

# Recreate Responsibly on Roaring Fork Valley & Other Public Lands

## Overview

In recent years, increasing numbers of people have been hiking, biking and riding on public lands. Between 2018 and 2020 alone, the number of people climbing 14'ers went up 18% (14ers.org). As more of us explore outdoors, it is important to know how to recreate responsibly, protecting the natural resources and other people's experiences.



## What are Public Lands?

Broadly, areas of land that are open to the public and managed by local or central government e.g., Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, Carbondale, or Pitkin County.



## Am I on Public Land?

Look for logos like these above that identify public land owners. Use a map, app or website to identify land ownership, e.g., <https://publiclands.org/pages/recreationmap>



**Colorado Wild Public Lands**  
**Keep it open, keep it ours!**  
[coloradowildpubliclands.org](https://coloradowildpubliclands.org)



- Watch for fences, NO TRESPASSING or Private Property signs.
- Stay on the PUBLIC trail.



## Respect Private Land

Private landowners may provide access to public lands through their properties. It's important to treat private lands respectfully too so that we don't lose this privilege. In 2021, several private landowners were considering closing access to 14ers, such as Mt Lindsay, to protect their property that included sections of trail.

## Start with Planning!

Public lands are for all to enjoy. Know where you're going and what kind of terrain to expect. Choose activities appropriate for your skill/comfort level.



**Notify others** - Make sure someone else knows where you're going and when you expect to return.

**Pack Necessities** - Colorado weather can change in an instant. Pack warm/waterproof layers for your time outdoors. Remember hats and sunglasses. Include sufficient snacks and sunscreen.

**Hydrate at altitude** - Bring plenty of water and drink it often (but avoid alcohol) to prevent dehydration. Remember, pets get thirsty too, so bring extra for them.

**Stay away from wildlife** - Do not feed, get close to, or harass wildlife. Remember, you are a guest in their territory!



**Check local fire restrictions** - It may look green, but Colorado's dry climate is conducive to fire conditions. Know the current fire hazard rating and behave accordingly. Remember, firearms, embers and ashes from smoking are hazards too.



## Trail Etiquette

*Always read the posted rules for each trail. Follow leave no trace principles and be considerate of others.*

### Stay on the trail

- Locate and stay on the main trail.
- Don't ride or hike on wet or muddy trails.
- Avoid braided, informal, game-trails or other secondary trails, and don't cut switchbacks. This will keep the route clear for others and protect vegetation.
- Be present and aware of your surroundings. Keep ears open and eyes on the trail.



### Respect other users

- **Bikers yield to hikers and all yield to horses.**
- **Bikers - be aware of other trail users, go slowly and announce yourself.**
- **Uphill travelers have the right of way.**
- Keep small children close to you.
- Go single-file to keep trails intact and allow other trail-users to pass.

### Take only photos, leave only tracks

- Pack out all trash.
- Don't leave marks, graffiti or tree carvings.
- Admire plants, rocks or artifacts in place where you find them.
- **Take a photo of this flyer with you.**



### Care for your pet

- Please keep dogs on leash - to respect to your fellow hikers, protect vegetation and limit disturbing wildlife.
- Bring poop bags and use them to pick up after your pet. Carry the bags with you (don't leave them for later) and dispose properly.



### Listen for natural sounds

- Talk in soft voices.
- Be considerate of those who are outdoors for quiet time and connecting to nature.



### Often there are no toilets

- Bring a wag bag with you (sold in most outdoor stores). Use it at least 70 steps from trails and water, and pack out.
- Consider natural options to toilet paper. Pack out all toilet paper and your waste.



### Additional Resources

Leave No Trace, Center for Outdoor Ethics:  
<https://lnt.org>

<https://www.colorado.com/CareForColorado>

The book "Wild at Heart" by Janis Huggins.

White River National Forest:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/whiteriver>

## Getting to the Trail

### Parking is Limited



- Have a back up plan should the lot be full; perhaps a different trail. Carpool!
- Follow parking rules to avoid impacting road access or private property.
- Use public transportation where possible. See <https://www.rfta.com/> for RFTA buses serving the Roaring Fork Valley.

### Family trails near bus routes

**Rio Grande Trail:** 40m. Paved trail from Aspen to Glenwood Springs, with many access points: <https://www.rfta.com/>

**Ponderosa Trail:** 0.7m. Gentle trail along the Roaring Fork River, in Basalt: <https://www.rfov.org/>

**Ditch Trail:** 2.05m. In Snowmass Village along an old irrigation ditch with great views: <https://www.gosnowmass.com/>

**Doc Holliday Grave:** 0.7m. Moderate trail with historic sites: <https://visitglenwood.com>

### Engage Youth

**Scavenger Hunt-** Create a list of nature items to seek. Finding and carrying out bits of litter is fun and keeps the trail clean!

**Inspector Gadget-** Use a magnifying glass or binoculars to see a different perspective.

**"Find Five"-** Pick something along the trail and "find five", of the item - from flower types to certain colors of rock!

With  
support  
from

