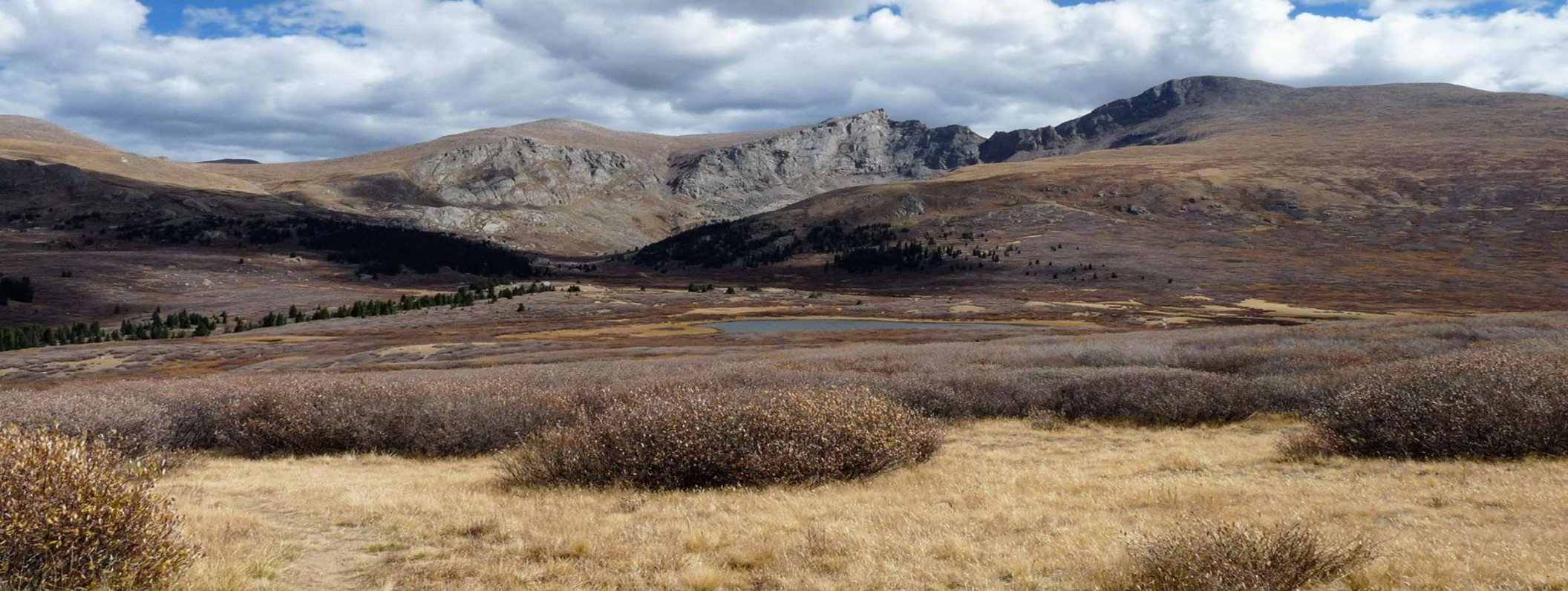


# Discovering Colorado's 14ers



# Learning Objectives

- What is CFI?
- Alpine environment
- Resources
- What is a 14er?
- Safety
- The Ten Essentials
- Training
- Gear
- Beginner peaks
- Stewardship
- Where to go next?



# Colorado Fourteeners Initiative (CFI)

- Trail construction & maintenance
- Close/restore unsustainable routes
- Protection of the alpine
- Hiker education
- Community engagement
- Public land advocacy

*“...to protect and preserve the 14,000-foot peaks through active stewardship and public education.”*

[www.14ers.org](http://www.14ers.org)



