

## **Give back to public lands National Public Lands Day is September 27**

Most of us use and appreciate the trails of the High Country, and some of us have even vowed to volunteer a day of work to give something back to this cherished resource. National Public Lands Day makes it easy to pitch in. In its 15th year as a coast-to-coast one-day event, NPLD brings more than 100,000 Americans together to collect trash, pull weeds, plant trees, construct trails and build bridges over wetlands.

One in three acres in this country belongs to the public, but millions of dollars in manpower are needed to complete backlogged maintenance projects or create new trails and facilities.

Grand County hosts one of the largest and longest-running (14 years!) NPLD events in the country, with six different projects to choose from. Just in Grand County alone, NPLD has improved local trails more than any other event during the year.

Grand County's NPLD projects range from high-altitude trail building in Rocky Mountain National Park to tree planting and buck-n-rail fence construction, all during peak foliage. There are projects geared to enthusiasts of mountain biking, motorized vehicles, fishing, hiking and boating, and many different jobs available to accommodate kids and less fit individuals. And on top of enjoying eye-popping scenery during the height of aspen foliage, volunteers are taken care of with complimentary breakfast, lunch and dinner provided with help from local restaurants and businesses who continue to support NPLD each year. Also provided is transportation to each project site, tools, instructions and safety demonstrations, a T-shirt and goodie bag.

Volunteers return year after year for a day of fun in the sun with like-minded outdoor-loving folks, as well as for the

appreciation party at the end of the day, complete with live entertainment, beer from New Belgium Brewery and loads of great door prizes.

Giving back to trails and open space not only feels good, it's a personal expression of thanks --- a community barnraising. So mark September 27th on your calendar to spend the day working hard and having fun at the same time. There's no need to preregister; just show up at Sol Vista at Granby Ranch ski area at 7am and roll up your sleeves. To preregister, contact the USDA Forest Service office in Granby at 970-887-4100. For more information about NPLD, visit [publiclandsday.org](http://publiclandsday.org).

Grand County NPLD projects:

- A new section of trail will be constructed in Rocky Mountain National Park that will be part of the Continental Divide Trail. The trail will connect and provide easier (non-motorized) access between the National Park Service CDT and the Forest Service CDT. 40 to 50 volunteers are needed to construct the new trail, which is about 1.2 miles long and runs between the Onahu Creek trail and the Bowen Gulch Trail. The work is on hilly terrain, requires a hike of .25 to 1.5 miles, and difficulty of work is rated moderate.
- The U.S. Forest Service will oversee improvements off FSR 120 (Kawuneeche Road) off CR4 just past the Idleglen split with FSR 123 near Grand Lake. About 30 to 40 people are needed, and the work is rated moderate. Work will include: constructing buck-n-rail fencing in certain sections for resource protection, hardening or rehabing some of the dispersed camping areas and possible seeding of old sites.
- The Bureau of Land Management will create a trail on the

bank of the Colorado River near Pumphouse Recreation Site where hikers and anglers have caused multiple access routes and erosion, and the footing is unsafe during wet or frozen conditions. A new trailhead and crib wall will be constructed, and old user-created trails will be rehabilitated and naturalized. Difficulty is rated moderate, with several tasks suitable for children.

- Headwaters Trails Alliance will construct two bridges on the Fraser to Granby Trail. Work is rated moderate. The trail is located off of Village Road in Granby Ranch. Approximately 15 to 20 people are needed to construct the bridges, put in rock walls and clean the trail up. The grade is about two percent with a hike of about one mile or so required.
- The U.S. Forest Service will lead a project on the Devil's Thumb/High Lonesome Trail, part of CDT, which will continue uphill from where the NPLD 2007 project left off. About 30 volunteers are needed to work on rehabilitation of drainage work and to install a boundary sign at the Indian Peaks Wilderness boundary. The work will involve a two-mile hike from the trail head and is rated moderate to difficult.
- Volunteers will plant 3,000 lodgepole seedlings in the Green Ridge campground. The trees are needed to replace trees lost to the mountain pine beetle infestation. As these trees grow they will provide wind protection, shading, and animal habitat for the campground. It is a USFS project, rated moderate to strenuous.