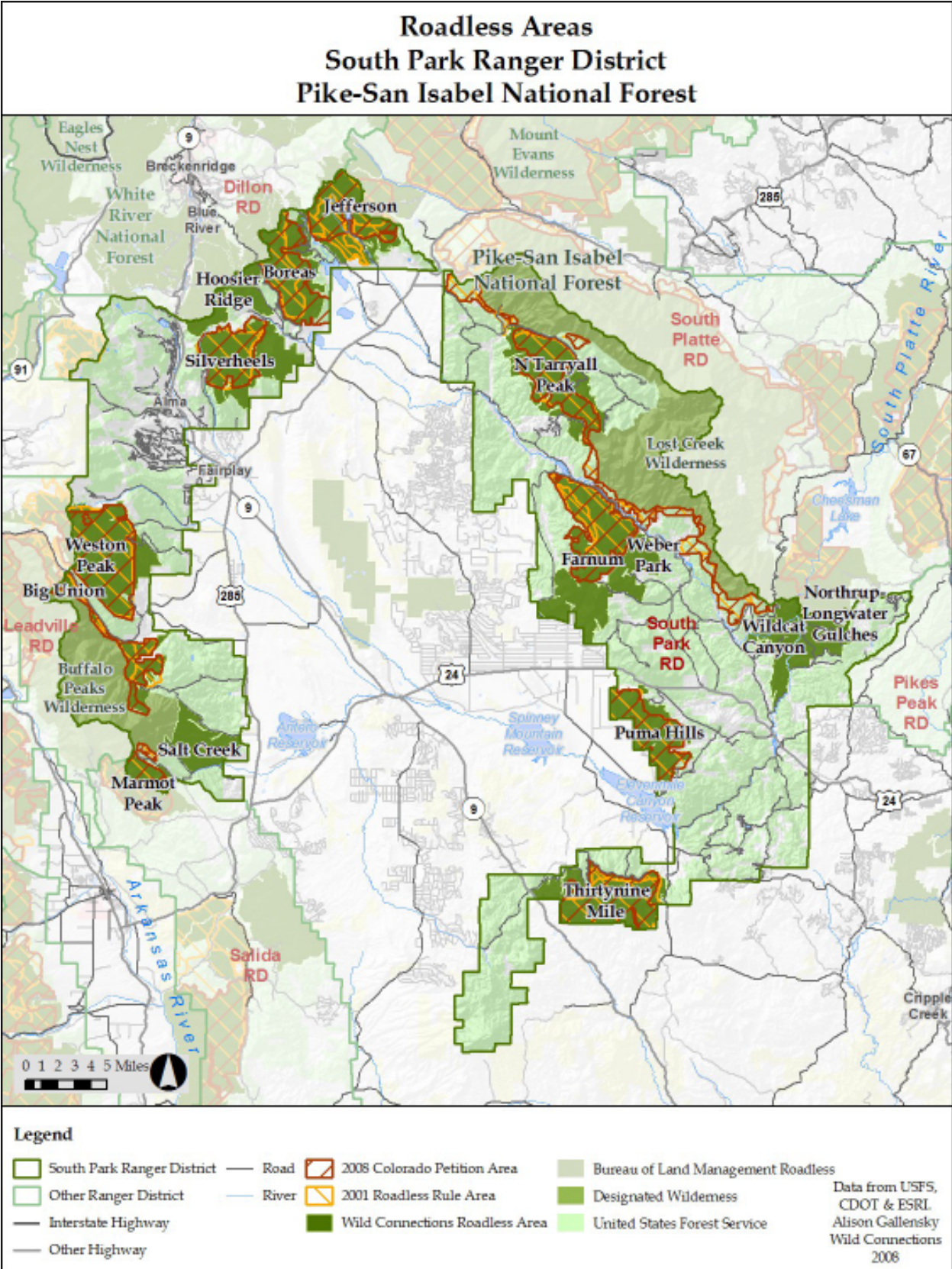


6. South Park Ranger District



USFS Roadless Areas

Big Union
 Boreas
 Farnum
 Jefferson
 Marmot Peak
 North Tarryall Peak
 Puma Hills
 Silverheels
 Thirtynine Mile
 Weston Peak

Additional areas recommended for the Roadless Inventory

Hoosier Ridge
 Salt Creek
 Wildcat Canyon

Maps for each Roadless Area display these boundaries: the extent of the area that Wild Connections found in field surveys shown in dark green; the USFS Inventoried Roadless Area of 2001 shown as a yellow crosshatch; the proposed 2008 Forest Service boundary shown as a red crosshatch; and in some cases contiguous roadless BLM land shown with a black outline.

Map Legend

Legend			
South Park Ranger District	Road	2008 Colorado Petition Area	Bureau of Land Management Roadless
Other Ranger District	River	2001 Roadless Rule Area	Designated Wilderness
Interstate Highway	Wild Connections Roadless Area	United States Forest Service	Data from USFS, CDOT & ESRL Alison Gallensky Wild Connections 2008
Other Highway			

Big Union Roadless Area

South Park Ranger District Pike-San Isabel National Forest

Like a giant, asymmetrical horseshoe, Big Union Roadless Area wraps around the northwest, north, and northeast sides of the Buffalo Peaks Wilderness Area. Taking its name from the Arkansas River tributary Big Union Creek, the area's forested slopes complement the higher alpine slopes of the central Wilderness.

Location and Boundaries

The Big Union Roadless Area is in Lake, Chaffee and Park Counties with the eastern side in the Pike National Forest and western side is in the San Isabel National Forest.

Weston Pass Road is the northern boundary, and the South Fork of the South Platte River is on the northeast side, with Rough and Tumbling Creek and Forest Routes 142, 158, and the 163 network forming the eastern boundary of the Roadless Area. FRs 396 and the 397 network are the southwestern boundary and further north the western boundary follows the Forest boundary.

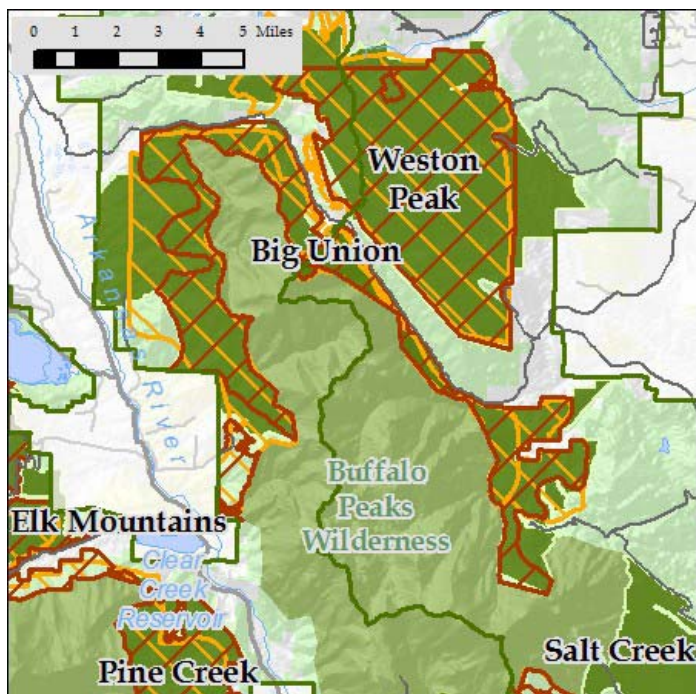


Big Union lower elevations forests complement the tundra of Buffalo Peaks. Photo by Arthur W. Smith

The Big Union Roadless Area as inventoried by Wild Connections is larger than the combined Buffalo Peaks East and West IRAs of the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule and proposed 2008 Colorado Roadless Rule.

Big Union Roadless Area

USFS name: Buffalo Peaks West/ Buffalo Peaks East



Ecological Values

Elevations in Big Union RA range from 12,892 feet at South Peak near Weston Pass to 9,200 feet on the west side near the Arkansas River, and 9,900 feet on the east on the slopes above South Park. It is the headwaters of the South Fork of the South Platte River and a portion of its major tributary, Rough and Tumbling Creek and several smaller tributaries of the Arkansas River, including Big Union Creek.

