

Aspen Ranger District  
806 W. Hallam  
Aspen, CO 81611  
(970) 925-3445—Voice  
(970) 925-5277—Fax



United States Department of Agriculture



**HIKING**

## **CONUNDRUM CREEK TRAIL #1981**

**Length:** 8.5 miles one-way (13.7 km one-way)

**Difficulty:** Moderate

**Trail Use:** Very Heavy

**Beginning Elevation:** 8,700 feet (2652 m)

**Ending Elevation:** 11,200 feet (3414 m)

**USGS Map(s):** Hayden Peak, Maroon Bells

**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 overnighing** 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.

**DAY/BACKPACKING OVERVIEW:** A moderate hike, which because of its distance of 8-1/2 miles each way, is often considered difficult. If going the entire way, backpacking is usually preferred. As a day hike short of the hot springs, its use is very heavy as it provides a fairly easy walk through the woods and meadows and bridged stream crossings. The views of mountains and fields of wildflowers are superb. Also used as an entry hike for extended backpacking trips into the wilderness and the starting point for the most challenging of the hikes to Crested Butte. **To help alleviate overcrowding, which often occurs, a one night stay is suggested. During holidays usage is particularly heavy. Camping around the springs is permitted only at designated sites. Most of these sites are located in the woods 1/4 of a mile before the hot springs.**

**ACCESS:** Drive 1/2 mile west of Aspen on Highway 82 to the Roundabout. Go around the Roundabout and turn right onto Castle Creek Road. Drive approximately 5 miles up Castle Creek then turn right onto Conundrum Road. Continue 1.1 miles to a parking lot at the trailhead. Be careful not to stray onto the numerous private driveways found along the road. Parking is limited. If lot is full, return to Castle Creek Road where overflow parking is provided. Do not park on Conundrum Road. This narrow road is on a County right-of-way over private property. Parking is prohibited and cars are towed.

**NARRATIVE:** The trail generally parallels Conundrum Creek weaving its way up the valley through the woods and meadows to three river crossings before the hot springs. Mt. Hayden looms at the start of the hike followed by views of Cathedral Peak, Conundrum Peak and Castle Peak. The first crossing at 2-1/2 miles and the second at 6 miles are over log bridges. The third crossing at 6-1/2 miles is bridged only by using a log jam or a large log. This can be hazardous during spring runoffs. At 8 miles, there is a cabin, and the hot springs are just ahead on the left on the other side of the creek. A log bridge spans the creek for crossing.

**ETHICS/REGULATIONS:** The Conundrum Creek Trail is within the Maroon Bell-Snowmass Wilderness, please educate yourself about Wilderness Ethics and the following rules:

- \* **NO DOGS beyond the second stream crossing at the Silver Dollar Ponds.**
- \* **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 CONUNDRUM CREEK TRAIL #1981

