
Acorn Creek & Ute Pass

**Acorn Creek: 1,140 acres
(1.8 square miles)**

**Ute Pass: 2,860 acres
(4.5 square miles)**

Total: 4,000 acres (6.25 square miles)



Douglas firs in Acorn Creek

Setting

The proposed Acorn Creek and Ute Pass Additions to the Ptarmigan Wilderness Area are adjacent to the northern portion of Ptarmigan Peak Wilderness Area on the western flanks of the Williams Fork Mountains. The terrain consists of a high relief mountainside drained by Acorn and North Acorn Creeks. The vegetation varies with elevation from grass shrub steppe and lodgepole pines, up to aspens, and on up to alpine tundra on the top of the Williams Fork ridge. The elevation ranges from 8,800 feet at Acorn Creek to 12,254 at Ute Peak.

What's special about them

Ecology: These proposed Wilderness Areas provide a transition zone linking the Ptarmigan Peak Wilderness Area to important mid-elevation wildlife habitat. Lower Acorn Creek contains excellent winter range for deer and elk, and the upper elevations support a large elk herd and moderate deer herd in the summer. There is potential wolverine habitat in these units, and much of the Acorn Creek area has been identified by Colorado Division of Wildlife as having high priority habitat.

Geology: The western flanks of the Williams Fork Mountains exhibit the exposed core of the uplifted mountains, consisting of Precambrian granites and gneisses, Cretaceous shales, and sandstone. This creates spectacular geological scenery above the Lower Blue River Valley.

Recreation: These units receive fairly heavy hunting use in the fall, especially Acorn Creek. There is a high opportunity to experience solitude and naturalness here, and there are outstanding views of the Eagles Nest Wilderness Area.

Potential threats

Motor recreation: The main threat to these proposed wilderness areas is posed by illegal ORV uses.

Logging: There have been calls for fuel removal in these areas, but their rugged geography and remoteness make such investment of resources questionable.

Outreach results

In response to extensive conversations with Summit County local officials, firefighting agencies and the U.S. Forest Service, this proposal reflects boundary changes that help ensure effective management of

forest fuel loads, wildfire fighting, and community safety. See attachments for details.

Other info

These proposed Areas, combined with the Ptarmigan Peak Wilderness Area and the adjacent Williams Fork Roadless Area on the Routt National Forest, form a roadless complex of 50,114 acres (78.2 square miles). The USFS has recommended that 1,982 acres of the Ute Pass and Acorn Creek RAs become part of the Ptarmigan Peak Wilderness Area, and they are being managed as such.