At the higher elevations near Weston Pass, the Big Union Roadless Area consists mostly of alpine tundra. On the western side, lodgepole pine intermixed with aspen and some Engelmann spruce-subalpine fir or

Douglas-fir predominates, with a small amount of sage shrubland. On the east there is a mixture of Engelmann spruce-subalpine fir, aspen, and lodgepole pine with smaller pockets of bristlecone/limber pine. Big Union is unusually rich in natural communities including Rocky Mountain fir-Engelmann spruce/ Drummond's willow montane riparian forest, Analogue sedge, extremely rich fens of Bellardi bog sedge/ alpine meadow-rue, bristlecone pine/Arizona fescue montane woodlands, Geyer's willow/water sedge montane willow carr, barren-ground willow/water sedge subalpine riparian/wetland carr, Rocky Mountain willow/mesic forb montane riparian willow carr, and Geyer's willow-Rocky Mountain willow/mesic forb communities. Big Union shares many rare plants found in the adjacent Buffalo Peaks Wilderness and Weston Peak Roadless Area. Rare plants include Rocky Mountain columbine, Leadville milkvetch, pale moonwort, alpine braya, clawless swampy lymnaea, Avery Peak twinpod, intermountain bitterweed and Weber saussurea.

Most of the area, except near Weston Pass where it is open tundra, is denning or winter habitat for lynx. The lynx linkage that connects the west central part of the Buffalo Peaks Wilderness across the Arkansas Valley to the Collegiate Peaks Wilderness and Elk Mountains Roadless Area in the Sawatch Range crosses the southwest part of Big Union. The entire area is within the overall range for black bear and mountain lion and summer range for mule deer and elk. Elk calve in the Lynch Creek drainage in the southeast and in several places on the west side. On the west a large area of winter elk and deer habitat overlaps Big Union. Bighorn sheep can be found in the summer, primarily on the eastern side, and the Lynch Creek drainage on the far southeast portion of the area overlaps a larger area of winter habitat. The American peregrine falcon and Townsend's big-eared bat have been recorded here.

Conservation and Community Values

The Weston Pass PCA overlaps the northeast part of Big Union as does the Mosquito Range TNC conservation area of moderately high conservation interest. The land along the South Fork of the South Platte River and Rough and Tumbling Creek east of Lynch Creek in the eastern portion of the Big Union Roadless Area is part of the South Fork of South Platte River PCA identified as having very high biodiversity significance and the South Park portfolio area identified by The Nature Conservancy. SREP recommends that the Big Union Roadless Area be managed as core wilderness.

Big Union's varied topography offers both gentle and challenging terrain for hiking, horseback riding, hunting, backcountry skiing and snowshoeing, as well as ample stream reaches for fishing. Recreational access is possible in numerous locations from the Weston Pass Road, for both on-and-off-trail experiences.



Boreas Roadless Area

South Park Ranger District Pike-San Isabel National Forest

Boreas Roadless Area is one of the series of mountains along the Continental Divide on the north edge of South Park. They are a stunning contrast to the intermountain parklands and ranches below.

Location and Boundaries

The Boreas Roadless Area is located between the Georgia Pass/Michigan Creek drainage and Boreas Pass/Tarryall headwaters in Park County 12 miles northeast of Fairplay. It is bounded on the east by the Georgia Pass road and several FRs east of Michigan Creek and near the forest boundary; on the south by the forest boundary; on the west by the Boreas Pass road, and on the north by the Continental Divide between the two passes.

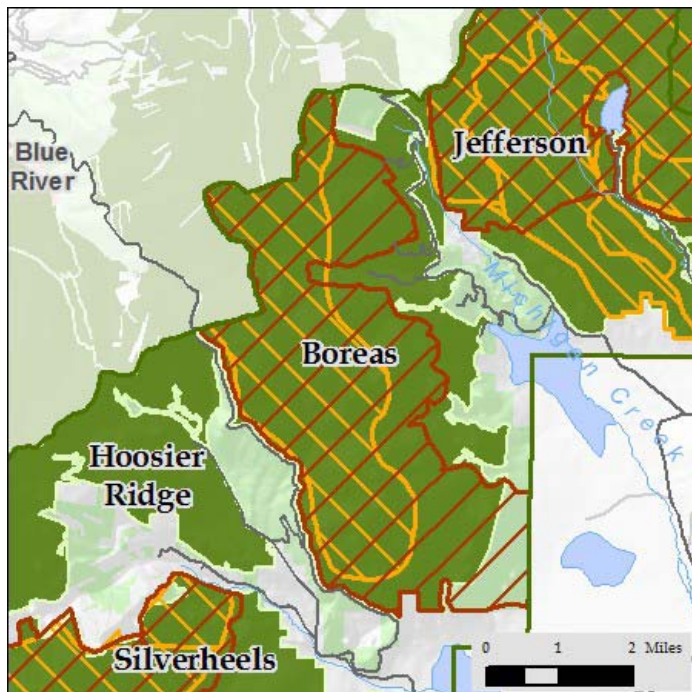


Lynx photo courtesy of Colorado Division of Wildlife

The extent of the RA as inventoried by Wild Connections is larger than the Forest Service 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule and proposed 2008 Colorado Roadless Rule.

Boreas Roadless Area

USFS name: Boreas



Ecological Values

The majority of the central part of Boreas is alpine tundra and rock, running south from the Continental Divide to within a mile or so of the southern boundary. On each side of this central spine are forests of Engelmann spruce-subalpine fir, lodgepole pine, aspen, and some bristlecone/limber pine. There are also montane meadows and wetlands. Rare plants and plant communities in this area listed by CNHP include subalpine riparian willow carr, diamondleaf willow/water sedge, Colorado larkspur, four species of moonworts, globe gilia, hoary or silver willow, Leadville milkvetch, Rocky Mountain columbine, slender cotton, and Weber saussurea .

Black bear are found throughout the area. Bighorn sheep are found in the alpine areas, with some winter range on the east side. Elk summer across most of the area, and there is a large elk calving area along the east side. Mule deer are found across the area in the summer and have both winter range and winter concentrations along the extreme southern boundary. Mountain goats may be found in the higher elevations in summer. Lynx habitat is limited to a band of forested areas on the east, south, and western perimeter of the RA, but lynx have been documented in the area. The Georgia Pass lynx linkage is one of the best forested, undeveloped connections from South Park to Summit County. Boreal toads are found in the Tarryall Creek riparian zone just to the west of Boreas.

Conservation and Community Values

The southern and central portion of the area includes the Boreas Mountain proposed RNA. A very small part of CNHP's South Park PCA overlaps the southern boundary of the RA, and a portion of the Boreas Pass PCA (high significance) and the extensive Mosquito Range PCA (very high significance) overlaps in the Boreas Pass area. The TNC Blueprint shows the majority of the area as moderately high conservation value and SREP's Vision lists the area as core Wilderness.

Travelers heading through the old railroad town of Como and up the Boreas Pass road trace the route of the Denver South Park and Pacific narrow gauge railroad. Hundreds of workers labored to lay the rails over the pass and on down to Breckenridge.



Farnum Roadless Area

South Park Ranger District Pike-San Isabel National Forest

The Farnum Peak Roadless Area lies on the east central edge of South Park in the Puma Hills. Its forested slopes provide a transition between the higher Lost Creek Wilderness to the east, the Tarryall River drainage and lower elevations in South Park.

Location and Boundaries

The Farnum Roadless Area is located 20 miles northwest of Lake George and 25 miles southeast of Kenosha Pass. County Road 77 along Tarryall Creek forms the northwestern boundary of the RA. FR 144, 237 and 235 define the west, south and eastern boundaries.

Wild Connections' inventory reveals a much larger area than the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule and proposed 2008 Colorado Roadless Rule.

