

Wilderness 50th Anniversary-Walk for Wilderness and Family Fun Fair

September 27, 2014

LaPlata County Fairgrounds, 9-1 pm

On September 3rd, 1964 the Wilderness Act was signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson, establishing the legal definition of wilderness and forever protecting wild places in the USA. Our area boasts three wilderness areas and 11 wilderness study areas including the Weminuche Wilderness which is the largest in Colorado.

The 50th Anniversary of this historic event occurs in 2014. Many community members, volunteers, advocacy groups, Fort Lewis College and special interest groups are partnering with the San Juan National Forest and BLM to have a yearlong series of events culminating the week of **September 25-28, with September 27 being the “Wilderness 50th Anniversary-Walk for Wilderness and Family Fun Fair”**. Wilderness Walks are community celebrations which include organized walks through scenic areas and wilderness related educational activities for wilderness supporters.

San Juan Mountains Association in partnership with the San Juan National Forest and BLM will be spearheading the Wilderness 50th Walk in Durango. The walk will begin at the LaPlata County Fairgrounds and continue on the scenic Animas River Trail ending back at the Fairgrounds. The turnaround is planned to be at Rotary Park where participants will receive a commemorative pin. Educational and interactive booths sponsored by community members will be located in parking lot A, at the fairgrounds, near the start of the walk.

Other components of the event at the fairgrounds will include:

- Live music (San Juan String Band)
- “Kids Education Corner” operated by SJMA
- Live “branding” of Wilderness 50th logo on wood discs (for participants)
- Stock packing/loading demo (Back Country Horsemen)
- Primitive tool demo (crosscuts, etc.)
- Food and beverage
- Wilderness river camp set up
- Backcountry gear demonstrations
- Dutch Oven cooking
- Mesa Verde NP, BLM, Forest Service booths
- Others TBA

The tentative schedule for this event is:

- 9 am-Send-off of the walkers by local dignitaries including agency representatives that manage local Wilderness areas; USDA Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and National Park System
- 10:30 am-Walkers arrive back at Fairgrounds and enjoy educational booths, food and music
- 11:30 am- San Juan String Band Program- The members of the San Juan String Band have combined their passion for the environment with their love of music, to provide conservation education and environmental awareness messages for the public. Their fun, interactive style will engage the entire family. The band represents the San Juan Public Lands (San Juan National Forest and Bureau of Land Management)
- Event ends approximately 1 pm