

Hiking Trails

Trail Map Legend:

E - Easy Good for families with small children, elderly or those with a short time frame.

M - Moderate Good for longer hikes and those looking for a more strenuous experience. Best for people with good physical conditioning.

D - Difficult Good for more serious hikers with appropriate equipment and excellent physical conditioning. May involve technical skills. Generally not recommended for those under 14 years old.

Gunnison Area

Hartman Rocks – Easy to Moderate - varied length of trails (1/2 – 30 miles).

Access: West on Highway 50, 1/2 mile west of town, before you cross the Gunnison River, turn left onto Gold Basin Road (CR 38). Travel 2.8 miles to the sign marking the entrance to the Hartman Rocks Recreation Area. This area is a network of both dirt roads and single track trails. The single track trails are marked with numbered posts on each end. You will hike through rolling hills of sagebrush, granite rock formations and cottonwood groves. A separate brochure is available for this area from the Gunnison Chamber of Commerce.

Gunnison Spur of the Colorado Trail – Easy to Moderate - 20 miles,

Access: East on Highway 50 to McDonald's. Turn left and go to the first stop sign. Turn right and travel around the college campus about halfway up the hill. Park in the eastern edge of the lot for the WSC library. Cross the road to gain access to the trail. The trail climbs steadily to the radio towers then follows a 2 track road up the crest of rolling hills to the top of Signal Peak. It continues for many miles along roads and trails.

O'Fallon Ditchline/Ridgeline Trail - Easy - 1.5 miles

Access: Take Highway 50 to McDonalds. Turn left and go to the first stop sign. Turn right and travel around the college campus about halfway up the hill. Park in the eastern edge of the lot for the WSC library. Cross the road to the entrance of the Trail.

This trail is a easy and short hike from the City of Gunnison through sagebrush and hills. It provides good views of the City and surrounding area. A loop hike can be completed by using the entire trail system there.

Gunnison Bike Path – Easy - 3 miles, ADA accessible

Access: North on Highway 135 to City Market parking lot. The trail starts from the parking lot.

The bike path travels north along Highway 135 to the Gunnison River. You will pass horse pastures on your way to the river. At the river, there is public fishing access, north and west of the bridge.

Neversink – Easy - 1.5 miles, ADA Accessible

Access: West on Highway 50 for 5 miles. The entrance is on the south side of the highway and is well marked.

Located on the north shore of the Gunnison River, this area is rich with grasses, flowers, cottonwoods and willows and is ideal for birding, fishing and wildlife observation. This trail is flat, shaded and provides very easy walking.

Frontage Road – Easy - 2.5 miles, ADA Accessible

Access: West on highway 50 to A&W Restaurant. Park on any nearby side street.

The frontage road begins at A&W and parallels Highway 50 out to the ranchland west of town. The frontage road is nice for an easy walk, in-line skating or a quick bike ride.

Crested Butte/Mt. Crested Butte Area

Crested Butte Summit Trail - Moderate-Difficult, 1.25 miles

Access: Park in the visitors parking area at Crested Butte Mountain Resort. There is a kiosk where maps can be obtained. Tickets are available at the Ski area ticket office or Eflin Sports in the Treasury Center. Follow a walkway to the Silver Queen Chairlift, which will take you to the trailhead.

The trail is well marked and will take you to the summit of Crested Butte Mountain through tall timber, across tundra and a screefield. There are spectacular views in all directions from the summit. Your return is a hike down the mountain (about 6 miles) or a ride down the chairlift.

Snodgrass Trail - Moderate - 3 miles (Trail closed for grazing July and August)

Access: Travel 2 miles past the ski area at Mt. Crested Butte on Gothic Road. The trailhead is on the left side of Gothic Road.

At the trailhead, cross over the fence on Snodgrass Road. At approximately 0.5 miles, the trail intersects with a road. Turn left and follow the trail west to the Washington Gulch Road. This trail takes you through fields of wildflowers and in and out of aspen and pine groves. There are beautiful views of Crested Butte Mountain along the way. Watch for “stop sign” closures.

Upper Loop Trail - Easy to Moderate - 3.4 miles

Access: From Mt. Crested Butte, travel east then south on the Hunter Hill Road for 1 mile. The trailhead is marked at the switchback. Parking is limited.

The trail descends to the Skyland subdivision at the Crested Butte Country Club through meadows and aspen trees. There are fence crossings. At approximately 1.5 miles, you will have several trail choices. To travel to Crested Butte, take the first right on the McCormick Ranch Trail. To travel to the Country Club, stay on the Upper Loop Trail. To travel to Brush Creek Road, turn left onto the Upper Loop Trail.

