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United States Department of Agriculture



HIKING

WEST MAROON TRAIL #1970

Length: 6.5 miles one-way (10.5 km)

Difficulty: Difficult

Trail Use: Heavy

Beginning Elevation: 9,580 feet (2920 m)

Ending Elevation: 12,500 feet (3810 m)

USGS Map(s): Maroon Bells

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 overnighing** 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 trail used very heavily by both day hikers and backpackers, West Maroon offers magnificent views of the Maroon Bells/Snowmass Wilderness area, two stream crossings, fields of wildflowers and access to other wilderness areas. This is the starting point for the most popular of the trails to Crested Butte. **If camping at Crater Lake, use designated sites only. Campfires are prohibited and only campstoves are allowed. Camping farther along the trail can be found between the two river crossings.**

ACCESS: From mid-June through September, Maroon Creek Road is restricted to vehicles from 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. beyond the T-Lazy 7 Ranch. Take the shuttle from Aspen Highlands Ski Area, which leaves every 20 minutes; dog 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 traversing through a meadow to the far end of the Lake and a Forest Service bulletin board. The Maroon-Snowmass Trail is to the right. It climbs 1.8 miles through aspen trees to Crater Lake. Take the left fork at the Crater Lake bulletin board. The West Maroon Trail skirts the right side of Crater Lake. After the lake the trail follows the stream for a short distance and then enters the forest. Upon emerging from the forest you will cross a rocky scree field. The first stream crossing is in a little over three miles. This crossing is fairly wide and can be extremely dangerous during high spring runoffs. The trail on the other side is not always visible before crossing. The trail climbs through forest and willow before reaching another stream crossing in an open area. After crossing, the trail angles to the right and climbs steadily through willow and then tundra. This area is very open and the pass can be seen in the distance. The trail continues to climb steeply through switchbacks followed by a long traverse that ends at the top of the Pass. The views are spectacular on a clear day. From the top of the pass the trail descends on the other side to the East Fork Creek Trail and Schofield Park into Crested Butte or Frigid Air Pass.

ETHICS/REGULATIONS: The West Maroon Trail is within the Maroon Bells-Snowmass Wilderness, please educate yourself about Wilderness Ethics and the following rules:

- * **DOGS MUST BE LEASHED** out of consideration for others and wildlife.
- * Limit group sizes to 10 people and 15 stock/pack animals.
- * **SANITATION** - bury human waste 100 feet from water and 6 inches in the soil.
- * Lightweight campstoves are recommended and required above the timberline.

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 WEST MAROON TRAIL #1970

