



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture



Forest  
Service

Pike and San Isabel  
National Forests  
Cimarron and Comanche  
National Grasslands

Leadville RD  
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Leadville, CO 80461  
(719) 486-0749  
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## La Plata Peak

At 14,336 feet, La Plata is the fifth highest peak in Colorado. It is located in the Collegiate Peaks Wilderness.

The Collegiate Peaks Wilderness was established in 1980 to preserve its quality, character, and integrity. It is intended as a place where the imprint of humans is substantially unnoticed; where natural processes are the primary influences and human activity is limited to primitive recreation and minimum tools. This will allow us, and future generations, to experience the Collegiate Peaks Wilderness in its natural condition.

### Trails

#### **La Plata Gulch Trail: 4.7 miles (one way) 9.4 miles (roundtrip); 4,350 feet**

From Leadville, travel 15 miles south on US 24 to Highway 82. Travel west on Hwy 82 fourteen miles to the turnoff marked "South Fork Lake Creek." Parking is provided on the south side of highway 82 at this junction. Do not park on Forest Service Road 391 or at the trailhead, they are located on private land.

Follow Forest Service Road 391 for 1/3 mile to the signed beginning of the La Plata Gulch Trail. Follow the trail across La Plata Gulch Creek and along the east side of the creek for two miles to timberline. Above timberline be careful to follow the trail (marked by cairns).

### Maps

**USGS:** Independence Pass and Mount Elbert

**Trails Illustrated:** #127 Aspen/Independence Pass

### For More Information

*The Colorado 14ers: The Standard Routes* By: Colorado Mountain Club

*14ers.com:* Use "starred" routes these are the standard routes

For more information on Leave No Trace Outdoor Ethics go to <http://lnt.org>





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## ***Climbing a Fourteener? Know Before You Climb!***

**Temperature:** Expect temperatures to decrease 5 degrees (F) with every 1000 foot gain in elevation.

**Wind:** this is a high wind environment. Alpine winds have been recorded at over 200 mph, with 75 mph gusts common. Combine decreasing temperature with high wind and a beautiful sunny day can become a health risk if you are not properly prepared.

**Sunlight:** there is twice as much ultraviolet radiation and 25% more light than at sea level. Therefore, a wide brim hat, sunscreen, and sunglasses are all highly recommended.

**Research the route.** Land managers recommend the standard route on any mountain. These routes are constructed and maintained to provide for protection of the natural resources. Three good sources of information: [www.14ers.org](http://www.14ers.org), [www.14ers.com](http://www.14ers.com), Colorado Mountain Club Guidebooks "The Colorado 14ers" available online. Carry a map & compass and know how to use them. Don't rely on cellular signal.

**Have an emergency plan.** Let someone know your location and when you plan to return. Make sure you call them as soon as you have phone coverage.

**Prepare yourself.** This will not be a walk in the park! Prepare yourself physically and mentally. A high level of fitness is necessary for even the easiest fourteener. Get an early start (pre-dawn in most cases) and be off the summit by noon to avoid exposure to afternoon thunderstorms.

**Prepare your Pack.** Have a good comfortable backpack. Pack plenty of water, high energy snacks, first aid kit, rain gear, warm clothing, eye protection, sun protection, lightweight shelter, human waste disposal bag.

**Carry human waste disposal bags and take your waste out with you.** Do not use catholes, the soil bacteria necessary for breaking down human waste does not exist at high altitudes.

**Proper footwear.** Fourteener trails are designed as Most Difficult hiker trails, sturdy hiking boots are essential! To protect the surrounding plants, stay on the constructed trail, even if there is snow, mud, or gravel. To protect your public lands, stay on the constructed trail. Alpine plants are extremely fragile; as few as 5 footsteps can kill plants leading to soil erosion.

Snow gaiters and an ice axe are essential when you are travelling across snowfields. Practice using your ice axe to self-arrest before you are in an emergency situation.

**Taking your dog?** Some mountains are better for dogs and some are very hard on your dog's pads. Do your research. To protect your dog, wildlife, and the enjoyment of others, keep your dog on a leash. Don't forget to carry extra water, a water container, and high energy dog treats.

**Going out overnight?** Have material to construct a bear hang and a waterproof container for your food. Hang food from tree limbs 12 feet off the ground, 6 feet from the tree's trunk, and 6 feet below the supporting limb.

***Camp in an already impacted area at least 200 feet from the trail and water.***





## Climbing Ethics

*Climbing Fourteeners is a popular activity, the mountains are crowded. Do your part to protect your lands.*

### **Plan Ahead and Prepare**

- Be physically and mentally prepared for a challenge. A high level of fitness is necessary.
- Educate yourself before your trip. Research the area, know what to expect.
- With your climbing companions discuss and agree upon your goals. Never get separated.
- Know the signs and symptoms of altitude sickness and heed the warning. Get off the mountain.
- Know the regulations and special concerns for the area. If possible, avoid weekends and holidays.

### **Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces**

- Stay on the trail. Walk single file. Wear hiking boots. Protect trailside plants, stay in the center of the trail, even when muddy to prevent eroding the sides of the trail.
- Don't "scree". Avoid steep loose slopes prone to erosion and vegetation loss.
- Use already established campsites that are at least 200 feet from water & the trail.
- Do not camp above treeline. It is not safe and kills fragile alpine tundra.
- Anticipate a shared experience and cluster camps in popular areas.
- Take breaks off the trail on a safe and durable surface.

