



MILL CASTLE TRAIL # 450→ 14.3 MILES ONE WAY

DIFFICULTY: Difficult (Difficulty ratings are subjective in nature)

SEASON OF USE: Summer through fall.

ELEVATION GAIN: Trailhead is at 9,000', Storm Pass is at 12,440',
Junction with Lowline Trail #438 is at 9,680'.

USGS MAPS: Squirrel Creek, West Elk Peak, Anthracite Range

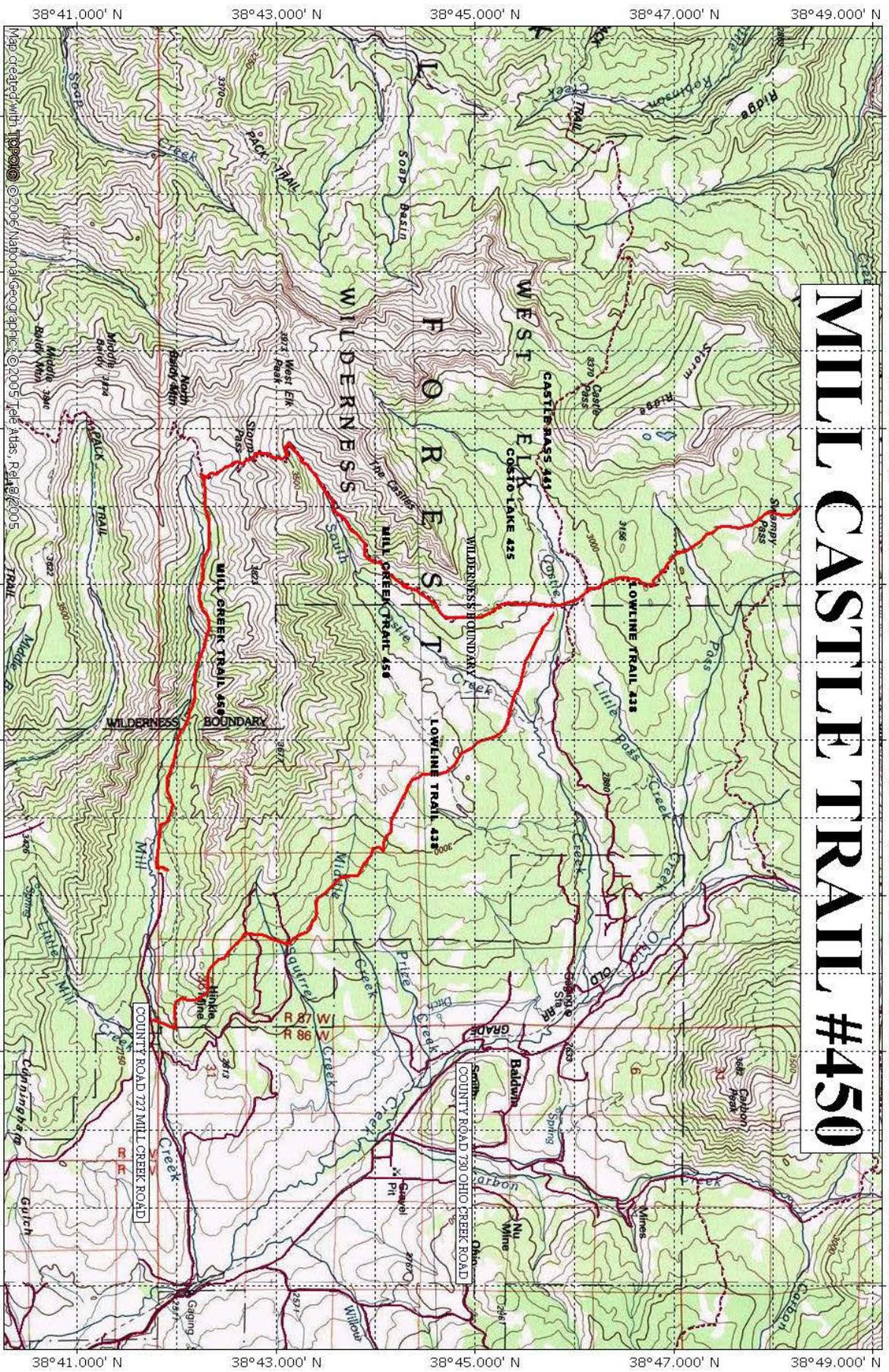
ACCESS #1: Travel about 3.5 miles north of Gunnison on US HWY 135. Take a left on County Road 730 and travel northwest up Ohio Creek Road for approximately 9 miles. Turn left on Mill Creek Road 727, and follow it until it ends at the gate approximately 4.5 miles. The trailhead is accessible by two-wheel drive vehicles when road is dry.

ACCESS #2: Hike south on the Lowline Trail #438 for six miles from the Pass Creek Trailhead.

ATTRACTIONS: The trail meanders west from the Mill Creek Road, turns north over storm pass, and then heads east to Castle Creek. Although this trail goes through rugged terrain, it is one of the most scenic trails in the West Elk Wilderness. An excellent day hike would be to hike in from Mill Creek for a distance and return. The trail crosses over a burned-over area from a 1991 wildfire. Once a predominately mature coniferous forest, now the area is thick with young aspen saplings.

CONSIDERATIONS: With the exception of the first mile from the Mill-Castle Trailhead, the Mill-Castle Trail is located within the West Elk Wilderness. Travel is by foot or horse only. The trail crosses Mill Creek just before the wilderness boundary. This crossing may be treacherous during the runoff or heavy thunderstorms. At approximately 5 miles from the trailhead, the trail has a series of steep, rocky, and slippery switchbacks; during inclement weather this makes horseback travel treacherous and not recommended for even the most experienced rider. The trail going over Storm Pass (12,440 ft.) is very steep on both sides. Only the most proficient hikers should attempt this hike. Storm Pass is aptly named because of its unpredictable weather. Snow, hail, rain, violent thunderstorms, and dangerous lightning can be expected with little or no protection from the elements.

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107°15.000' W 107°13.000' W 107°11.000' W 107°09.000' W 107°07.000' W 107°05.000' W 107°03.000' W WGS84 107°00.000' W

38°41.000' N 38°43.000' N 38°45.000' N 38°47.000' N 38°49.000' N



NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC



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