.

- ⊙ 83% of overnight visitors in the Maroon-Bells Snowmass Wilderness complied with the bear canister regulation
- ⊙ 93% of visitors on 4 pass loop complied with the regulation
- ⊙ Drastic improvement over the 62% compliance in 2015

Campfire regulation was clarified from ‘no fires within ¼ mile of tree line’ to ‘no fires above 10,800 ft.’

- ⊙ Rangers posted signs stating ‘No Fires Above Here’ at 10,800 ft. on high use trails
- ⊙ Rangers removed all fire rings above 10,800 ft. to discourage future use where there is no available firewood
- ⊙ 140 illegal fire rings naturalized at Conundrum preventing significant resource damage

Changes to the Wilderness registration permits enhanced monitoring efforts and supports the MBSW VUM plan

Resource Monitoring and Coordination

Data collection informs management needs and actions. Interdisciplinary reporting communicates field conditions to management, partners and public.

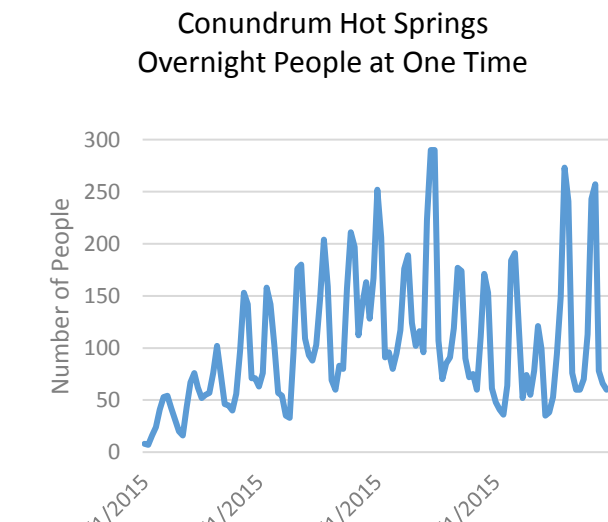


FIGURE 5 ANALYSIS OF REQUIRED REGISTRATION DATA



FIGURE 4 COLORADO ROCKY MOUNTAIN SCHOOL FRESHMEN ON A SERVICE PROJECT

- ☑ Group and camp encounter rates compared with plan standards
- ☑ Overnight required registration form update and emphasis (17,000+ overnight visitors to MBSW in 2015)
- ☑ Deployed nine trail counters to quantify day or total visitation
- ☑ 13 wildlife incident reports documented and faxed to the district biologist
- ☑ Outfitter camp inspections (6), outfitter group contacts (8) and permit violation investigations (3)
- ☑ INFRA wild national target reporting of Wilderness Stewardship Performance scores – MBSW = 54/100 (40 in '15) and HFPW = 40/100 (34 in '15)

Rapid Assessment Campsite Monitoring

- ① Implementation of a 5 year plan to inventory 20% of Wilderness zones annually for visitor created campsites. This data is crucial for moving forward with new visitor use management strategies.
- ② 417 sites inventoried in 2016 compared with 153 for the same zones in 2010
- ③ Campsites were documented with a picture, GPS coordinates, and rated on an overall impact scale

Maintenance and Restoration

Maintenance work provides safe and sustainable infrastructure for visitors. Rehab work restores the natural quality of heavily impacted areas.



FIGURE 6 RANGER NATURALIZING A FIRE SCAR

- ✓ 100 miles of trail maintained to standard
- ✓ Trail structure maintenance, 388 trees logged out and 279 sanitation burials
- ✓ Kiosk signage maintained at 45 trailheads
- ✓ 26 Required registration boxes were stocked, collected and maintained
- ✓ 2,870 ft² of impacted area restoration
- ✓ 327 illegal fire rings naturalized
- ✓ Hazard trees mitigation at designated campsites
[Blasting Hazard Tree Video](#) (Geneva Lake)
- ✓ Worked with volunteer groups to foster a stewardship ethic and work on trails

Issues and Impacts - MBSW

The wild character of the Maroon Bells – Snowmass Wilderness is being negatively affected by unprecedented levels of overnight visitation and associated impacts. Over capacity trailhead parking, abandoned tents, illegal campsites, trash and unburied piles of human waste attest to the need for proactive visitor management.