Ecological Values

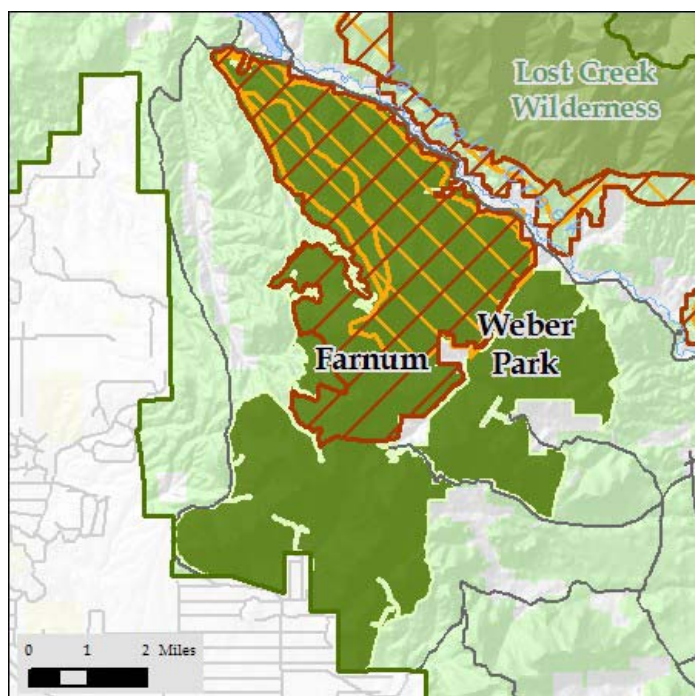
Farnum, Martland, and Schoolmarm Peaks dominate the landscape with elevations greater than 11,300 feet, rising from the RA's lowest elevation of 8,700 feet.



Aspen trees enliven Farnum Peak's forests. Photo by Michael Rogers

Farnum Roadless Area

USFS name: Farnum



Tarryall Reservoir is just north of the RA.

The vegetation in the Farnum Roadless Area is ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, bristlecone/limber pine with some aspen and lodgepole pine. Several tributaries of Tarryall Creek have their headwaters in the area.

The south and northwest corners of the Farnum roadless are on the edge of the larger South Park pronghorn winter range. Most of the area is summer and winter range for mule deer, with a winter concentration of deer on the northeast side, and winter range for elk. Bighorn sheep and mountain lion are found here.

There is lynx denning and winter habitat across the northern two-thirds of the area, and SREP identified several low priority lynx linkages connecting Farnum to Lost Creek Wilderness, across South Park, and to Puma Hills to the south.

Conservation and Community Values

The extreme southern corner of the Farnum Roadless Area is part of the South Park PCA of very high biodiversity significance and The Nature Conservancy's South Park portfolio area of moderate conservation value. The northeastern boundary is adjacent to the Lower Tarryall Creek PCA of very high biodiversity significance. The Tarryall Reservoir State Wildlife Area intersects the northern boundary of this RA. The Southern Rockies Wildlands Network Vision proposes that the Farnum Roadless Area be managed as core wilderness.

The area's steep, rugged interior offers a backcountry recreational challenge, much of it off trail, and plentiful solitude. Views west from Farnum Peak include the Collegiate and Mosquito Ranges. The area also provides wildlife connections to Lost Creek Wilderness and South Park.



Jefferson Roadless Area

South Park Ranger District Pike-San Isabel National Forest

This ancient, still-living bristlecone pine dwarfs the mapper who found it while bushwhacking through a remote part of the Jefferson Roadless Area. It is just one of the diverse features in the area which rises from the edge of South Park to the Continental Divide.

Location and Boundaries

Lying east of the Continental Divide between the North Fork of the South Platte and Georgia Pass, the Jefferson Roadless Area is in Park County some 10 miles west of Kenosha Pass. It is bounded on the east by several FRs, on the south by the forest boundary and FRs, on the southwest by the Georgia Pass road, and on the north by the Continental Divide.

Jefferson RA is significantly larger than the boundaries of the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule and proposed 2008 Colorado Roadless Rule.

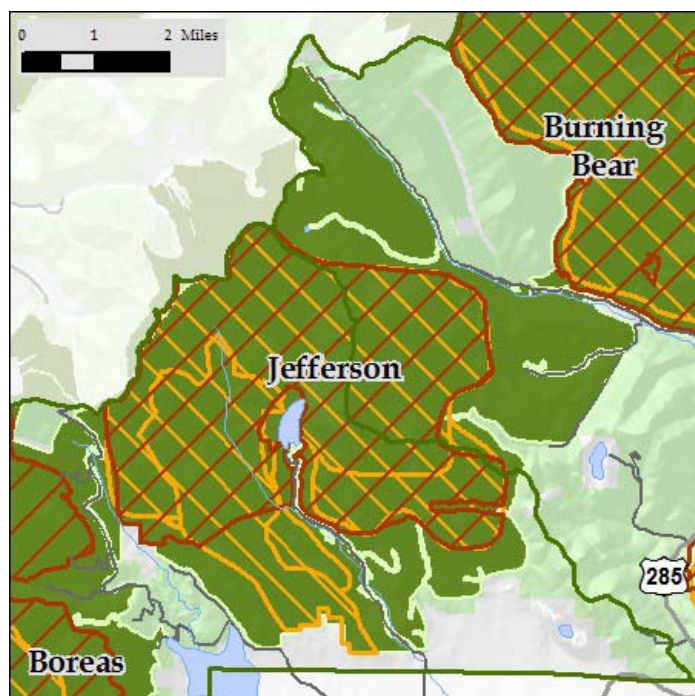
Ecological Values

The larger streams in the area include the North Fork of the South Platte River, Jefferson Creek, and Michigan Creek.



Bristlecone pine and mapper. Photo by Lyn Yarroll

Jefferson Roadless Area *USFS name: Jefferson*



Jefferson Lake lies in the center of the RA.

The northwestern part along the Continental Divide is alpine tundra and rock, while moderate elevations have a mixture of Engelmann spruce-subalpine fir, lodgepole, aspen, and bristlecone/limber pine. There are significant wetlands, especially along Jefferson Creek and the North Fork of the South Platte River. Rare plants and plant communities listed by CNHP include bristlecone pine/Thurber fescue and bristlecone pine/alpine clover montane woodlands, aspen/black twinberry montane riparian forests, diamondleaf willow/mountain marsh-marigold subalpine riparian willow carr, northern rockcress, Porter feathergrass, sea pink and Weber saussurea.

Boreal toads are located in the Jefferson Creek area. Bighorn sheep range across the higher elevations with winter range in the central parts northwest of Jefferson Lake. Elk and mule deer are found across the area in the summer and both have winter range, as well as mule deer winter concentrations, along the southern boundary. Mountain goats may be found in the higher elevations in summer. Mountain Lion, black bear and moose are located in this RA. Forested areas on the north, east, and south central portions are lynx habitat with extensive denning areas, and radio-collared lynx have been documented in the area. The Forest Service lynx amendment notes that the Georgia Pass lynx linkage is the best forested and least developed habitat connection that provides for north-south movements from South Park across the Continental Divide to Summit County.

Conservation and Community Values

The proposed Guernsey and Deadman Gulches RNA is located southeast of Jefferson Lake. The Guernsey Creek fen is one of the features included in Senator Ken Salazar's legislation to designate the South Park National Heritage Area. CNHP shows the forested portions as the Jefferson Hill PCA of high significance, and part of the South Park PCA of very high significance overlaps the southern boundary of the RA. TNC Conservation Blueprint shows the northeastern part as moderately low and the southwestern part as moderate conservation value. SREP's Vision shows the whole area as core wilderness

Jefferson Lake lies in the center of the area and is a popular recreation area reached via a long cherrystemmed road, as well as a domestic water supply. The Colorado Trail and the Jefferson Loop mountain bike trail go across the area between Kenosha Pass and Georgia Pass. Recreation opportunities include camping, backpacking, hiking horseback riding, among others.