### **Dispose of Waste Properly**

- Pack it in, Pack it out. Leave nothing behind, even organic waste.
- Pack out your poop. Carry human waste disposal bags and take your waste out with you. Do not leave your waste in catholes, the soil bacteria necessary for breaking down human waste does not exist at high altitudes.
- Pack out toilet paper and feminine hygiene products.
- Pack out your dog's waste.

### **Leave What You Find**

- Do not take flowers, berries, or rocks.
- Preserve our past. Do not take cultural artifacts. Do not touch historical structures.
- Do not build cairns, dig trenches, or build camp structures.
- Respect the summit. Memorabilia left is litter to other visitors.

### **Minimize Campfire Impact**

- Use a camp stove to cook meals. Campfires can cause lasting impacts to the backcountry.
- Know the rules and regulations around fires and do not have a fire above treeline.

### **Respect Wildlife**

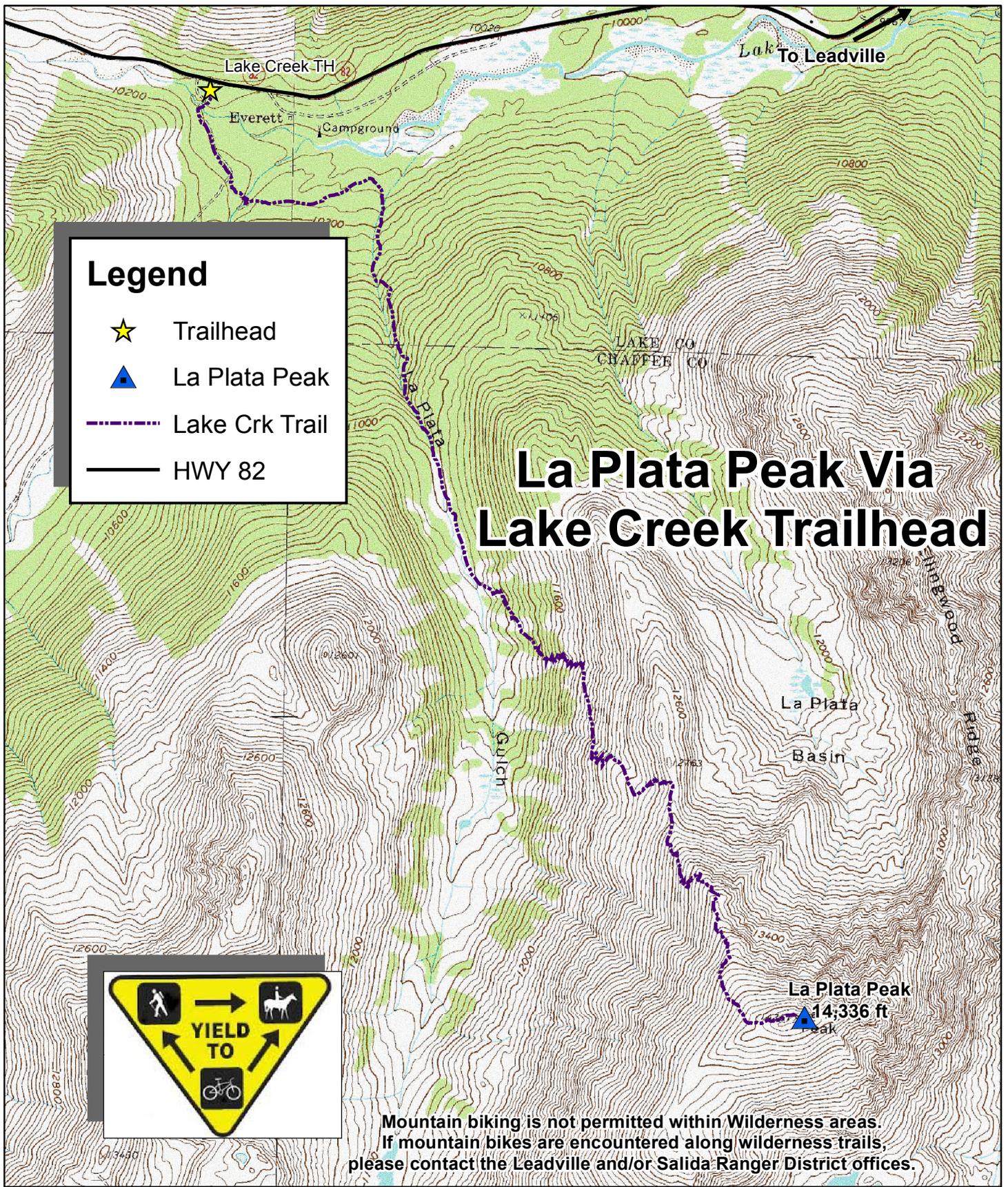
- Keep your dog on a leash or leave them at home.
- View wildlife from a distance. Never feed or disturb them.
- Expect bears. Store food and toiletries properly. Use a bear canister or hang food from a tree (12' up and 6' out from the trunk or nearest branch)

### **Be Considerate of Other Visitors**

- Keep group size small (2-4 people).
- Let nature's sound prevail. Avoid loud voices. Use earphones for music.
- Give the right of way to uphill climbers.

Updated: 8/26/2015





**Legend**

- ★ Trailhead
- ▲ La Plata Peak
- Lake Crk Trail
- HWY 82

# La Plata Peak Via Lake Creek Trailhead



Mountain biking is not permitted within Wilderness areas.  
If mountain bikes are encountered along wilderness trails,  
please contact the Leadville and/or Salida Ranger District offices.



1:24,000

This map is intended for use as a general guide only, not for actual land navigation. The San Isabel National Forest strongly suggests purchasing a topographic trail map and compass prior to beginning a hiking trip.