2016 MBSW Regulation Violations

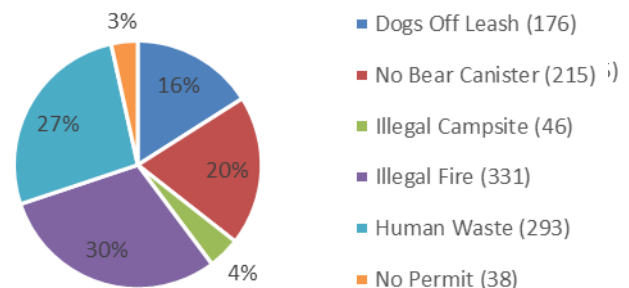


FIGURE 7 RANGER REPORTED REGULATION VIOLATIONS

438 lbs. of trash packed out (163 lbs. from Conundrum)	323 illegal campfires
273 incidences of unburied human waste	Dog leash law compliance only 42%
Monitored and rerouted illegal mountain bike trails in Wilderness	Planning effort for limited entry permit system under way in FY16
14 wildlife incident reports documented and faxed to the district biologist	44 tickets issued by rangers

2016 Wilderness Ranger Report Summary - Aspen/Sopris RD, WRNF

	Miles	Patrol Effort			Encounter Information					Regulation Violations							Maintenance			
		Ranger Days	Work Hours	Nights	Day Group	Day Total	Overnight Group	Overnight Total	Average group encounters	Observed Violations	Violation Notice	Bear Can Compliance	Dog Leash Compliance	Illegal Campsite	Illegal Fire	Human Waste	No Permit	Trees Cut	Wag Bag Compliance	Fire Rings Dismant
Conundrum 1981	208.7	29	258.4	17	127	293	596	1836	24.93	468	36	65%	60%	18	140	139	22	27		
West Maroon 1970	73.5	19	83.5	4	668	1866	161	418	43.63	140	5	89%	70%	6	45	44	2	5		
Avalanche 1959	68	12	63	7	71	85	14	31	7.08	32	0	80%	33%	3	10	1	0	42		20
East Maroon 1983	25.5	4	26.5	0	8	14	2	6	2.50	9	0	100%	0%	1	1	0	0	21		4
Thomas Lakes 1958	49.5	11	80.5	4	225	533	36	111	23.73	67	0	75%	32%	0	7	9	1	1		8
Cathedral 1984	20	3	26	0	46	110	3	7	16.33	16	0	67%	43%	0	9	1	0	3		9
Maroon/Snowmass 1975	164.5	33	171.75	10	958	2564	259	699	36.88	167	3	86%	81%	5	39	38	5	49	10%	33
E. Snowmass 1977	8	1	8	0	8	13	2	5	10.00	3	0	50%		0	1	0	0	20		1
Cut-off 1976	5	3	3.5	0	0	0	9	26	3.00	2	0	100%		0	0	0	0	0		0
Capitol Ditch 1963	9	3	11.65	0	22	51	2	10	8.00	26	0	100%	38%	0	2	9	0	2		2
Nickelson 1962.1	7.5	3	4.25	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	1	0			0	0	0	0	48		0
Capitol Cr Tr 1961	64.5	11	83.25	6	32	76	42	102	6.73	71	0	79%	33%	7	28	27	0	26		21
Carbonate 1971	6	1	4	0	3	5	0	0	3.00	1	0		0%	0	0	0	0	3		0
Fravert/North Fork 1974	27.5	7	25	2	17	36	20	38	5.29	27	0	95%	83%	1	13	8	0	7		11
American 1985	25	4	30.5	0	43	96	1	2	11.00	25	0	100%	19%	0	8	2	0	9		8
Hell Roaring 1960	50	8	54.5	0	2	3	4	24	0.75	9	0	75%	50%	0	5	0	0	28		4
Geneva/Trail Rider 1973	25	7	20.5	1	6	14	112	281	16.86	33	0	96%	42%	3	4	8	2	4		8
Off Trail/Pristine	14	3	16	1	6	13	2	5	2.67	8	0	100%	50%	0	5	0	0	0		6
W. Snowmass 2187	9	2	10	1	0	0	0	0	0.00	2	0			0	1	0	0	20		1
Silver Cr 1959																				
Hay Park 1957	24	4	24	1	0	0	0	0	0.00	7	0			0	0	0	0	17		0
Twin Lakes 402																				
Willow Lake 1978	6	2	5	1	1	2	7	19	4.00	10	0	57%		1	5	1	0	0		5
Total of all MBSW	890.2	170	1009.8	55	2243	5774	1272	3620	20.68	1124	44	83%	42%	45	323	287	32	332	16%	295