Marmot Peak Roadless Area

South Park Ranger District Pike-San Isabel National Forest

Marmot Peak Roadless Area is contiguous with the Buffalo Peaks Wilderness. Marmot Peak itself rises in the Wilderness just south of East Buffalo Peak. The area furnishes scenic views of rugged and rocky Marmot Peak, the twin Buffalo Peaks and the high Collegiate Peaks to the west.



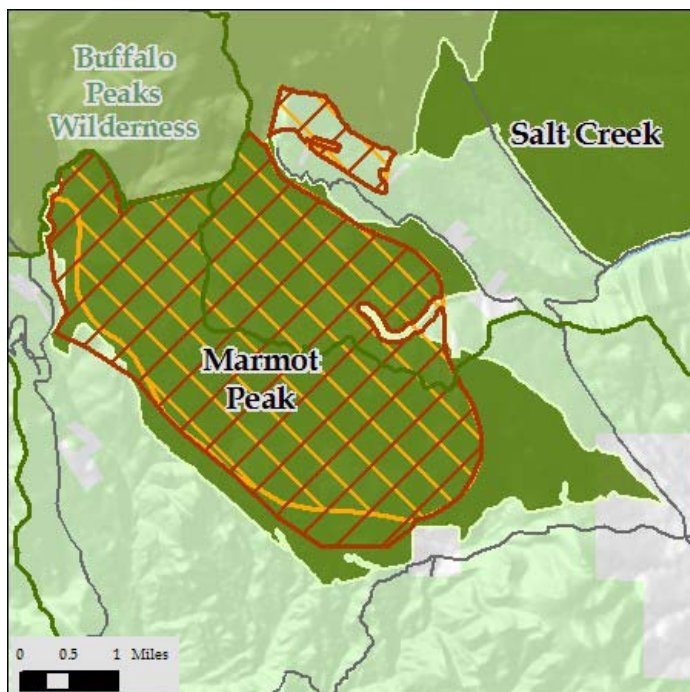
Mt Yale in the Collegiate Range as seen from Marmot Peak. Photo by Michael Rogers

Location and Boundries

The Marmot Peak Roadless Area is contiguous with the Buffalo Peaks Wilderness, sharing a boundary on the north. The area's other boundaries are FRs 436, 436.2C, and 309A on the northeast and east, and 311, 373, 373A, 375, and the Homestake pipeline on the south and west.

Marmot Peak Roadless Area

USFS name: Buffalo Peaks South



The boundaries of the Marmot Peak Roadless Area as inventoried by Wild Connections are somewhat larger than the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule and proposed 2008 Colorado Roadless Rule.

Ecological Values

Marmot Peak itself at 11,730 feet is the high point of the RA, and the land descends to 9,000 feet in the west and to 9,400 feet in the east. Marmot Peak straddles the divide between the South Platte and Arkansas watersheds. The headwaters for Salt Creek, a tributary to the South Fork of the South Platte River, rise here. Fourmile Creek, a tributary of the Arkansas, traverses the western boundary of the area and has its headwaters nearby in the Buffalo Peaks Wilderness.

The predominant vegetation in the Marmot Peak Roadless Area is lodgepole pine with areas of aspen on the northeast, ponderosa pine and pinyon-juniper woodlands on the south, areas of bristlecone and limber pine in the north and Douglas-fir in the center and on the southeast. Marmot Peak is located on the divide between the Arkansas and South Platte drainages. The headwaters of Salt Creek flow easterly through the Salt Creek Roadless Area and in to the South Fork of the South Platte River, while Fourmile Creek is a tributary of the Arkansas River to the west.

Much of the RA is habitat for lynx, although the denning and winter habitat is somewhat scattered. However, SREP identified several low priority lynx linkages from Marmot Peak south toward the Browns Canyon area. The entire area is within the overall range for black bear and mountain lion and summer range for mule deer, with some winter mule deer habitat on the south side. Elk find summer habitat across the area and the large calving area in the Wilderness comes down into the northern portion, along with another smaller area on the east side. Bighorn sheep lamb and spend the summer and winter in large portions of this RA, with the lambing area covering the whole west side and into the Buffalo Creek Wilderness. Boreal toads a candidate for listing on the Endangered Species Act are found here.

Conservation and Community Values

There is also a proposed Research Natural Area. Marmot Peak provides good wildlife linkages across the Arkansas River valley to the Heckendorf State Wildlife Area and adjacent Wildernesses to the west. The Southern Rockies Wildlands Network Vision recommends managing the RA as core wilderness.

In addition to stunning scenic views of the Collegiates, Marmot Peak and Buffalo Peaks, the area has many informal recreation options adjacent to the Four Mile designated motorized routes to the southwest.



North Tarryall Peak Roadless Area

South Park Ranger District Pike-San Isabel National Forest

Located on the edge of South Park, North Tarryall Peak has features of both montane and parklands ecosystems. Pronghorn graze along the forest edge. Although wild wolverine have not been seen in Colorado since the mid-1990s, one of the most recent sightings was in or near the North Tarryall Peak Roadless Area.



Pronghorn at edge of N. Tarryall Peak. Photo by Eric Henson

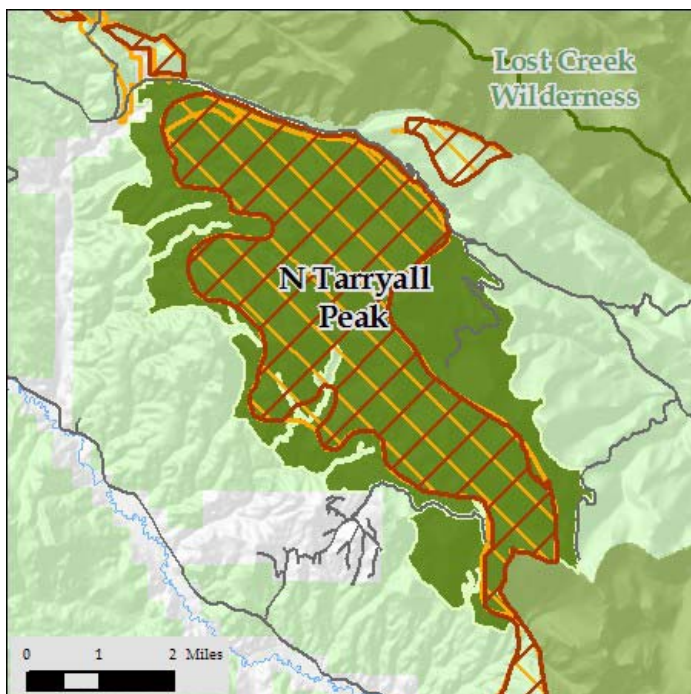
Location and Boundaries

The North Tarryall Peak Roadless Area includes its namesake at 11,902 feet and is in the northwestern end of the Tarryall Mountains a few miles south of Kenosha Pass. On the southeast, the RA is contiguous with Lost Creek Wilderness and in the northwest it is separated from the Lost Creek Wilderness by Lost Park Road (CR 39) through Long Gulch. The southwestern and northeastern boundaries are along old logging roads.

The North Tarryall Roadless Area boundaries are larger than the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule and proposed 2008 Colorado Roadless Rule.

North Tarryall Peak Roadless Area

USFS name: Lost Creek West



Ecological Values

Old House Creek and many other tributaries of Tarryall Creek have their headwaters in the North Tarryall Peak Roadless Area.

The vegetation in the North Tarryall Peak Roadless Area is predominately Engelmann spruce and subalpine fir mixed with stands of bristlecone/limber pine and some areas of aspen and ponderosa pine mixed with Douglas-fir in the lower elevation areas to the southwest.

Pronghorn come up along the forest edge of the RA. Most of the area is potential habitat for lynx. Bighorn sheep are found in the RA with a large area of winter range in the north-central portions. The entire RA is

mule deer summer range and the southwest third is mule deer winter range. Most of the RA is summer range for elk. Wolverine, an important top predator, was historically found in the North Tarryall Peak vicinity. Other rare and sensitive species found here include Porter feathergrass.