**Colorado  
Fourteeners  
Initiative**

# Life Zones: Where Are You Hiking?



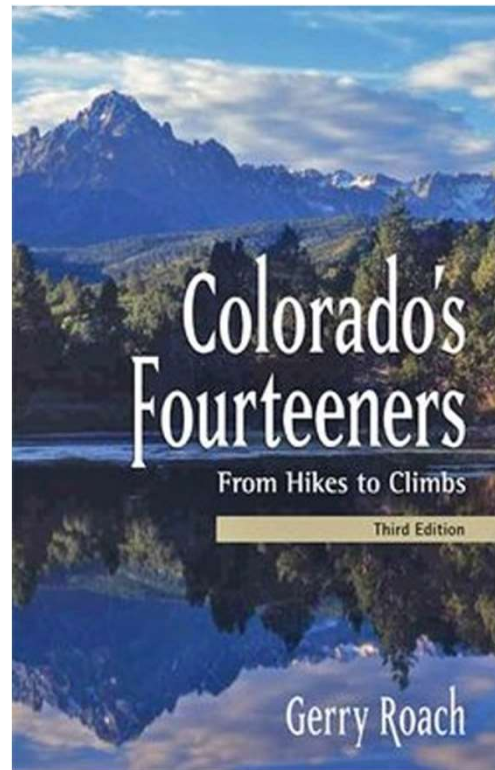
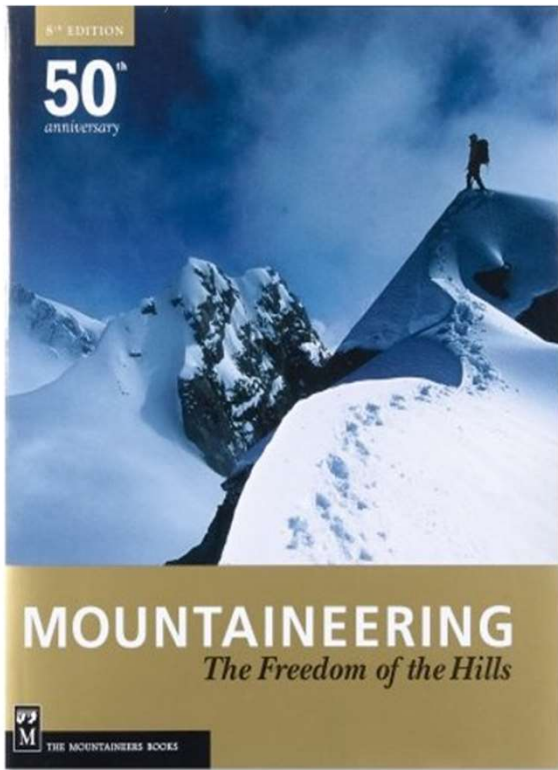
# Realities of the Alpine

- High wind environment
- Low effective precipitation
- U.V. radiation 50% higher
- Temperature extremes
- Short growing season



**How does this impact the plants? the animals? and YOU?**

# Resources: Credible Sources



# Resources: 14ers.com

- *Caution: crowd-sourced resources (e.g., AllTrails)*
- 14ers.com is single-sourced
- Website, *free app*, Facebook
- Peak lists, route descriptions
- Route photos, trailhead info
- Condition updates, trip reports

## New app features!

3D route flythroughs

Downloadable map packs

Enhanced offline use

14ers.com

A-Z Range Elevation

Front Range

|  |               |         |
|--|---------------|---------|
|  | Grays Peak    | 14,275' |
|  | Torreys Peak  | 14,272' |
|  | Mt. Blue Sky  | 14,268' |
|  | Longs Peak    | 14,259' |
|  | Pikes Peak    | 14,109' |
|  | Mt. Bierstadt | 14,066' |

Tenmile Range

|  |               |         |
|--|---------------|---------|
|  | Quandary Peak | 14,272' |
|--|---------------|---------|

Mosquito Range

|  |             |         |
|--|-------------|---------|
|  | Mt. Lincoln | 14,293' |
|--|-------------|---------|

14ers Trailheads Map My Routes Settings

< Uncompahgre Peak

**Uncompahgre Peak**

Last Updated Mar 07, 2026

Elevation 14,318'

Rank 6 of 53

Range San Juan

Location

In the San Juan mountain range 9 miles northwest of Lake City and 3 miles east of Wetterhorn Peak.

View on Map Overview Weather More...

Routes

South Ridge  
Class 2 3,000' 7.5 mi ★

Route bookmarked Standard route ★

Photos downloaded

Peak Conditions

Retrieve Condition Updates

14ers Trailheads Map My Routes Settings

# What is a 14er?

It's a mountain at least 14,000 feet high that is **at least 300 feet higher than the saddle** connecting it to a neighboring mountain.