Upper Upper Loop Trail - Moderate to Difficult - 2.2 miles

Access: From Mt. Crested Butte, travel east then south on the Hunter Hill Road for 1 mile. The trailhead is marked at the switchback. Parking is limited.

The trail descends to the Skyland subdivision at the Crested Butte Country Club through meadows and aspen trees. At approximately 1.5 miles, turn left onto the Upper Upper Loop Trail. (You will encounter a spur to your right that is rated intermediate and is a nice hike). The trail ends at Brush Creek Road on the Southern side of Crested Butte Mountain. Turn right to return to town.

Lower Loop Trail - Easy, ADA accessible for 1 mile - 2.5 miles

Access: From Crested Butte, travel north on 1st street then west on Butte Avenue. Butte Avenue turns into Peanut Lake Road. Continue past Peanut Lake and park at the fence line before reaching Peanut mine.

The trailhead is across the road from Peanut Mine and for the 1st mile is on private land (please stay on the trail). Once on BLM lands, two single-track trails continue northwest until ending at the Gunsight Pass Road. To return, travel east on the road, then southeast on the Slate River Road. Finally, turn south on Gothic Road.

Crested Butte/Mt. Crested Butte Recreation Path - Easy - 2.75 miles (2 miles are ADA accessible)

Access: Park at the Crested Butte Mountain Resort parking lot. The trail starts at this parking lot heading back towards Crested Butte.

The trail follows Gothic Road for the first 3/4 mile, crossing the road twice. The remaining 2 miles wind through meadows. The end of the trail is still under construction. When you get to the barricade, signs will direct you onto a single track dirt path out to Gothic Road. You may continue your hike on the shoulder of Gothic Road into Crested Butte. There is a shuttle that can take you back up to the parking lot.

Green Lake Trail - Moderate - 4 miles

Access: Park in the Town of Crested Butte, near the Crested Butte Nordic Center at 2nd Ave. and Whiterock. The trail begins near the Nordic Center.

This trail provides a more aggressive and longer trail from Crested Butte, and proceeds through private property during some of its length, so remaining on the marked trail is a requirement. The trail ends at Green Lake, with the return trip a back-track back into Crested Butte.

Taylor River Road and Fossil Ridge Area

Henry Lake Trail - Difficult - 7 miles

Access: North on Highway 135 to Almont, right onto Taylor River Road. Travel approximately 15 miles to Lottis Creek Campground. Trailhead for South Lottis Trail is behind the campground. The Henry Lake Trail branches off of the South Lottis Trail at about 4.5 miles.

There are many spectacular views along this trail and fishing in the lake is reported to be fair to good. The trail is located in the Fossil Ridge Wilderness and parallels South Lottis Creek and crosses some wet areas. It ascends rapidly the last 3/4 mile to Henry Lake at 11,704 ft.

Gold Creek Trail - Moderate - 5 miles

Access: Take Highway 50 east to Parlin. Turn left at Parlin and go about 8 miles to Ohio City. Turn left on the Gold Creek Road and drive past the Gold Creek Campground. The trailhead is at the end of the Gold Creek Road and may require 4-wheel drive once past the campground.

This single track trail in the Fossil Ridge Recreation Management Area provides beautiful views into the Fossil Ridge and Pitkin areas. The trail climbs to Shaw Ridge, and for a day hike it is recommended to stop here. More experienced hikers can continue on the trail to access Union Park.

Doctor Park Trail - Moderate - 4 miles

Access: North on Highway 135 to Almont, right onto Taylor River Road. Travel 6 miles to North Bank Campground. Trail leaves from north end of campground.

The trail heads Northeast out of the campground to access the Doctor Park area. You will have excellent views of Manganese Peak and Doctor Park Mine from this trail.

Fossil Ridge Trail - Moderate - 13.5 miles

Access: Take Highway 50 east to Parlin. Turn left at Parlin and go about 8 miles to Ohio City. Turn left on Gold Creek Road and drive to the Gold Creek Campground. The Fossil Ridge Trailhead is directly across from the Gold Creek Campground on the left side of the road.

This trail in the Fossil Ridge Recreation Management Area climbs up several switchbacks then levels out once on the ridge. Boulder Lake can be accessed from this trail at about 4 miles. The Fossil Ridge Trail also accesses the Mill Lake and Summerville Trails into the Fossil Ridge Wilderness and the Willow Creek Trail. The views from the Fossil Ridge Trail are spectacular as you look to the mountains south and east.

