

Colorado Wilderness Act of 2009

Proposed Areas in Fremont County - Fact Sheet

Why Wilderness Designation?

Congressionally-designated wilderness areas provide people with outstanding opportunities for recreation, solitude, inspiration, natural quiet, economic benefits, and contact with nature. These areas safeguard many ecological values, such as wildlife habitat and clean air and water, important to all of us. Without wilderness, we lose large, untouched landscapes, which allow us to study and understand how natural systems operate. Preserving wilderness may be the most important contribution we can make to the health of the environment and to future generations. No new wilderness has been designated in central Colorado for more than 17 yrs.

Badger Creek Proposed Wilderness

Citizens Wilderness Proposal: 25,229 acres

Colorado Wilderness Act of 2009: 25,229 acres with possible boundary changes pending.

BLM Inventoried Roadless Area: 0

BLM Field Office: Royal Gorge Field Office (Canon City) (Pike-San Isabel National Forest)

Location: The Badger Creek proposed wilderness is situated near Howard, Colorado, approximately 7 miles east of Salida and 3 miles north of the Arkansas River in Fremont and Chaffee counties.

Description: Badger Creek flows year-round through a mountain valley, wide, deep, and substantially forested. The proposed wilderness includes much of the middle watershed of Badger Creek, one of the few primarily spring-fed streams in the region. Extensive meadows, interspersed with patches of forest, cover the valley's upland shoulders in many places. Elevations range from approximately 7,000 feet along Badger Creek to over 11,033 feet on the top of Jack Hall Mountain.

Life zones range from low-elevation semidesert shrub to montane and subalpine, including notable aspen and bristlecone pine stands. Near the stream, rare plant communities of narrow-leaf cottonwood and coyote willow are found.

Outstanding Wilderness Attributes Include: remoteness, birding, fishing, unusual plants, solitude

Beaver Creek Proposed Wilderness

Citizens Wilderness Proposal: 38,378 acres

Colorado Wilderness Act of 2009: No changes from Colorado's Canyon Country Wilderness Proposal (CCCWP) acreage. This proposal was the template or guide for the Act.

BLM Wilderness Study Area: 27,020 acres

BLM Field Office: Royal Gorge Field Office (Canon City) (Pike-San Isabel National Forest)

Location: The Beaver Creek proposed wilderness is situated 23 miles northeast of Canon City in Fremont, Teller, and El Paso counties.

Description: Beaver Creek and its tributaries, on the south slope of the Pikes Peak massif, carve deeply incised granite canyons with tumbling cascades, waterfalls, and calm pools. Beaver Creek is a sizable stream year round; its headwaters reach to the top of Pikes Peak, although the wilderness unit contains only mid-elevations of 6,000 to 10,000 feet.

Life zones range from desert species to verdant pine-spruce-fir forests and meadows. Condition and diversity of wildlife is excellent. Beaver Creek is a renowned coldwater fishery, with a variety of trout, including cutthroat. There are bighorn sheep, mule deer, occasional elk, numerous black bear, mountain lion, golden eagles, and beaver. Endangered peregrine falcons have been sighted here. Most significantly, Beaver Creek includes occupied habitat of the Mexican spotted owl, a federally-listed threatened species. Several owl nests have been located within the proposed wilderness.

Outstanding Wilderness Attributes Include: near cities, hunting, scenic canyons, fishing, diverse wildlife and habitats.

Grape Creek Proposed Wilderness

Citizens Wilderness Proposal: 44,372 acres

Colorado Wilderness Act of 2009: 44,372 acres with possible boundary changes pending.

BLM Wilderness Study Area: 21,525 acres

BLM Field Office: Royal Gorge Field Office (Canon City) (Pike-San Isabel National Forest)

Location: The Grape Creek proposed wilderness is situated 10 miles southwest of Canon City in Fremont County.

Description: The proposed Grape Creek Wilderness consists of rugged, scenic terrain administered by the BLM and the San Isabel National Forest. Although administration is split, the area is ecologically and physiographically one diverse wilderness centered on Grape Creek and the surrounding mountains.

Contrasts characterize the proposed wilderness, ranging from Grape Creek's pools and riffles to the high, forested ridge of Tanner Peak. Elevations vary from 6,400 to 9,600 feet. Life zones range from upper Sonoran to montane, offering diverse vegetation including sagebrush, rabbitbrush, cholla cactus, and yucca in the canyon, as well as pinyon-juniper woodland, ponderosa pine, and Engelmann spruce forest intermixed with meadows at higher elevations.

Outstanding Wilderness Attributes Include: solitude, birding, cliffs, forests, varied wildlife, fishing, horseback riding

McIntyre Hills Proposed Wilderness

Citizens Wilderness Proposal: 17,318 acres

Colorado Wilderness Act of 2009: No changes from CCCWP boundaries

BLM Wilderness Study Area: 17,318 acres

BLM Field Office: Royal Gorge Field Office (Canon City)

Location: McIntyre Hills is located in Fremont County, 12 miles west of Canon City and immediately south of U.S. Highway 50 and the Arkansas River.

Description: McIntyre Hills is characterized by semiarid rolling hills covered with pinyon-juniper forests, interspersed with steep rugged drainages. Elevations here range from 5,900 feet near the Arkansas River to 8,100 feet in the southern portion of the area. The higher elevations host some ponderosa pine and Douglas fir stands. A rare species of penstemon known to exist in only five locations also occurs in McIntyre Hills. Springs and pools in the major drainages provide a reliable water source for wildlife and recreation. The rugged topography and dense vegetation are excellent habitat for mule deer, black bear, turkey, and small mammals. Golden eagles and prairie falcons nest here. The area represents a sizable portion of the range of one of the densest populations of mountain lions in the western United States. McIntyre Hills holds top priority as a bighorn sheep transplant area for the Colorado Division of Wildlife.

Outstanding Wilderness Attributes Include: low-elevation, easily accessible all year, hiking, hunting, scenic canyons.

For more information on the Colorado Wilderness Act, or to request a presentation and discussion about the Act with your group, please contact:

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