Conservation and Community Values

Most of the RA is within The Nature Conservancy's Kenosha conservation portfolio area of moderately low conservation value, and the northeast corner is included in the Long Gulch area of moderately low conservation value. The northeast portion of the North Tarryall Creek Roadless Area barely intersects the Long Gulch at Platte River Mountains PCA of high biodiversity significance. The Southern Rockies Wildlands Network Vision proposes that the North Tarryall Creek Roadless Area be managed as core agency.

The edges of the RA have a number of old logging roads, now closed and revegetating, dispersed camp sites and fire rings allow for dispersed camping.



Puma Hills Roadless Area

South Park Ranger District Pike-San Isabel National Forest

Just south of the Puma Hills roadless area, in December 1806, Capt. Zebulon Pike made an historic observation in his journal: “Found a river 40 yards wide, frozen over which after some investigation I found run northeast... Must it not be the headwaters of the river Platte? If so, the Missouri must run much more west than is generally represented.” Today he would note Elevenmile and Spinney Mountain reservoirs on the South Platte River, which are recreation areas and water storage for the Denver metropolitan area.

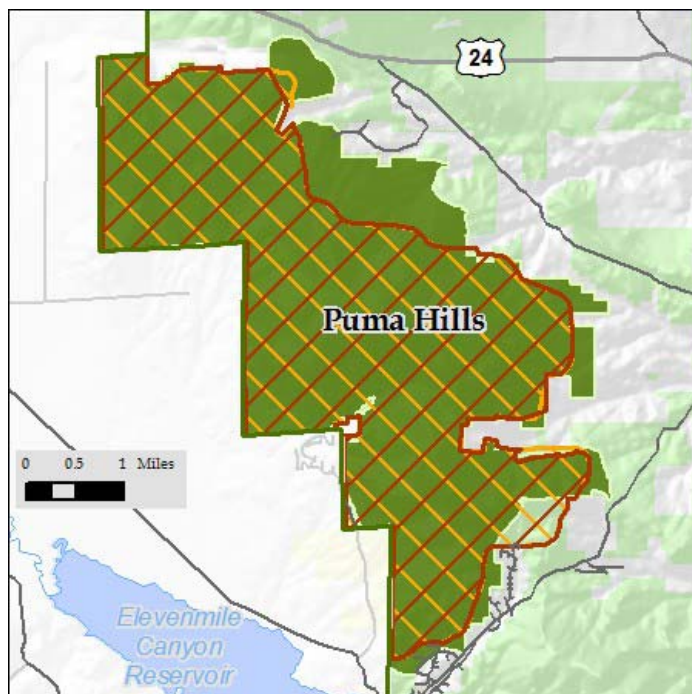


Photo Puma Hills. Photo by Martha Sullins

Location and Boundaries

The Puma Hills Roadless Area includes Pulver Mountain at 10,538 feet and Stoll Mountain at 10,863 feet and National Forest land from Wilkerson Pass south to County Road 92.

Puma Hills Roadless Area
USFS name: Puma Hills



The RA is in Park County and is part of the Puma Hills wooded edge of the high montane valley between South Park and Tarryall Creek. FR 708 defines the north eastern edge, the Forest Service boundary makes the north and west sides and other local roads and the Forest Boundary make up the southeastern boundary.

The Puma Hills Roadless Area boundaries are somewhat larger than to the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule and proposed 2008 Colorado Roadless Rule.

Ecological Values

The vegetation in Puma Hills is predominately Douglas-fir mixed with some areas of Engelmann spruce-subalpine fir, aspen and

ponderosa pine in the lower elevation areas and a small area of mountain grasslands and meadows in the west. Boyer Gulch and Caylor Gulch both originate in this area and drain to Elevenmile Canyon Reservoir.

The southwest corner of the Puma Hills Roadless Area is pronghorn winter range. Most of Puma Hills is an area of high summer activity for black bears with a large portion to the northeast of high fall bear activity. Bighorn sheep are found in most of the RA. Most of the area is summer and winter range for mule deer and for elk, with high winter concentrations of deer across the area. Sensitive species found in the area include the American peregrine falcon.

Conservation and Community Values

The western boundary of the Puma Hills Roadless Area intersects the Colorado Natural Heritage Program's South Park PCA which is of very high biodiversity significance. The Spinney Mountain State Wildlife Area is less than three miles west of this RA. The west and southern third of this RA is included in The Nature Conservancy's South Park portfolio area of moderate conservation value. The Southern Rockies Wildlands Network Vision proposes that the Puma Hills Roadless Area is a core wilderness.

Much of the surrounding area is private land limiting access to the RA, but campers or hikers can also enjoy the adjacent Elevenmile Reservoir, or a Spinney Mountain Reservoirs a bit father west.



Silverheels Roadless Area

South Park Ranger District Pike-San Isabel National Forest

Mt. Silverheels, Palmer Peak and Little Baldy are the highest points in the Silverheels Roadless Area. The combination of high alpine peaks, dark forests and valleys is stunning, as well as biologically rich.

Location and Boundaries

Near Fairplay in Park County, the Silverheels Roadless Area is located in the “Y” formed by the junction of US Highway 285 and Colorado Highway 9. The eastern boundary is roughly defined by

Tarryall Creek, the south by roads near the forest boundary, the west by Beaver Ridge, and the north by private lands in the Iron Mountain area. FR 194, which goes up Trout Creek between Little Baldy and Palmer Peak, is cherrystemmed out of the RA.

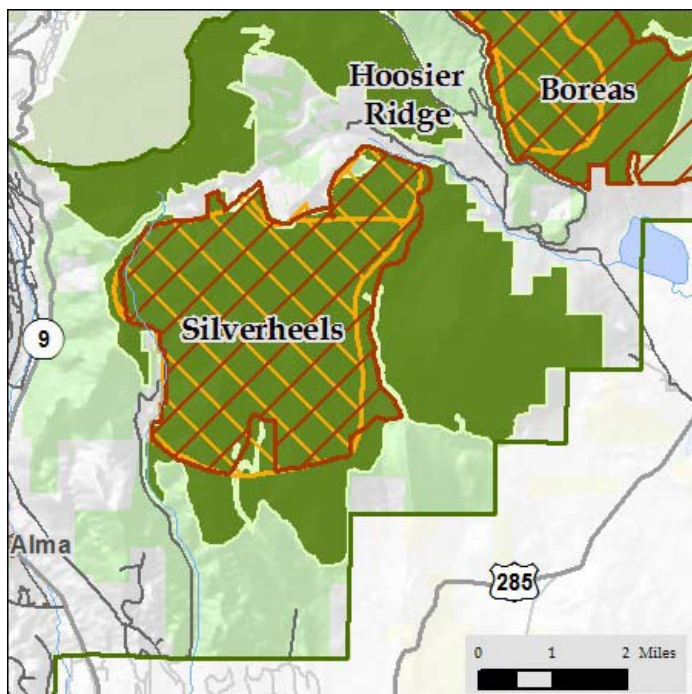


Trout Creek as seen from below Palmer Peak. Photo by Douglas Kretzman

The Silverheels Roadless Area as inventoried by Wild Connections is significantly larger than the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule and proposed 2008 Colorado Roadless Rule.

Silverheels Roadless Area

USFS name: Silverheels



Ecological Values

The northwest part of the Silverheels Roadless Area, dominated by Mount Silverheels, is alpine tundra or rock. The more moderate elevations across the south are Engelmann spruce-subalpine fir and lodgepole pine, with significant stands of aspen, some bristlecone/limber pine, and wetlands, especially in the northwest, south, and central areas. The wetlands areas include noted examples of Rocky Mountain willow/beaked sedge, barren-ground willow/water sedge, and willow carr communities. There are occurrences of Porter feathergrass, Penland alpine fen mustard and snow grass.

