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United States Department of Agriculture



**HIKING**

## UPPER CAPITOL CREEK TRAIL #1963

**Length:** 7.3 miles one-way (11.7 km);  
3.3 miles to Capitol Creek-4 miles to Capitol Lake

**Difficulty:** Difficult

**Trail Use:** Heavy

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

**Ending Elevation:** 11,600 feet (3536 m)

**USGS Map(s):** Capitol 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.

**DAY/BACKPACKING OVERVIEW:** A good backpacking hike with access to the Avalanche Creek Trail, West Snowmass Trail, Capitol Peak, and Mt. Daly. This area is popular with horseback riders, hikers, and climbers. There are also grazing allotments, so don't be surprised to see cattle on the trail. Expect to see a large number of climbers on the weekends.

**ACCESS:** Drive 14 miles west of Aspen on Highway 82 to Old Snowmass and turn left. Continue 2 miles to the "T" intersection. Take the right turn 5 miles until the pavement ends. Follow the dirt road about 3 miles to the trailhead. The last mile is on a 4WD road. If you don't have 4WD, park in the BLM meadow on the right approximately one mile below the trailhead. The Trailhead is past the Capitol Lake Trailhead but shares the same parking area. The road does continue past the Capitol Lake Trailhead and climbs very steeply to the Hell Roaring Trailhead. The road is slick when wet.

**NARRATIVE:** The trail begins moderately along the ditch for one mile. It continues through aspen and fir stands for another mile and then opens up. The trail descends down to the Capitol Creek. You will cross here and meet up with the Capitol Creek Trail. There are good spots for camping at this point. At the 6 mile point the trail switchbacks to a double log crossing. In another 1/2 mile, the trail crosses the stream again. In the fir stands on the right, 1/3 mile from this crossing, are popular dispersed camping sites. Stove sites can be found on the knolls to the right about 50 yards before the Mt. Daly Trail. Camping is not allowed in the meadows or within 200 feet of Capitol Lake. Continue on the trail to Capitol Lake. To reach the pass and Avalanche Creek Trail, follow the trail along the west of the lake.

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

- \* **BEAR CANISTERS REQUIRED** for all overnight visitors. Approved bear canisters must be capable of holding all scented items (food, toiletries, dog food, garbage, etc.) and should be stored on the ground, out of sight and no less than 100 ft. away from any camp.
- \* **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.
- \* **No fires above 10,800 ft.** Lightweight campstoves are recommended.

**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.