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United States Department of Agriculture



**HIKING**

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## **AMERICAN LAKE TRAIL #1985**

**Length:** 3.20 miles one-way(5.15 Km. one-way)

**Difficulty:** Difficult

**Trail Use:** Heavy

**Beginning Elevation:** 9,400 feet (2865 m)

**Ending Elevation:** 11,365 feet (3464 m)

**USGS Map(s):** Hayden Peak

**PERMIT INFORMATION:** In order to provide quality recreation experiences and to protect the wilderness lands, the Forest Service must gather data regarding visitor use and travel patterns.

**Each party overnighiting** in the Maroon Bells-Snowmass Wilderness is **required to self-register at the Trailhead and to carry a copy of the registration with them** during their visit. There is no fee charged and no limit to the number of permits issued.

**ACCESS:** Drive 1/2 mile west of Aspen on Highway 82 to the Roundabout. Go around the Roundabout and turn right on Castle Creek Road. Drive 10 miles to the Elk Mountain Lodge and turn right into the American Lake parking lot. The trail begins here.

**DAY/BACKPACKING:** A moderately difficult day hike to a high mountain lake through groves of aspen, pine forests and open meadows offering limited views of surrounding peaks. Fishing is considered fair. **Camping is prohibited within 100 feet of the lake and on the small peninsula on the shore of the lake.**

**NARRATIVE:** The trail rises steeply, switchbacking through the aspen for about 1-1/2 miles before reaching a spruce forest. From this point to the lake the trail levels with periodic ascents of an easy to moderate grade. On a rainy day the forest aroma is delightful. The trail continues its ascent intermittently passing through forest and meadows that are ablaze with wild flowers from mid-July to mid-August. Approximately 1/2 mile before the lake, the trail emerges into a fantastic wildflower oasis surrounded by scree. It briefly re-enters the forest before it crosses another large scree field with sounds of a waterfall just ahead and to the left. The lake is just beyond.

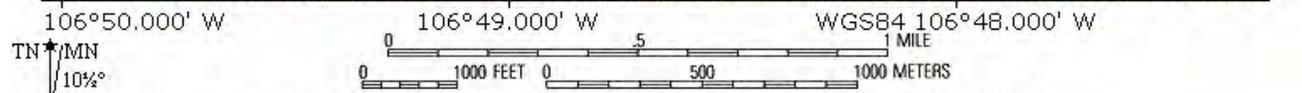
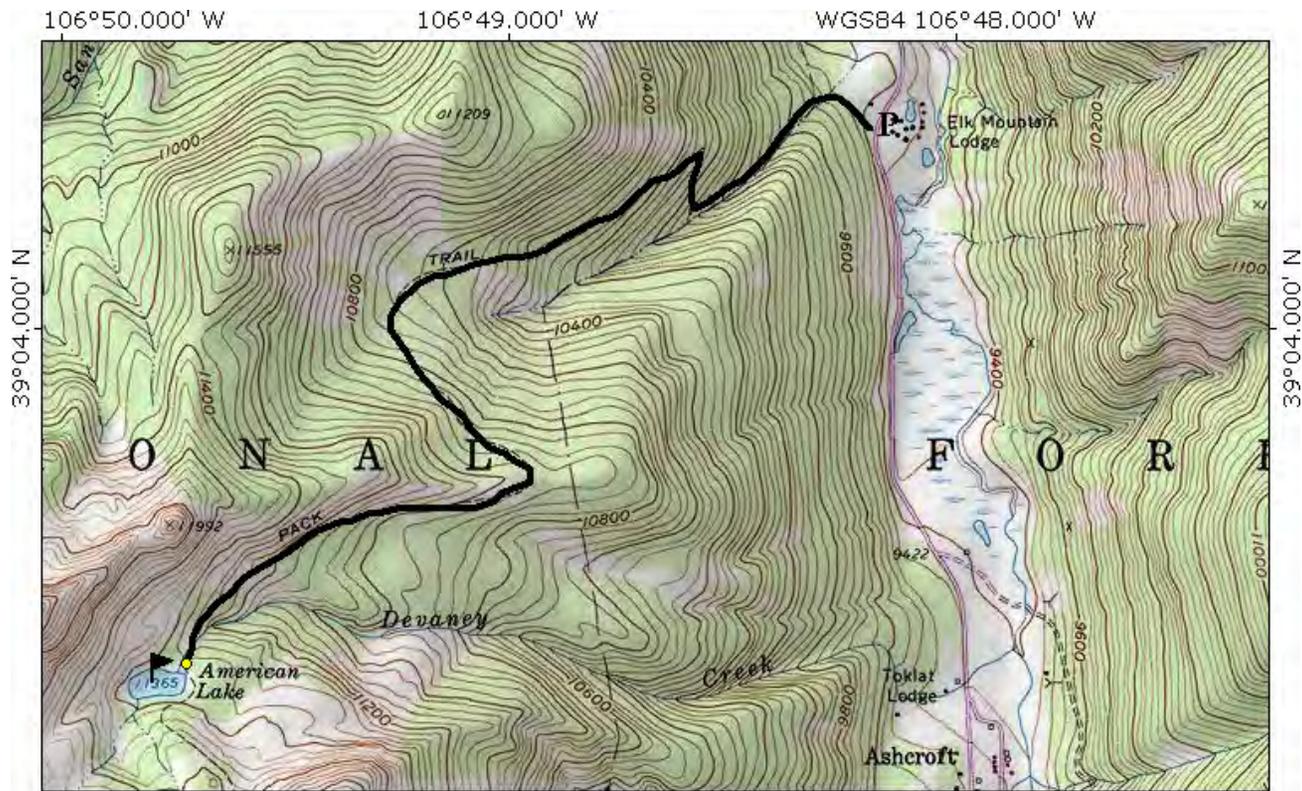
**ETHICS/REGULATIONS:** American Lake is within the Maroon Bell-Snowmass Wilderness, please educate yourself about Wilderness Ethics and the following rules:

- \* **DOGS MUST BE LEASHED** out of consideration for both other people and wildlife.
- \* Limit group sizes to 10 people and 15 stock/pack animals.
- \* **SANITATION** - bury human waste 100 feet from water and 6 inches in the soil.
- \* Lightweight campstoves are recommended and required above the timberline.

**PACK IT IN—PACK IT OUT!! LEAVE NO TRACE!!**

This map is intended for use as a general guide only, not for actual land navigation. The White River National Forest suggests purchasing a topographical trail map prior to your hiking trip.

ASPEN-SOPRIS RANGER DISTRICT WHITE RIVER NATIONAL FOREST  
 AMERICAN LAKE TRAIL #1985



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