



Piedra Area

Trip Planning Information

Welcome!

The Piedra Area contains 60,387 acres in the San Juan National Forest. In the Colorado Wilderness Act of 1993, the Piedra Area was designated by Congress as an area to be managed to maintain its presently-existing wilderness character and potential for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System. The Act provides for grazing and restricts mechanized and motorized travel. This handout provides information which will assist you as you prepare for your trip. Please carry it with you.

It's wild out there!

The Piedra is large, remote, and wild. Be sure to carry a current topographical map of the area and know how to use it. Although the Piedra River Trail is well-used and relatively easy to follow, other trails are indistinct at junctions and other areas. There is very little directional signing. Due to vandalism or harshness of conditions, signs may be damaged or missing. If planning a through hike on the Piedra River Trail, contact the district office to determine if the First Fork Road on the west end of the hike is open.

High Water

During spring snow melt, high fast water and muddy conditions 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 water levels drop.

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 snowpack by mid-June, but higher areas may be snow-covered into late July or mid-August. Carry clothing and equipment which will keep you warm and dry, even when day-hiking.

High Elevation

Elevations range between 7,000 and 12,000 feet. High altitude sickness can be fatal. Symptoms include irritability, headache, dizziness, drowsiness, nausea, clouded thinking ability, raspy breathing, rapid heartbeat when resting, and difficulty sleeping. Move to lower elevation and drink lots of water. If symptoms persist, seek medical aid.

To keep it wild . . .

The following regulations are in effect in this area to help ensure the protection of the wilderness environment. Violators may be cited and fined. A complete listing of official orders is available for review in Forest and District offices.

Piedra Area Regulations

Travel and Equipment

- Possession of motorized and mechanized means of transport is not permitted. Use of motor vehicles, bicycles, wagons, hang gliders, and carts is not permitted.
- To lessen erosion, shortcutting of switchbacks is prohibited.

Forest-wide Regulations

Stock Feed

All feed must be certified weed-free and marked with certified twine, packing or transit certificate. Only the following are allowed:

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

Campfires

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

Trash

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

Caches

Caches or stashing of equipment for more than 14 days is not permitted. Geo-caches are not permitted. Such caches are subject to seizure and fines.

Damage to trees

Cutting or damaging live trees is prohibited.

Outfitters and Guides

Commercial guides and outfitters must hold a legal permit to operate within 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.

Livestock and pets

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

Leave No Trace

A few recommendations to help you leave no trace of your visit:

- Camp at least 200 feet from water. In areas where there are no established sites, move your camp before impacts begin to show.
- Travel and camp on durable surfaces, including established trails and campsites, rock, gravel, dry grasses, or snow.
- 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 catholes far from camp, trails, and water sources.
- 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 treeline or which are heavily used, avoid building campfires due to the limited supply of down and dead wood.
- Protect wildlife from your food by using bear-resistant methods of storing or hanging food, trash, and scented items.
- Keep pets under control, preferably leashed, to protect wildlife and lessen conflict with other visitors.
- When hikers meet horses or other stock on the trail, hikers should move well off the trail to one side. When safe to do so, move off the trail to the downhill side. Speak to riders so the stock will know you are people, not predators.
- Horses and mules, which are not familiar with llamas, are often startled by the odor or sight of llamas. When they meet, move the llamas well off the trail and speak to riders.
- Keep restrained stock far from water sources, trails, and campsites. Tie 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 or hobbles, move animals frequently to avoid overgrazing.