Summerville Trail - Moderate - 11 miles

Access: North on Highway 135 to Almont, right onto Taylor River Road. Travel 10 miles. The trailhead is on the right side of the road.

This trail is a major trail in the Fossil Ridge Wilderness. Although the trail for the first 1/5 miles is gentle, it quickly gains elevation with three series of switchbacks. The trail follows a meandering creek, then enters into a quiet lodgepole forest. If you hike the entire 11 miles to the Fossil Ridge Trail you will see breathtaking views of Henry Mountain and Fossil Ridge.

Mill Lake Trail - Moderate - 2.5 miles

Access: Take Highway 50 east to Parlin. Turn left at Parlin and go about 8 miles to Ohio City. Turn left on the Gold Creek Road and drive to the Gold Creek Campground. The Fossil Ridge Trailhead provides access to Mill Lake Trail and is directly across from the Gold Creek Campground on the left side of the road.

This trail begins on the Fossil Ridge Trail. Within the first mile, the Mill Lake Trail junctions off of the Fossil Ridge Trail. The Mill Lake Trail enters the Fossil Ridge Wilderness and after a short 1.5 mile walk it leads you to Mill Lake. Mill Lake sits at an elevation of 11,480 feet.

Curecanti Area

West Beaver Creek Trail – Moderate - 7 miles

Access: From Gunnison, travel west on Highway 50 for 6 miles to the Cooper Ranch site. Turn right on the Beaver Creek Road. Travel north 2.5 miles to the D.O.W. House. Park at the house. The trailhead is another 2 miles and can be accessed by hiking.

The trail gradually climbs along the Beaver Creek Valley, meandering through aspen and pine forests. In about 7 miles, you will intersect with the Beaver Creek Trail near the old cabin.

Coal Mesa Trail – Difficult - 9 miles

Access: From Gunnison, travel west on Highway 50 for about 25 miles to Highway 92. Travel west on Highway 92 for 1 mile. Once across the Blue Mesa Dam, turn right onto the Soap Creek Road #721 and travel 9 miles to Soap Creek Campground. (The trailhead is adjacent to the south end of the Soap Creek Campground) The trail crosses Soap Creek (via a bridge) and enters the West Elk Wilderness Area in 1/2 mile. The trail follows the ridge for a distance and has excellent views. The trail climbs steeply to Bonfisk Peak. For a looped trail, return to Soap Creek Campground on the Cow Creek Trail.

Dillon Pinnacles – Easy - 2 miles

Access: From Gunnison, travel west on Highway 50, 6 miles past the Elk Creek Visitor Center. The trailhead is clearly marked on the right just before the bridge crossing the reservoir.

Ascending through sagebrush, conifers and riparian vegetation, this trail offers spectacular views of the weather sculpted Dillon Pinnacles and Blue Mesa Reservoir. There are interpretive signs along the trail that describe how these spectacular spires were formed. Horses are permitted.

Pine Creek – Moderate - 1 mile

Access: West on Highway 50, one mile west of junction with Highway 92. The exit is clearly marked and a short, unpaved road leads to the trailhead. Trailers must be parked before descending to the trailhead.

This trail descends along Pine Creek on the south side of the Black Canyon of the Gunnison. 232 Stair steps take you down to the Morrow Point Reservoir below Blue Mesa Dam. The lower portion of the trail follows

the historic bed of the Denver and Rio Grande Western railroad. It also accesses the Morrow Point Lake Boat Tours.

Pioneer Point/Curecanti Creek – Difficult - 2 miles

Access: West on Highway 50 to the junction of Highway 92. Turn right onto Highway 92 and travel 5.7 miles to the trailhead.

This trail descends steeply from the rim of the Black Canyon of the Gunnison. It follows Curecanti Creek down to Morrow Point Reservoir. The Curecanti Needle, a 700 foot geologic spire, is within view at the trail's end.

Hermit's Rest – Difficult - 3 miles

Access: West on Highway 50 to the junction of Highway 92. Turn right onto Highway 92 and travel 17 miles to the trailhead.

This trail zigzags through oak, pine, juniper and fir. You will descend steeply to the wooded campsite and picnic area on the shores of Morrow Point Reservoir.

Ohio Creek Area

Beaver Ponds Trail - Easy - 1/2 mile

Access: North on Ohio Creek Road, travel 22 miles from Highway 135. Trailhead is marked.