Bighorn sheep are found in the upper elevations in the summer, with winter range to the south outside the RA. Elk and mule deer summer across the area and mule deer have some winter range and concentration areas on the southern boundary, with elk winter range being further to the south. There is a large elk calving area along Trout Creek. Lynx overall and denning habitat covers most of the east part of Silverheels as well as some on the south side. There are also 1979 records of wolverine and two rare insects - Alberta and Polixenes arctic skippers- are currently found in this area.

Conservation and Community Values

Little Baldy Mountain is a biologically rich subalpine area that conservationists recommend for further research as a potential RNA. The southern end of the Mosquito Range PCA, rated as outstanding conservation significance by CNHP, comes well down into the Silverheels Roadless Area and the South Park PCA overlaps somewhat on the southern boundary. The TNC Blueprint includes Silverheels in its moderately high category and SREP's Vision shows the whole RA as core Wilderness.

The diverse mountain terrain provides a variety of recreation experiences from gold panning on the boundary in Beaver Creek to hunting, fishing and hiking.



Thirtynine Mile Roadless Area

South Park Ranger District Pike-San Isabel National Forest

The long, timbered ridge of Thirtynine Mile Roadless Area sweeps across the horizon at the southern end of South Park. Elevenmile and Spinney Mountain Reservoirs can be seen from Thirtynine Mile RA.

Location and Boundaries

Located in Park County, Thirtynine Mile Roadless Area is 50 miles west of Colorado Springs and five miles north of the town of Guffey. Thirtynine Mile Roadless Area boundaries are FR 270, 253, and 254 to the north, Colorado Highway 9 on the west and County Road 59 on the east. The southern boundary of the RA is the National Forest Boundary.

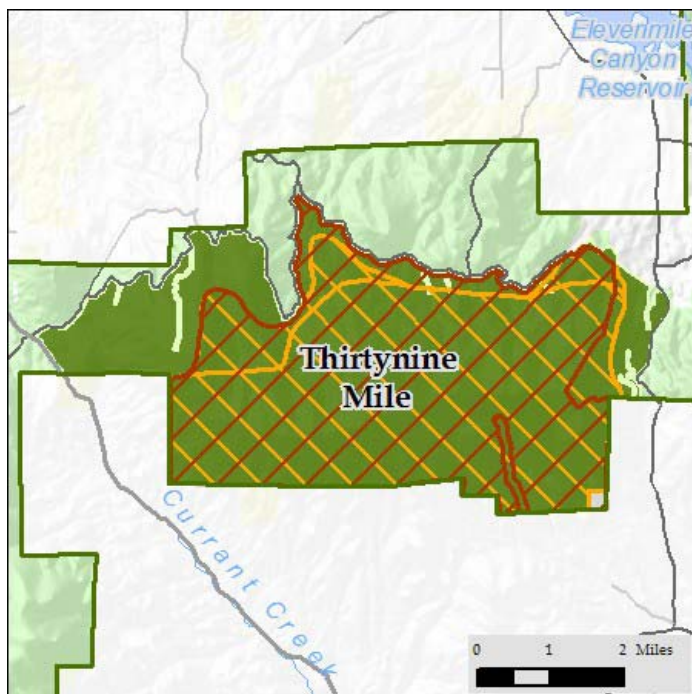
The Thirtynine Mile Roadless Area as inventoried by Wild Connections is larger than the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule and proposed 2008 Colorado Roadless Rule.



Examining bear-clawed aspen on the south side of Thirtynine Mile. Photo by John Stansfield

Thirtynine Mile Roadless Area

USFS name: Thirtynine Mile Mountain



Ecological Values

Thirtynine Mile RA consists of a series of peaks at the southeastern edge of South Park, straddling the divide between the South Platte River and Arkansas River basins. Running east-west, the mountain is the remnant north slope of the huge Guffey volcanic area, active over 30 million years ago. With elevations ranging between 9,500 feet to 11,550 feet, the RA provides marked geographic and ecological changes from the lower elevations of South Park and the Arkansas Valley.

Vegetation in the RA is predominately Engelmann spruce-subalpine fir mixed with large stands of aspen with areas of ponderosa pine mixed with bristlecone/limber pine in the south and some mountain grasslands and meadows in the west. The rare pale blue-eyed grass and bristlecone pine/gooseberry-currant upper montane woodlands are found here.

The extreme western quarter of the Thirtynine Mile Roadless Area is overall range for pronghorn. Most of Thirtynine Mile is a fall high activity area for black bears. The entire RA is summer range for mule deer and the lower elevation areas are mule deer winter range, with winter concentrations on the north side. Thirtynine Mile is important elk habitat for both summer and winter range, and most of the area is a calving ground for elk. The area also provides wildlife links with Lost Creek Wilderness Area to the northeast and Black Mountain to the southwest in the midst of extensive private ranches in South Park.

Conservation and Community Values

The proposed Thirtynine Mile RNA is in the southern portion of the Thirtynine Mile Roadless Area. The Saddle Mountain designated RNA is just east of the RA. There is a PCA of moderate biodiversity significance on the south side of the area. A PCA of moderate biodiversity significance is just east of this RA. The Spinney Mountain State Wildlife Area is less than three miles west of this RA. The SREP Network Vision shows the Thirtynine Mile Roadless Area as core wilderness.

Isolated by private land, Thirtynine Mile Mountain offers remote and varied backcountry experiences, many off-trail, for the hiker and deer and elk hunter. Great vistas are available from the high points, including Pikes Peak to the east and the Mosquito Range to the northwest.



Weston Peak Roadless Area

South Park Ranger District Pike-San Isabel National Forest

The Weston Peak Roadless Area is a sky-reaching alpine and subalpine gem, part of the Mosquito Range that divides the upper Arkansas and South Platte Rivers.

Location and Boundaries

The Weston Peak Roadless Area lies in Park and Lake Counties southwest of the town of Fairplay and just north of the Buffalo Peaks Wilderness

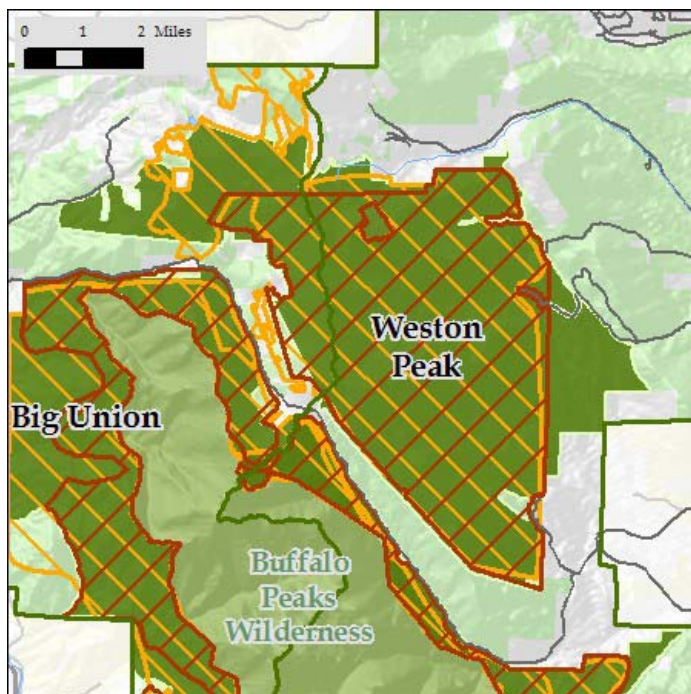
Area. It straddles the ridge between the South Fork of the South Platte and Fourmile Creek. The power line near Weston Pass road forms the south and southwestern boundary of the RA. The 111/111A network of Forest Routes and private inholding parcels are the boundary to the northwest and north. Forest Routes 175, 426, 455.A, the National Forest boundary, and private lands form the RA boundary on the east.