There are 53 named *and* ranked 14ers in Colorado, and 58 total named (five of which are unranked).



Ellingwood, Blanca, Little Bear

# The Rating System

| Classes |   |
|---------|---|
| Class 1 | Easy hiking, usually on a good trail  |
| Class 2 | More difficult hiking; can involve more talus/scree                                     |
| Class 3 | Scrambling; un-roped with occasional use of handholds                                   |
| Class 4 | Climbing; terrain is often more steep, dangerous, and consequential; falls can be fatal |
| Class 5 | Technical climbing/rock climbing using rope and belay systems                           |

*The class of a route is determined by its most difficult move/section.*

**There are no easy 14ers!**

# Examples of Classes 1 – 2

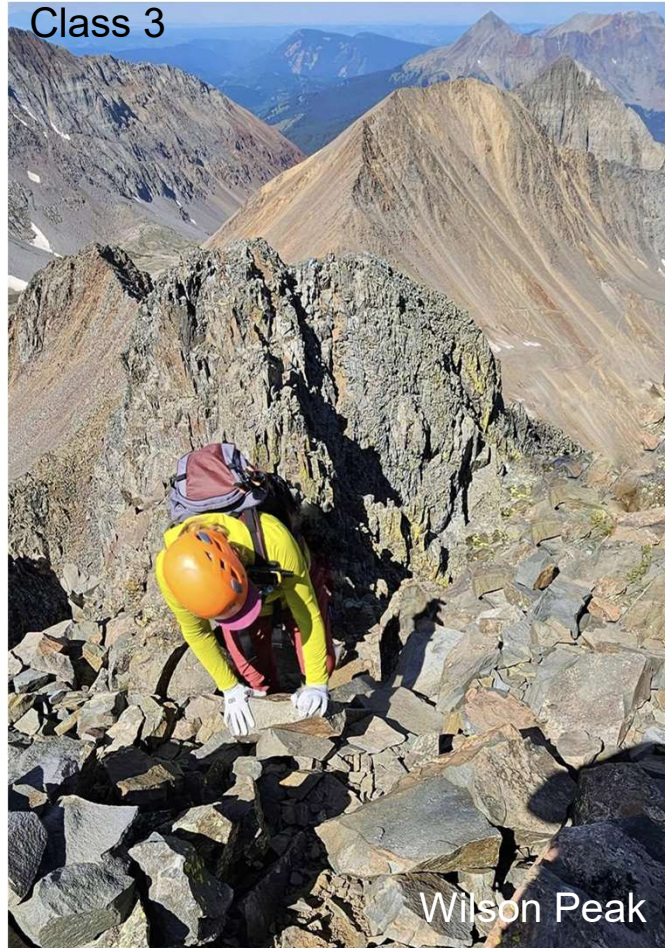
Class 1



Class 2



# Examples of Classes 3 – 4



# Safety: Weather

- Start early! Back to tree line by noon, vehicle by storm activation.
- Gathering + uplift + dark on the bottom = start taking heed
- Hear thunder? Retreat!
- Seek to get as low as possible.
- Spread out if you're in a group.
- Lightning position, if necessary.

**Forecast resources:** NOAA/Weather.gov, OpenSnow, Mountain Forecast



*Prioritizing learning more about forecasts, lightning, and how to read the sky is critical to your safety.*

# Safety: Exposure to the Elements

- Sunscreen (SPF 30+)
- Blisters (shoes/moleskin)
- Altitude sickness
- Dehydration
- Hypothermia
- **Summit is only halfway**



# Safety: Buddy System

- Two are better than one
- Conversation
- Emergency preparation
- Route-finding



# Safety: Route Finding

- Know/study your route
- Start on established trails
- Look for cairns (*caveat: verify!*)
- Keep group together
- Carry paper maps – and know how to read them
- Use GPS tools (e.g., 14ers.com app, GPX files uploaded into a mapping app like GAIA, OnX, etc.)



