

Aspen Ranger District
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United States Department of Agriculture



HIKING

GOVERNMENT TRAIL #1980

Length: 9.8 miles one-way (15.7 km)

Difficulty: Moderate

Trail Use: Moderate

Beginning Elevation: 8,000 feet (2438 m)

Ending Elevation: 9,400 feet (2865 m)

USGS Map(s): Aspen, Highland Peak

DAY/BACKPACKING OVERVIEW: Government Trail is **closed for elk calving from May 15 - June 20**. It's an enjoyable day hike or mountain bike ride through aspen groves. This is a hike where a car shuttle is helpful. It is also known as Brush Creek Trail and is a popular cross country ski trail in the winter.

ACCESS: **From Aspen:** Drive 1/2 mile west of Aspen on Highway 82 to the Roundabout. Go around the Roundabout and turn right onto Maroon Creek Road and continue 1 mile to the Recreation Center. The trail begins behind the baseball fields. Cross the pedestrian bridge and follow the signs for the Government Trail.

From Snowmass Village: Drive 6 miles west of Aspen on Highway 82 and turn left onto Brush Creek Road. Continue about 4 1/2 miles to Wood Run Road and turn left. Follow Wood Run Road to the cul-de-sac at the end. There is a gated dirt road on the far side that leads to parking at the trailhead.

NARRATIVE: **From Aspen:** The trail crosses Maroon Creek via a pedestrian bridge and turns left onto a residential street. It then leaves the road and begins a steep ascent with switchbacks until reaching Buttermilk Ski area. The trail alternates between aspen groves and ski runs (signs are present to guide you across the runs). Beyond the ski area the trail climbs slowly through rolling terrain, passing through aspen, lodgepole pine, and flowered meadows where wildlife can often be seen. The trail ends at the Snowmass Ski area. The trail is not a loop so a car shuttle is recommended.

ETHICS/REGULATIONS: The Government Trail is outside the Wilderness but borders private property. Before you go out, check into the route, it's condition, ownership of land, posted areas, regulations and the following rules:

- * **DOGS MUST BE UNDER VOICE CONTROL** out of consideration for both other people and wildlife.
- * **SANITATION** - bury human waste 100 feet from water and 6 inches in the soil.
- * The trail is **not** open to motorized vehicles such as motorcycles or ATVs.
- * Camping is limited to 14 days.

PACK IT IN—PACK IT OUT!! LEAVE NO TRACE!!

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

ASPEN-SOPRIS RANGER DISTRICT WHITE RIVER NATIONAL FOREST GOVERNMENT TRAIL #1980

