

Sopris Ranger District
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United States Department of Agriculture



4WD

SCHOFIELD PASS ROAD #317

Length: 6 miles one-way (9.6 km);

Difficulty: Most Difficult

Trail Use: Low to Moderate

Beginning Elevation: 8,880 feet (2707 m)

Ending Elevation: 10,720 feet (3267 m)

USGS Map(s): Snowmass Mountain, Oh-Be-Joyful, Gothic

ATTRACTIONS/CONSIDERATIONS: Schofield was an old mining town and is now a ghost town with a number of old buildings still standing. The first portion of the road passes through a narrow, steep canyon which contains a number of picturesque water falls. The Devil's Punch bowl is a series of water falls ending in a deep pool of water. Schofield Park is large and open and is surrounded by the majestic peaks of the Elk Range. The East Fork trailhead into the Maroon Bells-Snowmass wilderness can be accessed on this road. This road will connect to roads leading to Crested Butte during the Summer.

ACCESS: From Carbondale travel south on Highway 133 about 22 miles to the Marble turn-off and veer left onto road #314. Go east on the Marble road, through Marble and past Beaver Lake. The road begins to head uphill and passes over shale rock. About 1 mile outside of Marble there is a fork in the road; take the right fork. The road immediately heads downhill, then on to Crystal City. After Crystal City take the right fork onto road #317 to reach the pass.

NARRATIVE: This route should only be attempted by very skilled and experienced four-wheel drivers, and only in jeep-type, small, high clearance 4WD vehicles. There have been several fatal accidents on this road. Most accidents occur on the descent from Schofield Park to the Devil's Punch bowl. One danger is due to drivers not drying out their brakes after a deep creek crossing before the steep descent. A snowbridge, formed by winter avalanche deposition, crosses the road about half way between Crystal and Schofield Park. During some years the snowbridge does not melt sufficiently to allow passage. The segment from Schofield Park to Schofield Pass is easy, as is the drive from the pass to Crested Butte. The entire route is popular with hikers and mountain bikers as well as 4WD enthusiasts.

ETHICS/REGULATIONS: Motorized vehicles are not allowed within adjacent Wilderness Areas. Before you go out, check into available routes, their conditions, ownership of land, posted areas, regulations that apply and the following rules:

- * Be sure your machine is as quiet as possible.
- * Avoid wetlands, streams, and steep hills where your tracks may cause damage.
- * **Sanitation** - Bury human waste 100 feet from water and 6 inches in the soil.
- * Avoid running over young trees, shrubs and grasses--**Stay on established routes!**
- * Ford streams at designated sites only.

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