# Emergencies

- *When in doubt, turn around!*
- Activate SOS if available
- Give first aid, if needed
- Be visible and bright
- Stay in place unless in danger
- Remain calm
- Utilize ten essentials, if needed



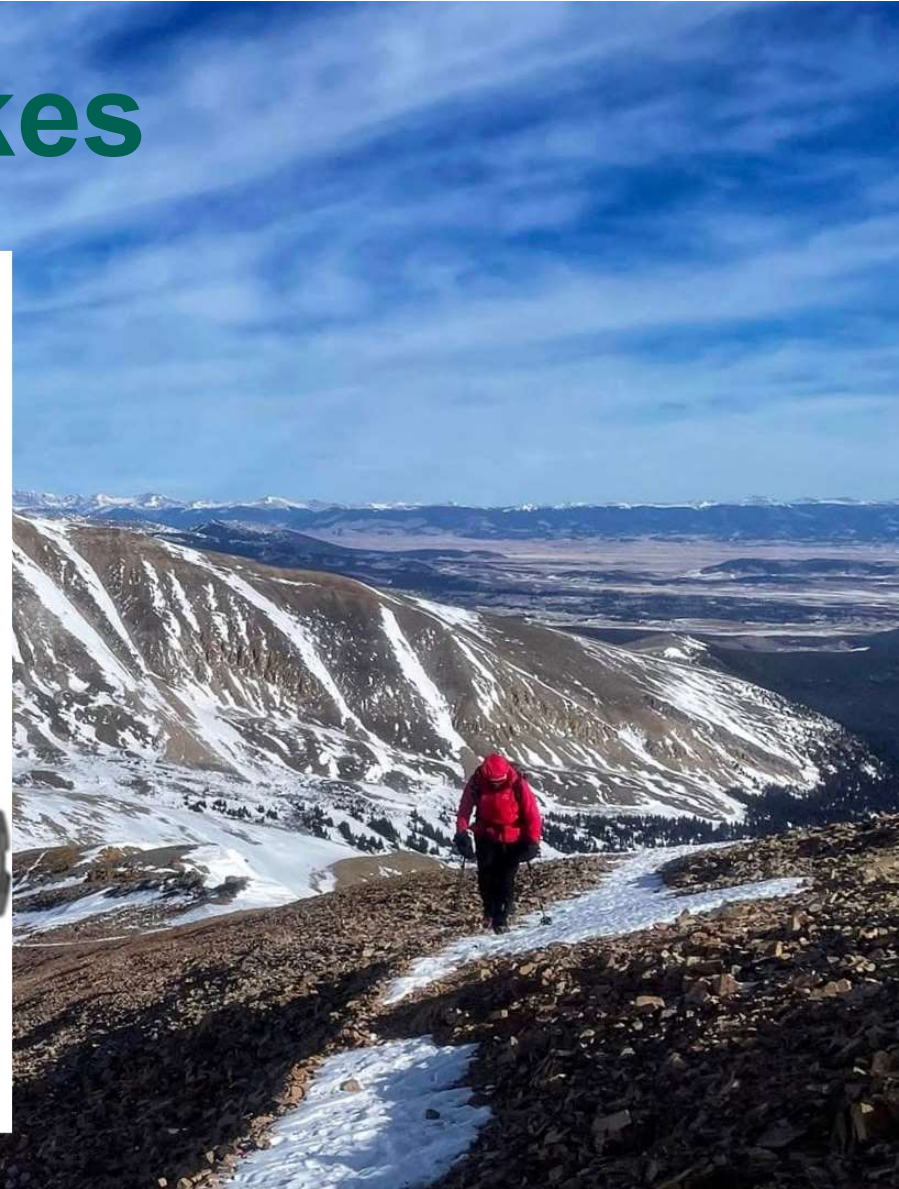


# Other Gear Considerations

- Pack
- Helmet
- Trekking poles
- Watch
- GPS
- inReach/SPOT
- Extra batteries
- Battery pack/power bank
- Medications
- Glasses/contacts
- Phone
- Wag Bag /TP /pack-out baggies
- Insect repellent/Permethrin
- Two-way radios
- Water treatment system



# Microspikes



# Trip Plan

## Who is in your group?

- Everyone properly equipped?
- First-hand knowledge of the route?

## What are the conditions?

- Weather forecast?
- Snow conditions?
- Route to the trailhead?

## Where are you going?

- Round Trip or Point to Point?
- Potential Campsites & Ranger Stations?