Looking into South Park from Weston Peak. Photo by Naomi Yoder

Weston Peak Roadless Area

USFS name: Weston Peak



The Weston Peak Roadless Area as inventoried by Wild Connections is larger than the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule and proposed 2008 Colorado Roadless Rule.

Ecological Values

From, along the high peaks of the central Mosquito Range the RA drops to the east into the forested edge of South Park at 10,000 feet. At 13,572 feet, Weston Peak is the westernmost of a series of mountain peaks in the area that include Ptarmigan Peak (13,739 feet) and Horseshoe Mountain (13,898 feet). The RA includes the headwaters of the Middle Fork of South Platte River and of Twelvemile Creek, with smaller streams west of the watershed divide flowing into the Arkansas River.

The northwest two-thirds of the Weston Peak RA consist of alpine tundra including bare rock areas, but with a number of wetlands. On the eastern side, Engelmann spruce-subalpine fir, intermixed with bristle-cone/limber pine, gives way in the lower elevations to lodgepole pine and large aspen stands. Extremely rich fens of Bellardi bog sedge/alpine meadow-rue, Geyer's willow/water sedge montane willow carr, analogue sedge wet meadow, and snow-grass alpine wetland natural communities add to the diversity of vegetation. Rare plants include alpine and arctic, altai cotton grass, Avery peak twinpod, Canadian single-spike sedge, woods and clawless drabas, Yellowstone, Gray's Peak, and Colorado Divide whitlow-grasses, Colorado tansy-aster, common and pale moonworts, globe gilia, kotzebue grass-of-parnassus, Leadville milkvetch, lime-loving willow, Penland alpine fen mustard, Rothrock Townsend-daisy, snow grass, and Weber saussurea . The list attests to the species richness of the area.

The Weston Peak Roadless Area contains some lynx habitat, but only in the lower elevations on the east side. Black bear and mountain lion are found in suitable locations, and there is summer range for elk and mule deer, with a large elk calving area and winter range for deer on the northeast side. Bighorn sheep use summer range across most of the area and a substantial amount of winter range in the central portion.

Conservation and Community Values

Two proposed RNAs, Weston Peak and Weston Peak North, are highly recommended by the Center for Native Ecosystems for their excellent alpine tundra and wetlands. Most of the RA is included in the Mosquito Range PCA of outstanding biodiversity significance and TNC's Mosquito Range conservation portfolio area of moderately high conservation value. The Weston Pass PCA crosses the pass between Weston Peak and Big Union Roadless Areas, intersecting both areas. The Southern Rockies Wildlands Network Vision describes the Weston Peak Roadless Area as core wilderness.

For backcountry recreationists, the RA has challenging alpine terrain with glacial cirques and cliffs. Peak climbing, fly fishing, botany, hunting, backcountry skiing, and backpacking are some of many options. For all who seek it, solitude can be found in the quiet valleys, wind washed tundra, and absence of visitors on Weston Peak. The area provides scenic vistas of South Park, Pikes Peak, the Collegiate Peaks and upper Arkansas Valley, and the mountains of the Tarryall Range and the Sangre de Cristos.



Hoosier Ridge Roadless Area

South Park Ranger District Pike-San Isabel National Forest

Hoosier Ridge is located along the Continental Divide north of Fairplay between Hoosier Pass and Boreas Pass. It is contiguous with a large Roadless Area of the same name in the White River National Forest.



*Looking into Hoosier Ridge with Oxide Mine trail and Mt. Silverheels on right.
Photo by Doug Kretzman*

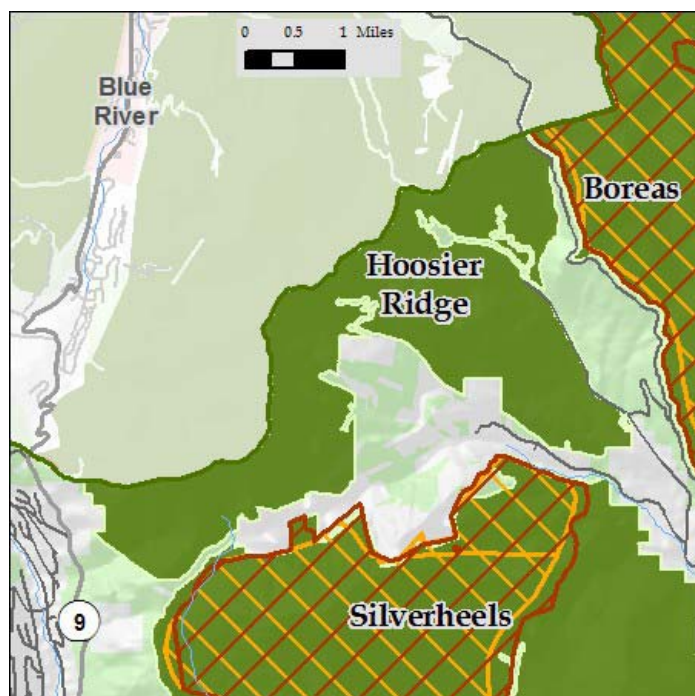
Location and Boundaries

The Hoosier Ridge Roadless Area is bounded on the east by North Tarryall Creek or the Boreas Pass Road, on the south by roads and mining claims in the Deadwood Gulch/Iron Mountain area, on the west by the forest boundary near Highway 9 and on the north by the Continental Divide. It is a very irregularly shaped area due to surrounding roads and mining claims.

It was not included in the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule and proposed 2008 Colorado Roadless Rule.

Hoosier Ridge Roadless Area

USFS name: n/a



Ecological Values

Because of its high elevation, Hoosier Ridge is primarily alpine tundra and rock, with Engelmann spruce-subalpine fir, and lodgepole pine found in the southeast portion adjacent to the Tarryall Creek headwaters. It includes significant examples of montane riparian forests. Rare plants include common, lance leafed, least, and reflected moonworts, globe gilia, Leadville milkvetch, alpine braya, Colorado Divide whitlow, northern rockcress, Rocky mountain columbine, Weber saussurea, and Penland alpine fen mustard.

Black bear are found across the area. Elk and mule deer summer in the area, but their winter ranges are further south. Lynx habitat and denning habitat are limited to the southeast forested area. There are records from 1979 of wolverine in this area.

Conservation and Community Values

The Hoosier Ridge designated RNA lies along the Continental Divide in both the Pike and White River National Forests just east of Hoosier Pass. It was designated as a “typical example of alpine ecosystems in excellent condition, containing unique plant populations or demonstrated scientific and public interest.” (ROD, PSI, 1995) The Pike-San Isabel National Forest side of the RNA drains into Beaver Creek, the water supply for Fairplay. The RNA is entirely alpine grasslands, and at least ten rare plants are found here. The major part of Hoosier Ridge Roadless Area is included in the large Mosquito Range PCA of CNHP, which they consider to have outstanding significance. The TNC Blueprint includes the whole RA as moderately high conservation value, and SREP’s Vision lists the RA as core wilderness and core agency.

The Oxide Mine, on the south central boundary, holds mining and historical interest. Hikers bushwhacking across the tundra are treated to splendid views of the surrounding mountains.



Salt Creek Roadless Area

South Park Ranger District Pike-San Isabel National Forest

Salt Creek Roadless Area is located southeast and directly adjacent to the Buffalo Peaks Wilderness. East and West Buffalo Peaks dominate the western views from the RA and South Park is visible to the east.

Location and Boundaries

The Salt Creek Roadless Area is 15 miles southwest of Fairplay in Park County. On the northwest the RA is contiguous with the Buffalo Peaks Wilderness. Its northeastern boundary is Pony Park Road, the eastern boundary follows the Forest boundary and FR 433, and the southern boundary is Salt Creek road (FR 435). Short cherrystems in the RA are included for FRs 434 and 433.2B on the north.

