TAKE THE LEFT FORK TO OVERLOOK - .6 Miles

9. Elevenmile Canyon

This is a popular recreation area for fishermen, campers, and hikers. The South Platte River runs through the canyon and has carved a variety of valleys and gorges. The canyon is almost 11 miles long and was originally called Granite Canyon.

Now a road, the Midland Railway worked its way through the canyon in the late 1880's and was abandoned in 1918. The grade was then used as the main highway into South Park until the dam was built in 1931.

BACK TO THE MAIN TRAIL

10. Grand Peak

With good visibility you can see the Grand Peak from this viewpoint. In 1806 a young man of 26 was sent by Thomas Jefferson to lead a party exploring around the headwaters of the Platte River. It was November, and with chest-deep snow and little warm clothing, the party made it to within 15 miles of the Grand Peak before turning back to their stockade in Pueblo.

The young man never made it to the summit, and never knew the peak by any other name. It wasn't until after his death that the mountain was named for Zebulon Montgomery Pike - Pike's Peak.

11. "Palo Duro"

Palo Duro is the Spanish word for mountain mahogany which means hard wood. The Navajo word has a similar meaning, "whose wood is as heavy as stone." Because it is so hard, the Navajo use it as staffs to hold wool when spinning. They also used this shrub in preparing a reddish dye for wool.

Mountain mahogany is also called "sweetbrush" because of its sweet taste to deer and antelope.

12. I Need You...You Need Me!

Interdependence between plants and animals is common in the mountain environment. The yucca plant and yucca moth is one example of a symbiotic relationship. The Yucca moth pollinates the plants, while the moth cannot reproduce without yuccas (eggs are laid during pollination and the larvae feed upon the seeds). How can humans affect these relationships?

13. Do You Have "US" Stumped?

Harvesting timber is one of the traditional "multiple uses" of the forest. Under government administration, early timber marking practices insured that trees branded by a "Butt Blaze" had been legally harvested. This tree was probably cut around 1920. Can you find the "US" on this stump?

14. What's cooking?

Mature ponderosa pines are noted for their puzzle-like bark and rich, golden color. As sunlight warms the bark a familiar smell might emerge from the tree; people often think the tree smells like vanilla or their favorite candy bar. Do you smell yours?

Indians ate the seeds either raw or made into bread; squirrels and chipmunks as well as birds also enjoy eating them.

15. Kinnikinnick Tea

Kinnikinnick, the low growing ground cover, is an Indian word meaning "mixture." A mix of these leaves along with sumac and willow were used by the pioneers and Indians as tea. The leaves were also used to treat urinary disorders. The red berries which ripen in the fall are relished by bears and other animals - thus the nicknames of "bearberry" and "chipmunk apples."

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HARD ROCK SELF-GUIDED TRAIL

The Hardrock Self-Guided Trail explores the diverse life of the region that extends from the Riverside Campground to the Blue Mountain Campground or vice versa.

Allow 1 - 2 hours for this .9 mile walk. The Overlook Side Trail is .6 miles round trip if you decide to take a look at Elevenmile Canyon from the top.

Be prepared for all types of weather conditions in the mountains. Be sure to carry plenty of water, a jacket or raincoat, and wear sturdy shoes.

Pike National Forest
South Park Ranger District