## When will you be back?

- Estimated return time?
- **9-1-1 time?**
- Backup plan for delays?

**Your Trip Plan  
should be left  
with someone  
at home  
JUST IN  
CASE**

# Trip Plan (sample)

*Time to call 911 if you've had no contact:* \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Group Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Names of Group Members: \_\_\_\_\_

Cellular Phone Numbers: \_\_\_\_\_

Departure Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Return Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Trailhead: \_\_\_\_\_

Drivers/Vehicles (color/year/make/model/registration): \_\_\_\_\_

Destination: \_\_\_\_\_

Route: \_\_\_\_\_

Weather Forecast: \_\_\_\_\_

Sunrise/Sunset/Moonrise (% moon illumination)/Moonset: \_\_\_\_\_

Outdoor Experience Level of the Group (1-5): \_\_\_\_\_

Medical Experience of the Group: \_\_\_\_\_

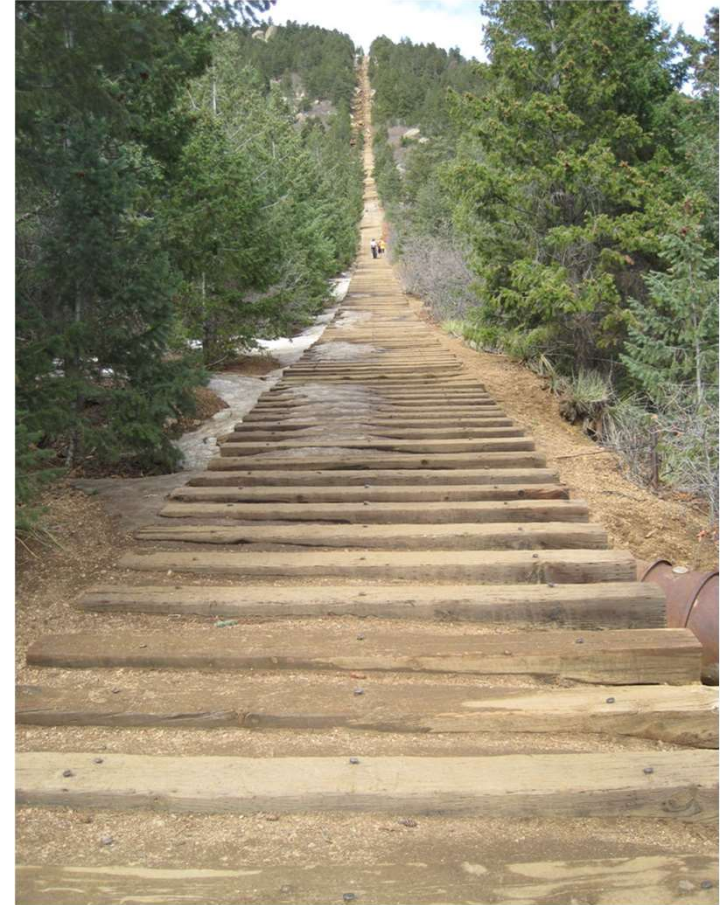
Emergency Equipment on hand: \_\_\_\_\_

Special Medical Conditions/Needs: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional information: \_\_\_\_\_

# Training

- Hike! Walk hills!
- Manitou Springs Incline
- Small pack first
- Hikes with pack (20lbs)
- Break in footwear, if needed
- Acclimation regimen

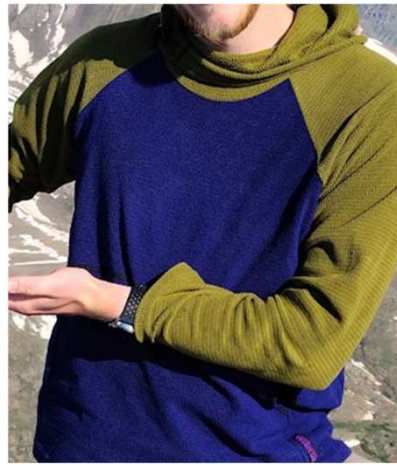


# Clothing

**IMPORTANT! Our search and rescue friends recommend wearing bright colors!**



**Base layer**  
(synthetic or wool;  
t-shirt or long sleeve)



**Fleece layer**



**Insulating layer**  
(down or synthetic)



**Shell**  
(wind/rain)

***Avoid cotton. Moisture-wicking is critical.***

**Merino / Synthetic Socks!**  
(Darn Tough / Smartwool)

# Footwear



**Hiking Boots**

**Trail Running  
Shoes**

**Approach  
Shoes**

**Mountaineering  
Boots**

Find what works for you. Leave room for feet to expand. Buying a ½ size up from your normal size is recommended, and then learn some lacing techniques to prevent your feet from sliding around.