4 Pass Loop Totals	295.5	69	304.25	17	1649	4480	561	1462	32.03	369	8	93%	69%	15	101	98	9	65	NA	92
		Day Use:	O/N Use:		Total Users			MBSW Permit Compliance =	98%				Human Waste Pack-out Compliance (Conundrum & Snowmass Lake) =	16%						
		62%	38%		9394															

Collegiate Peaks																				
Grizzly Lake 1990	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	NA	0	0	0	NA	0	0	NA	0
Difficult 2106	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	NA	0	0	0	NA	0	0	NA	0
New York 2182	8.5	1	3	0	4	6	0	0	4	0	0	NA	0	0	0	NA	8	0	NA	0
Tabor 2185	6.5	1	3.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	NA	0	0	0	NA	2	0	NA	0
Weller Lk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	NA	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	NA	0
Petroleum 1991	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	NA	0	0	0	NA	0	0	NA	0
Off Trail/Pristine	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	NA	0	0	0	NA	0	0	NA	0
Total of all CPW	15	2	6.5	0	4	6	0	0	2	0	0	NA	0.00	0	0	0	NA	10	NA	0

Hunter Fryngpan																				
Chapman Gulch 1920	28	4	19.5	0	1	3	1	2	0.50	0	0	NA	NA	0	0	0	NA	1	NA	0
Fryngpan Lakes 1921	10	3	9	0	3	7	0	0	1.00	8	0	NA	NA	0	3	2	NA	2	NA	3
Granite Lakes 1922	21.8	2	14.5	1	3	7	0	0	1.50	8	0	NA	NA	0	3	2	NA	2	NA	3
Chapman Lake 1923	5	1	2.5	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	0	0	NA	NA	0	0	0	NA	0	NA	0
Sawyer Lakes 1926	5	1	6	0	1	1	0	0	1.00	2	0	NA	NA	0	1	0	NA	1	NA	1
Aspen/Norie 1927	9.8	2	4.5	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	0	0	NA	NA	0	0	0	NA	0	NA	0
SF Pass 1940	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	NA	NA	0	0	0	NA	0	NA	0
Linkins Lake 1979																				
Midway 1993	10	1	9	0	1	0	2	3	3.00	2	0	NA	NA	0	0	2	NA	1	NA	3
Woody Cr 1994																				
Lost Man 1996	7	1	6	0	16	43	Man	6	16.00	1	0	NA	NA	0	0	0	NA	0	NA	0
Hunter Creek 1996	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	0	0	NA	NA	0	0	0	NA	0	NA	0
Off Trail/Pristine	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	1	2	NA	NA	0	0	0	NA	0	NA	0
Total of all HFPW	98.6	17	72	1	25	61	3	11	1.65	22	2	NA	NA	0	7	6	NA	7	NA	10

Holy Cross																				
Savage Lakes 1918	9	2	15	1	4	10	1	1	2.50	4	0	NA	NA	0	0	0	NA	0	NA	2
Lyle/Mormon Lakes 1919	5	2	11.5	0	9	20	10	30	9.50	12	0	NA	NA	2	10	0	0	1	NA	10
Henderson/Carter 1944	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	0	0	NA	NA	0	0	0	0	0	NA	0
Off Trail	7	3	24	3	2	3	2	2	1.33	4	0	NA	NA	0	4	0	0	0	NA	2
Tellerium 1917	11.5	2	12	1	12	41	0	0	6.00	9	0	NA	NA	0	2	0	0	23	NA	3
Eagle Lake	6	2	15.5	1	6	10	2	20	4.00	2	0	NA	NA	0	0	0	0	0	NA	5
Total of all HXW	38.5	11	78	6	33	84	15	53	4.36	31	0	NA	NA	2	16	0	1	24	NA	22

HXW Permit Compliance = 100%

Raggeds																				
Yule Creek 2083	10	2	10	0	1	2	0	0	0.5	0	0	NA	NA	0	0	0	NA	15	NA	0
Raspberry Pass 1968	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	NA	NA	0	0	0	NA	0	NA	0
Anthracte 1969	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	NA	NA	0	0	0	NA	0	NA	0
Total of all RW	10	2	10	0	1	2	0	0	0.50	0	0	NA	NA	0	0	0	NA	15	NA	0

	Miles	Patrol Effort			Encounter Information					Regulation Violations							Maintenance			
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Total Of all Areas	1052	202	1176	62	2306	5927	1290	3684	17.8	1090	46	0.8	0.4	47	346	293	33	388	0.16	327