This is a good choice for families with small children. The trail climbs gently through dense aspen stands and ends at the Beaver Ponds where there is public fishing access.

Mill-Castle Trail - Easy to Difficult - 8 miles

Access: North on Ohio Creek Road, travel about 10 miles to the Mill Creek Road, turn left and travel 4.5 miles to trailhead.

The lower part of this trail is suitable for all hikers, but the upper sections should only be attempted by the most proficient hikers due to the unpredictable weather and rugged terrain. However, this is one of the most scenic trails in the West Elk Wilderness. The trail meanders west from the Mill Creek Road, first following Mill Creek, and then steeply climbing to Storm Pass.

Railroad Grade Road - Easy - 6 miles

Access: North on Ohio Creek Road about 23 miles from Highway 135. As you approach the sweeping switchback turn, head east onto the Railroad Grade Road. Park along the road as soon as possible.

The road and trail meander through pine and aspen forests and meadows. As you walk along the historic Railroad Grade Road, remnants of the mining past are still visible. Look for the hand built rock retaining wall that protected the rail line from rock slides and avalanches.

Dyke Trail - Easy to Moderate - 6 miles

Access: From Crested Butte, travel west on the Kebler Pass Road to Lake Irwin Road #826. Travel north on the Lake Irwin Road to the trailhead (about 1/2 mile past the campground). Alternate access: from Horse Ranch Park, travel north on the Dark Canyon Trail approximately 2 miles to the Dyke Trail.

The Dyke Trail is a very popular trail in the summer and especially during the fall colors. The trail meanders through aspen groves and meadows and crosses over the "Dyke", a rocky spine.

Lost Lake Trail (and Beckwith Pass) - Easy to Moderate - 5 miles

Access: From Gunnison, travel north on Ohio Creek Road to the intersection of Kebler Pass. Turn left onto Kebler Pass and travel to the Lost Lake turnoff. Turn South towards the Lost Lake Campground. The trailhead is near the entrance to the campground.

Follow the trail for 0.6 mile up to Lost Lake. Continue around the base of East Beckwith to Dollar Lake, then join the Beckwith Pass Trail at its first stream crossing just above the campground. The trail travels approximately 2.6 miles through stands of conifer and aspen to the summit of the pass. The trail crosses numerous streams and also brings users close to high mountain lakes. Avoid the pass trail when rainy.

Swampy Pass - Easy to Moderate - 6 miles

Access: From Gunnison, travel North on Ohio Creek Road for about 18 miles. The trailhead is located 1/2 mile north of the National Forest boundary.

This very scenic trail will lead you into the West Elk Wilderness where you will get excellent views of the Castles. It ascends gradually to Swampy Pass then descends gradually to the junction of Trail #438. Avoid using this trail when rainy. This trail is heavily used by horse back riders.

Resources

Guide Books for Hiking in the Gunnison Valley

Timber, Talus & Tundra – Mary Ann Tarr
Hiking the Gunnison River Basin – Geraldine M. Bloomquist & Paul Bloomquist

Both are available at The Bookworm at two locations:

211 N. Main in Gunnison
408 3rd Street in Crested Butte

USFS Maps and other Hiking Maps available in Gunnison

Bookworm, 211 N. Main St.
Eflin Sports, 701 N. Main St.
Gene Taylors Sportings Goods, 201 W. Tomichi Ave.
Gunnison Sporting Goods, 133 E. Tomichi Ave.
High Mt. Drifter, 114 S. Wisconsin St.
Traders Rendezvous, 516 W. Tomichi Ave.
USFS and BLM offices 216 N. Colorado

USFS Maps and other Hiking Maps available in Almont, Crested Butte and Mt. Crested Butte

Three Rivers Resort, 130 County Rd 742, Almont
Alpine Outside, 315 6th St. 4-Way Stop, Crested Butte
Bookworm/Book Seller, 408 3rd St., Crested Butte
Eflin Sports, Slopeside Treasure Center Building, Mt. Crested Butte

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1-800-274-7580

- www.gunnisonchamber.com

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US Forest Service

216 N. Colorado St. Gunnison, CO 81230
(970) 641-0471

Bureau of Land Management

216 N. Colorado St.
Gunnison, CO 81230
(970) 641-0471

- www.co.blm.gov/gra/index.html

Curecanti National Recreation Area

102 Elk Creek
Gunnison, CO 81230

- www.nps.gov/cure/

Users are encouraged to consult USFS maps, quad sheets and more complete reference materials for detailed information on these and other trails in the Gunnison area.