

Holy Cross Ranger District  
24747 US Hwy 24  
P.O. Box 190  
Minturn, CO 81645  
(970) 827- 5715 - Voice  
www.fs.usda.gov/whiteriver



United States Department of Agriculture



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## MITCHELL CREEK LOOP

**Length:** 7.38 miles (one way)  
**Difficulty:** Moderate to Easiest  
**Beginning Elevation:** 10,436 feet  
**Elevation Gain:** +796 feet - 796 feet = +0 feet

**Trail Use:** Moderate  
**Open To:** XC, Snowshoe  
**Ending Elevation:** 10,436 feet  
**USGS Map(s):** Leadville North

**Attractions/Considerations:** There are several tours available from the west side of Tennessee Pass and they are some of the first to get snow due to their high elevation. These trails are maintained and signed by the San Isabel National Forest. Blue diamonds on trees mark the trails.

**Access from Vail:** Travel west on I-70 to Exit 171 for Minturn, Leadville, and Hwy 24. Exit here and turn right (south) onto Hwy 24. Proceed south about 23 miles to the Tennessee Pass parking area across Hwy 24 from the Cooper Hill Ski Area. There are two trailheads; one north by the outhouse, and the other south closer to Hwy 24.

**Trail Highlights:** (Two trailheads: One north by the outhouse, and another south close to Hwy 24)

**Old Railroad Run (2.5 miles one-way):** This is a good flat **beginners** trail and is an out-and-back trail. This trail leaves from the north trailhead and follows an old railroad grade to the northwest. Of interest are the old brick kilns, where charcoal was made from local timber and used to fuel the trains going to Leadville.

**Powderhound Loop (2.5 miles):** This is a short tour up to the Continental Divide. Often holding good powder, it is recommended for the more advanced user.

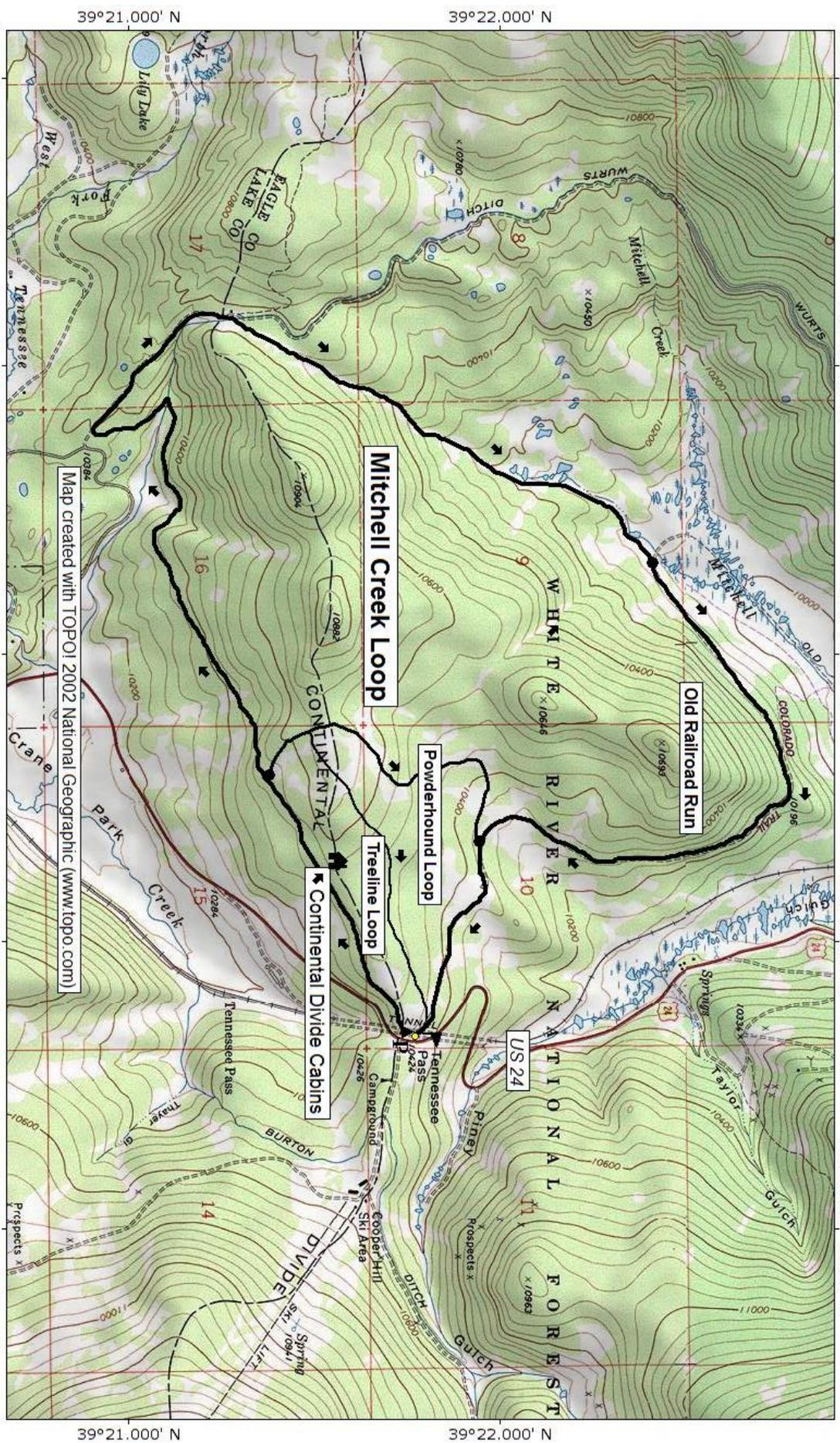
**Mitchell Creek Loop (7.38 miles):** This trail offers good views of Chicago Ridge and the Continental Divide, receives only moderate use, and is rated moderate. It can be traveled in both directions, but is more fun clockwise. Leave the parking lot from the south trailhead (the one closest to Hwy 24) accessed at the Forest Service sign. Travel 2.5 miles westerly to where it intersects Wurtz Ditch Road. Turn right, northerly, continuing on the road 1/2 mile to where it crosses Wurtz Ditch Bridge. Cross the bridge and go to the back side of a descent through heavy timber and willows for 2 miles. At the bottom you come out of the trees into a meadow where you turn right, easterly, and pick up the old narrow gauge railroad grade, which you follow 2.5 miles past the charcoal ovens and back to the parking lot.

**Treeline Loop (2.0 miles):** This shorter loop passing over the Continental Divide requires a gentle climb that is rewarded by magnificent views of the Sawatch Range.

**Ethics/Regulations:** Before you go out, check into available routes, ownership of land, posted areas, regulations that apply, and the following rules:

- **Respect private property.** Ask permission before entering.
- **Be considerate** of other winter back-country travelers. We're all out to enjoy the outdoors.
- **Avoid disturbing wildlife** by staying out of elk and deer wintering areas. Detour if you spot wildlife.
- **Wilderness Areas and Primitive areas are closed to motorized vehicles.** Inquire at a local Forest Service office if in doubt. Obey all signs.
- **Beware of avalanches!** Avalanches may occur at any time during the winter. Avoid mountainous terrain after heavy snowfalls or prolonged periods of high wind. Stay on the windblown side of ridges. Avoid crossing steep hillsides and entering narrow, steep canyons.
- **Remember** to notify a responsible person of your travel plans.

**This map is intended for use as a general guide only, not for actual land navigation. The White River National Forest strongly suggests purchasing a topographic map and compass prior to your hiking trip.**



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