**Let's review some good beginner  
14er options!**

# Mount Sherman

## Standard route (SW ridge)

- Elevation gain: 2,100ft
- Difficulty: class 1
- Distance: 5.25 miles RT



# Mount Bierstadt

## Standard route (west slopes)

- Elevation gain: 2,850ft
- Difficulty: class 2
- Distance: 7.25 miles RT



# Quandary Peak

## Standard route (east ridge)

- Elevation gain: 3,450ft
- Difficulty: class 1
- Distance: 6.75 miles RT



Photo from 14ers.com

# Pikes Peak

## Northwest slopes route (Craggs)

- Elevation gain: 4,300ft
- Difficulty: class 2
- Distance: 14 miles RT

## Standard route (Barr Trail)

- Elevation gain: 7,600ft
- Difficulty: class 1
- Distance: 24 miles RT



Photo from 14ers.com

# Grays & Torreys Peaks

## Standard combination route (north slopes/south slopes)

- Elevation gain: 3,600ft
- Difficulty: class 1
- Distance: 8.25 miles RT



# Dogs and 14ers:

## An Important Message from Glacier the Bark Ranger



- Deciding to take your dog
- Why to use a leash
- Dog rescue
- Dogs vs. wildlife
- Dogs vs. plant life
- Dog waste



# Leave No Trace

- Plan ahead and prepare
- Travel & camp on durable surfaces
- Dispose of waste properly
- Leave what you find
- Minimize campfire impacts
- Respect wildlife
- Be considerate of others



# Just How Loved Are the 14ers?

|                       |                         |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Front Range</b>    | <b>Best Est: 86,500</b> |
| Longs Peak            | 7,000-10,000            |
| Pikes Peak            | 10,000-15,000*          |
| Torreys Peak          | 15,000-20,000*          |
| Grays Peak            |                         |
| Mount Blue Sky        | 20,000-25,000           |
| Mount Bierstadt       | 25,000-30,000*          |
| <b>Tenmile Range</b>  | <b>Best Est: 26,500</b> |
| Quandary Peak         | 25,000-30,000*          |
| <b>Sawatch Range</b>  | <b>Best Est: 76,500</b> |
| Mount Elbert          | 15,000-20,000*          |
| <b>Mosquito Range</b> | <b>Best Est: 22,500</b> |
| Mount Lincoln         | 15,000-20,000*          |
| Mount Bross           |                         |
| Mount Democrat        |                         |
| Mount Sherman         | 7,000-10,000*           |

**2022:** 279,000 hiker use days

**2023:** 260,000 hiker use days

**2024:** 265,000 hiker use days

## That's why in 2025 CFI...

- Restored ~7,000 square feet on 11 different 14ers.
- Installed 342 timber steps on 10 different 14ers.
- Built 2,309 linear feet of new trail on Mt. Shavano alone.

# What Can You Do To Help?

Taking care of public land is *everyone's* responsibility.

- *Get involved.* Trail maintenance, peak stewarding, donating.
- *Clean as you go.* Carry an extra trash bag.
- *Teach others.* Share information with friends and fellow hikers.
- *Lead by example.* Talk the talk, walk the walk!



# Go Learn More!

- CFI's YouTube channel

- Alpine ecology
- Mountain safety
- Mountain weather
- Leave No Trace

- 14ers.com

- "Getting Started" section

- AlpineRescueTeam.com

- Safety & Education page



## CO14ersInitiative

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Protect. Restore. Educate. >

[14ers.org](https://14ers.org) and 3 more links

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Home > Climbing 14ers: Getting Started

Climbing 14ers

Getting Started

Getting Started

Welcome to 14ers.com!





**Questions?**

Little Bear Peak