

Colorado
Columbine

TRAIL TIPS TO ENJOY YOUR EXPERIENCE

It is very important to remember that weather conditions can change rapidly. Be prepared for cool temperatures, rain showers, lightning and mid-afternoon thunderstorms. Wear a hat and apply mosquito repellent. To avoid hypothermia, long sleeve jackets and pants would be a good idea. Plan to be off the ridge by early afternoon to avoid dangerous lightning strikes.

Always monitor children, especially on those segments of Crag Crest with precipitous drop-offs.

Keep pets on a leash.

Tell others where you are going, when you expect to return and allow plenty of time for the hike. You might want to consider a vehicle shuttle.

Bring plenty of drinking water and snacks. You will be hiking at a high elevation with steep drop-offs.

FACILITIES

The Grand Mesa Visitor Center, is open between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. daily during the summer.

Commercial lodges are near the trailheads. Dining, groceries, lodging, and sporting goods are available at most of the lodges.

Trailhead parking lots are provided. The West Trailhead, near Island Lake, is accessible from Colorado Highway 65. The East Trailhead, near Eggleston Lake, is accessible from Forest Road 121.

VISITOR CENTER 970/856-4153

MORE FACILITIES

Horse unloading ramps are available at both parking lots.

Drinking water is available at Crag Crest Campground, adjacent to the East Trailhead, but is not available along the trail or at the west trailhead.

Restrooms are available at the Crag Crest Campground, the West Trailhead and the Visitor Center.

NATURAL HISTORY

The Crag Crest rises from 10,150 feet at Eggleston Lake to 11,189 feet along the crest. At the lower elevations, the trail passes through stands of Englemann spruce, subalpine fir and open meadows. Quaking aspen, with leaves which are light green in the summer and brilliant yellow in the fall, grows among the dark green conifers. Patches of low-growing Oregon grape are found in and near these forested areas.

The forests and meadows provide food and cover for big game animals such as elk and deer. They may be seen feeding in the open meadows in the early morning or late evening.

Porcupine, snowshoe rabbit, pine squirrel, chipmunk, pocket gopher, red fox and various species of mice are some of the small mammals often seen along the trail. The pika or "cony" and the yellow-belly marmot can often be detected among the rocks. Ravens, woodpeckers, flickers, finches, hawks, blue grouse, chickadees, robins, jays and humming birds are a few of the many kinds of birds which may be observed in the Crag Crest area.

VISTAS FROM CRAG CREST

The view from Crag Crest extends in all directions. To the northwest, the Book and Roan Cliffs appear as multicolored cliffs and slopes.

The highest point on the Grand Mesa is Leon Peak, located to the east. This 11,326-foot peak was once used as a fire lookout. In the distance, east and south from the trail, are the West Elk Wilderness, Uncompahgre Wilderness, Lizard Head Wilderness and the Raggeds Wilderness.

The view to the east and south includes the West Elk Mountain Range, the San Juan Range, and views of five of the 14'ers.

To the west the Uncompahgre Plateau can be seen, and on the western horizon, the La Sal Mountains in western Colorado and eastern Utah is visible on a clear day.

This brochure was printed by Western Colorado Interpretive Association and the Grand Mesa Scenic and Historic Byway Association in cooperation with the Grand Mesa National Forest USDA.



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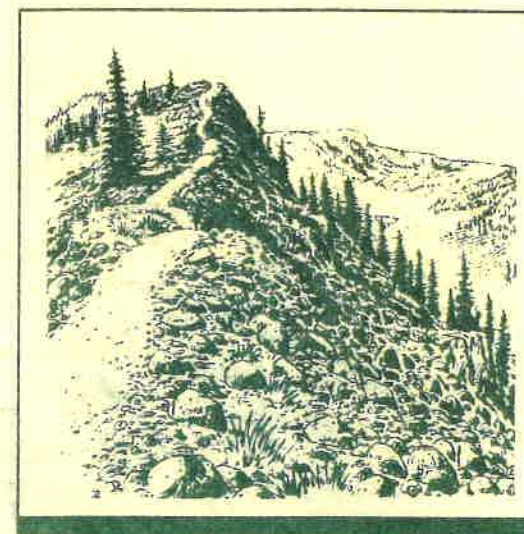
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COLORADO'S

