Aspen Ranger District
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United States Department of Agriculture

CRATER LAKE
Maroon-Snowmass Trail #1975

LENGTH: 1.8 miles one-way; (2.9 Km. one-way)
AVERAGE HIKING TIME: 1 1/2 hrs. one-way
DIFFICULTY: Moderate
USE: Extremely heavy

BEGINNING ELEVATION: 9,580 Feet; (2920 m)
ENDING ELEVATION: 10,076 Feet; (3071 m)
USGS MAP(S): Maroon Bells
RECOMMENDED SEASON(S): Summer/ Fall

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 **overnighting** 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 short and very popular day hike over rocky trails, through aspen groves and around rock formations to a high mountain lake. This trail is often used as a starting point for extended backpacking trips into the wilderness. **This trail is extremely rocky and dry. Good hiking shoes and plenty of water are a must. Camping is permitted only in designated areas and campfires are prohibited. Dogs are not permitted around the lake or at the campsites.**

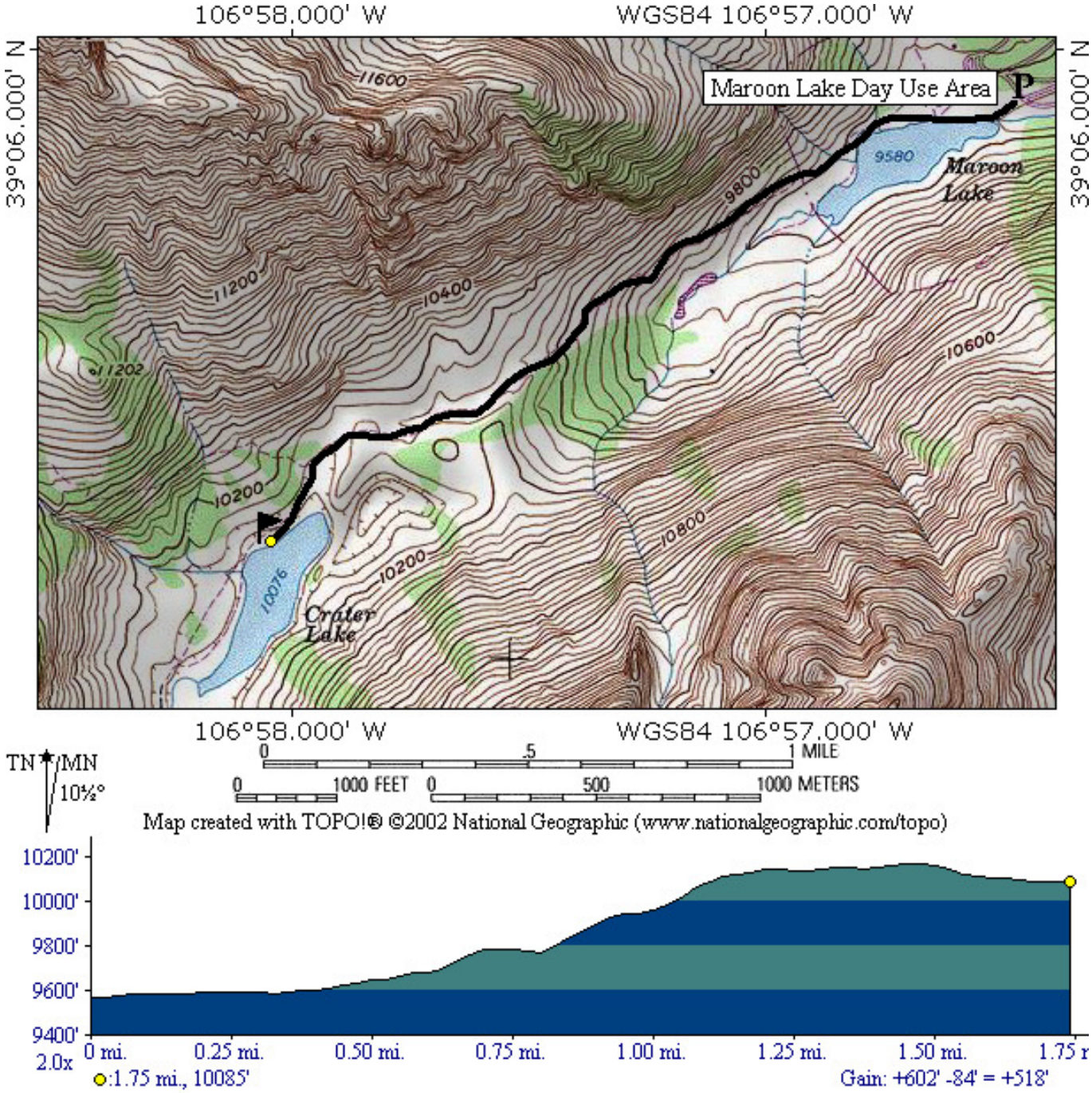
ACCESS: From mid-June through September, Maroon Creek Road is restricted to vehicles from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. beyond the T-Lazy Seven Ranch. Take the shuttle from Aspen Highlands Ski Area, which leaves every 20 minutes; dogs are allowed on the bus.

The Maroon Bells Scenic Area is a recreation fee area; there is a *mandatory fee*. The Interagency, Senior/Golden Access Passes are honored. From the Hwy 82 Roundabout, just west of Aspen, take the Maroon Creek Road turn. In approximately one mile is Aspen Highlands, *turn left here for the shuttle*! If arriving during *non-bus hours*, continue another 4 miles to the Welcome Station. The use fee will be collected here, or in the fee tube immediately behind the station if un-manned; continue another 5 miles to the parking lot at Maroon Lake.

NARRATIVE: The trail starts at the Maroon Lake parking area. To the right of the Lake, the Maroon Snowmass Trail traverses through a meadow to a Forest Service bulletin board at the far end of the lake. The trail continues to climb through scree fields and aspen groves before a beautiful "rock garden". From here the trail drops down to Crater Lake.

ETHICS/REGULATIONS: Crater Lake is within the Maroon Bells-Snowmass Wilderness. In addition to being Designated Wilderness, this is an *extremely* popular area! *Please* be considerate and follow these highlights *in addition to Wilderness Regulations*:

* **NO DOGS** are allowed at Crater Lake except when passing through the area.
* **ALL DOGS MUST BE LEASHED AT ALL TIMES!**
* **Limit group sizes to 10 people** and 15 stock/pack animals.
* Bury human waste 100 feet from water and 6 inches in the soil.
* Camping is allowed in designated sites **ONLY** and stoves are required within 1/2 mile of Crater Lake. **NO CAMPFIRES AT THE LAKE!**
* Lightweight campstoves are required above timberline.

WILDERNESS AREAS are in a delicate state of natural balance; they are not renewable resources. Any careless act by man can upset this natural balance and result in the destruction of the beauty found in the Wilderness. By following the above ethics and regulations you can help protect and preserve the natural features of the Wilderness for future visits. **Please respect the land and rights of others!**

ASPEN-SOPRIS RANGER DISTRICT WHITE RIVER NATIONAL FOREST
CRATER LAKE TRAIL #1975