

Trip Planning Information

Weminuche Wilderness

Welcome! *The Weminuche Wilderness contains nearly half a million acres in the San Juan and Rio Grande National Forests. Originally designated as Wilderness by Congress in 1975, it is a component of the National Wilderness Preservation System. As you visit, keep in mind that you join thousands of people who come to explore each year. This handout contains information that will assist you as you prepare for your trip. Please carry it with you.*

To keep it wild . . .

Become familiar with the enclosed information about regulations and conditions you can expect to encounter in the area. A few recommendations to help you *Leave No Trace* of your visit:

- **Camp far from water.** Select a previously used site when camping in heavily used areas. In areas where there are no established sites, move your camp before impacts begin to show.
- **Do all washing** of yourself, clothes, and dishes far from water sources, using biodegradable soap or no soap. Scatter wash water far from camp and water sources.
- **Bury human waste** six inches deep in individual cat holes far from camp, trails, and water sources. Pack out toilet paper and sanitary items.
- **Pack out all that you pack in**—food scraps and trash. Do not bury any trash or garbage.
- **If you choose to have a campfire**, be sure the area is not closed to campfires, then keep it small. In areas at or above tree line or which are heavily used, avoid building campfires due to the limited supply of down and dead wood.
- **Keep pets under control**, preferably leashed, to protect wildlife and lessen conflict with other visitors.
- **If traveling with stock**, ask for Leave No Trace information for stock users.
- **When hikers meet horses or other stock** on the trail, have all hikers in your party move to one side and well off the trail. When safe to do so, move off the trail to the downhill side. Speak to riders to let the stock know you are people, not predators.
- **When hikers with llamas meet horses** or other stock, move well off the trail and speak to riders. Horses and mules, which are not familiar with llamas, are often startled by the odor or sight of llamas.
- **Keep restrained stock** at least 100 feet from water sources, trails and campsites. Horses should be tied to trees only for short periods of time. Do not allow stock to damage trees. When using a hitchline, electric fence, picket or hobbles, move animals frequently to avoid overgrazing.
- **Protect wildlife** from your food by using bear-resistant methods of storing or hanging food, trash, and other scented items.

It's wild out there!

To Stay Found

Be sure to carry a current topographical map of the area. The Weminuche Wilderness is a large, remote wilderness. Signing is limited to junctions of Forest Service system trails and does not give mileages. Due to vandalism or harshness of the conditions, signs may be damaged or missing.

High Elevation

Elevations range from 8,000 to over 14,000 feet. High-altitude sickness is potentially fatal. Monitor yourself and others for symptoms—irritability, headache, dizziness, drowsiness, nausea, and clouded thinking ability. Symptoms may also include raspy breathing, rapid heartbeat when resting, and difficulty sleeping. Move to a lower elevation and drink lots of water. If symptoms persist, seek medical aid.

Weather

Expect and be prepared for rain, hail, snow, or biting wind at any time of the year. Intense afternoon thunderstorms are common in summer. Lower elevations are usually free of the winter snow pack by mid-June, but higher areas may be snow covered into late July or mid-August. Hypothermia is a concern year round. Carry clothing and equipment that will keep you warm and dry, even when day hiking.

High Water

During snowmelt, muddy conditions and high, fast water are common. Water levels of streams and rivers may rise dangerously with warm weather or after rainstorms. Use caution when crossing, or delay crossing until the water level drops.

Forest offices are in Dolores, Durango, Bayfield, Pagosa Springs, Creede, Monte Vista, Del Norte, and La Jara. For information, call (970) 247-4874 or (719) 852-5941. www.fs.fed.us/r2/sanjuan or www.fs.fed.us/r2/riogrande

Weminuche Wilderness

The following regulations are in effect in the Weminuche Wilderness to help ensure the protection of the wilderness environment.

Group size

- Maximum group size is 15 people per group, with a maximum combination of people and stock not to exceed 25.

Travel and Equipment

- Possession of motorized equipment and mechanized means of transport are not permitted. Use of motor vehicles, bicycles, wagons, hang gliders, carts, chainsaws, or other motorized equipment is not permitted.
- To lessen erosion, shortcutting of switchbacks is prohibited.
- Use of aircraft to land or drop people or materials is prohibited, with the exception of agency-approved administrative use or emergency search-and-rescue operations.

Camping

- Camping is not permitted within 100 feet of streams or lakes, except as designated or posted.

Waste disposal

- Disposal of human waste and wash water is prohibited within 100 feet of any water source.

Livestock and pets

- Recreational livestock are prohibited from being restrained within 100 feet of lakeshores and streams or within riparian areas.
- Pets must be under voice control or physical restraint.

	No camping	Camping & fires only in designated sites	No campfires or wood stoves	No restraint of livestock	No grazing of recreational livestock
Archuleta Lake within 200 feet of lake	X		X	X	X
Emerald Lake within ½ mile of north shore & ¼ mile of other shores		X	X	X	X
Little Emerald Lake within ¼ mile of lake		X	X	X	X
Flint Lake between shore & Flint & La Osa Trails & within 200 feet of west & north shores	X		X	X	X
Fourmile Lake within 200 feet of lake	X		X	X	X
Needle Creek Drainage including Chicago basin			X		
Twin Lakes In Needle Creek drainage	X		X		
Weminuche and East Fork Trails--Park at the junction					X
Vestal Basin			X		
West Fork (Rainbow) Hot springs area			X		X
West Ute Lake Within 200 feet of lake	X		X	X	X

Forestwide Regulations

*The following regulations are in effect. Violators may be cited and fined.
A complete listing of official orders is available for review in Forest and District offices.*

Stock Feed

All feed must be weed-free certified in Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nebraska, Wyoming, or Utah and be marked with certified twine, packing or transit certificate. Only the following are allowed:

- Weed-free baled hay
- Cubed or pelletized hay
- Steamed grain in a processor's stamped bag
- Weed-free baled mulch made from tree fibers or steamed material.

Campfires

Do not leave campfires unattended. Make sure the fire is out and ashes are cold.

Trash

Pack out and properly dispose of all refuse. Do not bury trash.

Damage to trees

Cutting or damaging live trees without a permit is prohibited.

Caches

Do not cache or stash equipment for more than 14 days.

Outfitters & Guides

Outfitters, guides & group leaders who receive compensation must hold a valid permit to operate in National Forests. Contact this Forest to confirm that your outfitter is permitted.

Reserved Campsites

No camping is allowed in or within 100 feet of areas signed as "reserved" or "assigned" to permitted commercial outfitters.

Hunting

Hunting is permitted under regulation by the Colorado Division of Wildlife.