CRAG CREST

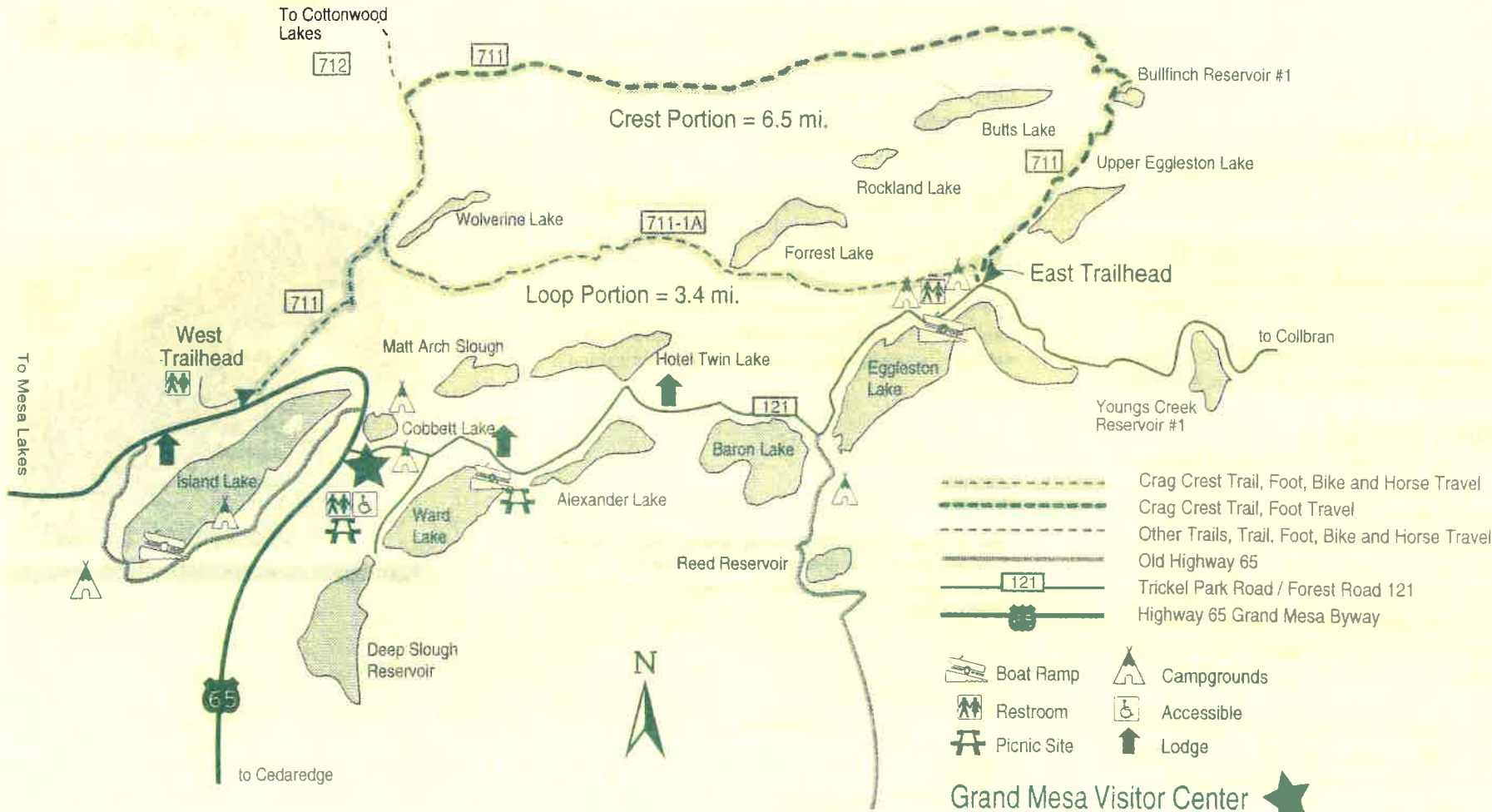
National Recreation

Trail



GRAND MESA NATIONAL FOREST

CRAG CREST NATIONAL RECREATION TRAIL



Eagle

TRAIL INFORMATION

The Crag Crest National Recreation Trail is a 10.3 mile circular trail consisting of a crest portion and a loop portion. It is recommended that you get an early start to avoid afternoon thunderstorms.

It is accessed from 2 trailheads. One on the west end across from Island Lake and one on the east adjacent to Eggleston Lake.

The crest portion (6.5 miles) rises steeply from the East Trailhead to the top of Crag Crest. From the West Trailhead, the crest portion rises more gradually to the top of Crag Crest. Sections of the Crag Crest portion are on a narrow ridge with steep drop-offs on both sides.

The loop portion (3.4 miles) provides an alternate return route.

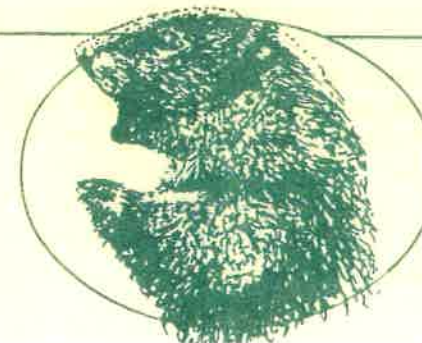
Only foot travel is allowed on the crest portion between the East Trailhead and the Cottonwood Lakes Trail junction. Rocky drop-offs and narrow trails make any other type of passage unsafe.

Foot, mountain bike and horse travel are allowed on the loop portion and on the crest portion between the West Trailhead and the Cottonwood Lakes Trail junction.

Motorized vehicles are prohibited on all portions of the Crag Crest Trail.

CRAG CREST NATIONAL RECREATION TRAIL

The Crag Crest Trail in the Grand Mesa National Forest, Colorado, was designated as a National Recreation Trail by John McGuire of the USFS on March 14, 1978.



Marmot or "Whistle Pig"

VISITOR CENTER 970/856-4153