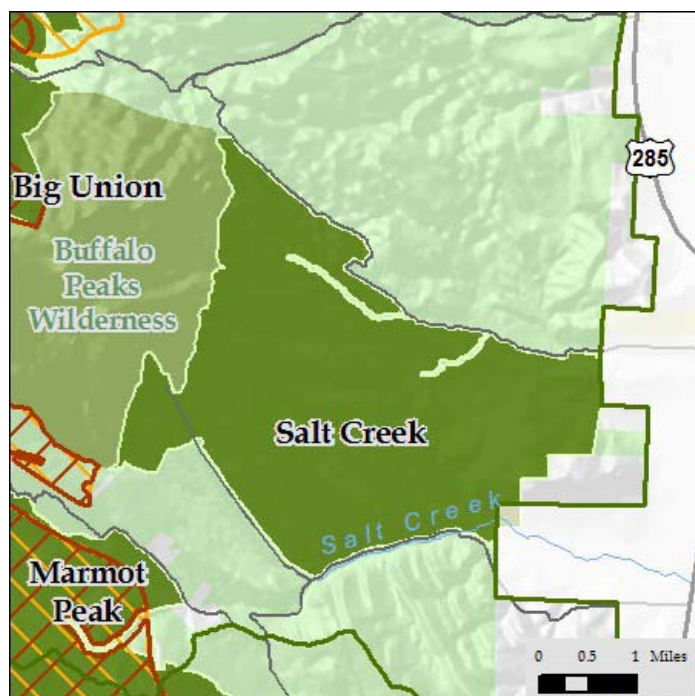


Buffalo Peaks can be glimpsed through the aspen and pines of Salt Creek. Photo by Jean C. Smith

Salt Creek was not included in the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule and proposed 2008 Colorado Roadless Rule.

Salt Creek Roadless Area

USFS name: n/a



Ecological Values

Salt Creek itself, with headwaters in the Marmot Peak Roadless Area, flows through the southern portion and into the Antero Reservoir, part of the water system for the Denver metropolitan area. Salt Creek ranges in altitude from almost 11,000 feet at the border of the Buffalo Creek Wilderness on the west down to about 9,000 feet in the northeast.

The Salt Creek Roadless Area contains substantial aspen woodlands on the west, changing to areas of limber and bristlecone pine, Douglas-fir, foothills and mountain grassland, and ponderosa pine as one moves to the east. The RA has sensitive natural communities of note: Drummond's willow/

mesic forb communities, mountain mahogany/needle-and-thread grass mixed foothill shrublands, and strapleaf willow montane willow carr.

Along with Salt Creek riparian areas, the RA provides a great diversity of habitat for various animal and bird species. Black bear and mountain lion can be found here. There is some very scattered habitat for lynx. Mule deer are widespread and the most of the area is winter range. Pronghorn antelope might be seen occasionally on the eastern edge of the RA as it is very similar to their main range in South Park. Elk calve and spend the summer and winter in portions of this RA.

Conservation and Community Values

The eastern half of the RA is part of the large South Park PCA that has very high biodiversity significance, and a small part of the extreme western corner is included in the Brush Park PCA of moderate biodiversity significance. The land directly to the east of the RA is the Antero/Salt Creek Colorado State Land Board Stewardship Trust Area. The Southern Rockies Wildlands Network Vision recommends managing the RA as core wilderness.

Lower elevations and easy access from Pony Park road provide hiking, backpacking and wildlife watching with views of the Buffalo Peaks in the distance.



Wildcat Canyon Roadless Area

South Park Ranger District Pike-San Isabel National Forest

The South Platte enters Wildcat Canyon from the south flowing through a deep rocky canyon until it reaches the more open lands at Corral Creek on the north end of the Roadless Area. The Hayman fire burned across the area, and the uplands on each side are now recovering, while deep in the canyon fire damage was relatively light.



South Platte River entering the remote canyon. Photo by Jean C. Smith

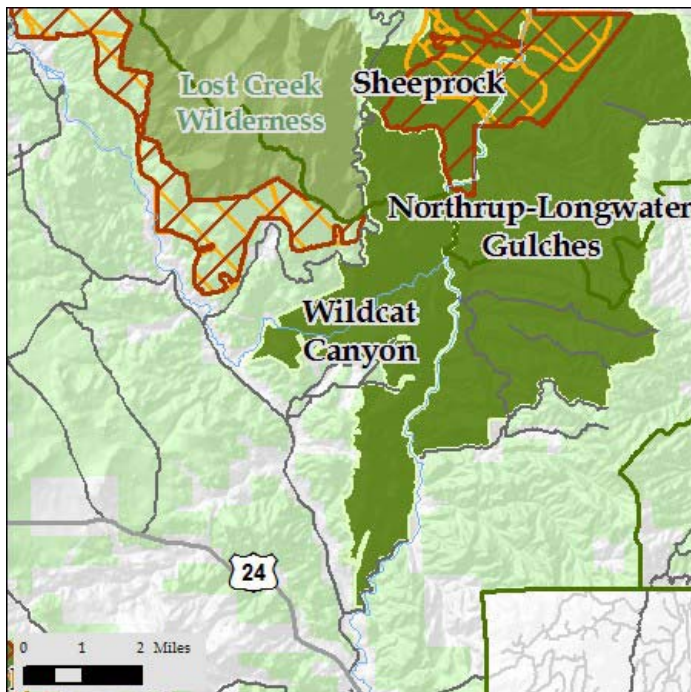
Location and Boundaries

The Wildcat Canyon Roadless Area lies between the South Platte River on the east, Matukat Road (FR 211) on the west (with logging roads in the vicinity of FR 210 excluded), Corral Creek Road (FR 540) on the north, and Tarryall Road (FR 77) on the south.

Wildcat Canyon Roadless Area was not included in the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule and proposed 2008 Colorado Roadless Rule.

Wildcat Canyon Roadless Area

USFS name: n/a



Ecological Values

On the south end of the area, after passing the Happy Meadows campground, the river enters a wild and rugged canyon which is accessible only by a rough and seldom used foot trail along the river or via the rough foot trail near Tarryall Creek, a major tributary of the South Platte River. Flowing north past the confluence with the Tarryall River, the South Platte enters a more open canyon with occasional grassy meadows interspersed with forest until it reaches the Corral Creek Roads (FRs 540 and 211). Here massive rock monoliths guard the river at the south boundaries of the Sheeprock and Northrup-Longwater Gulches Roadless Areas.

The Wildcat Canyon Roadless Area pre-Hayman was ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir, with a few aspen, and there are significant riparian species along the South Platte and Tarryall Creek. Pale blue-eyed grass is a rare plant that is found here. All but the southern end of Wildcat Canyon was burned in the Hayman Fire, with an intermix of high, moderate, low severities, and unburned areas. Riparian areas fared better, with some unburned areas along the river. In addition to the loss of forest cover, the highly erosive soils on steep slopes have continued to deposit massive amounts of sediment into the South Platte River.

Mountain lion are found here and the whole area is a summer concentration location for black bear. Elk find summer and winter range across the north end and there is an elk calving area located just to the west of the RA. Mule deer have both summer and winter range over the whole area. Bighorn sheep may come into the area from the adjacent Lost Creek Wilderness. There is habitat for Preble's meadow jumping mouse on the north end along the South Platte River. The South Platte River harbors a population of wild brown and rainbow trout, which are still present post-Hayman in spite of the heavy sediment deposits in the river.

Conservation and Community Values

Approximately half of Wildcat Canyon is listed by the TNC Blueprint as of moderate conservation value. The SREP Vision lists the RA as core wilderness.

The inaccessible character of the South Platte River canyon is Wildcat Canyon's most distinguished feature, but the uplands are also quite inaccessible except for a few areas on the south end where there is road access around Tappan Mountain and Platte Springs above Tarryall Creek. Before the Hayman Fire, the river stretch between Corral Creek and Tarryall Creek was popular with jeepers and ATV users. Dispersed camping on the river banks, several legal fords of the river connecting to the network of trails east of the river, and continual off-road trespass were serious problems both for habitat, water quality, and enforcement. This whole area is now closed to motorized use because of the fire, although, when conditions permit, the travel plan would allow access.

