

Throughline Trail #860



Photo taken by Paonia RD Ranger

The Throughline Trail traverses the western lobe of the West Elk Wilderness. It climbs gradually from Smith Fork Creek, passing through Gambel oak thickets, meadows, aspen forests and drainages studded with beaver ponds. After topping out on the southern flanks of Mt. Gunnison there are spectacular views of the heart of the West Elk Mountains. From there the trail descends into the vast aspen forests of Coal Basin and continues down into Coal Creek Canyon.

Along this trail you may encounter deer, elk, bear and cat-tle. The trail is well-used and easy to follow, though there are rocky sections, creek crossings and bogs. Occasionally, avalanche debris can block the trail to horse traffic until mid-June.

Don't Forget Your Camera!



Trail Ethics:

The Throughline Trail is maintained for foot & horseback travel only. Please don't cut across switchbacks or create new trails.



Motors & Machines:

Motorized vehicles or bicycles are not allowed on the Throughline Trail or in the Wilderness Area.



Drinking Water:

DO NOT drink water directly from a river or stream. Water needs to be treated first by either filtering, boiling for at least 10 minutes or treated with iodine tablets.



Multiple use:

As you use this area you may notice that the Forest is managed for a broad range of uses. Recreation use alone includes hiking, horseback riding, hunting, snowmobiling and sight-seeing. In addition, the vegetation in the Forest requires some form of management. Timber harvest and livestock grazing are both forms of land management you may encounter while using this area. The livestock grazing on this area is managed in a very progressive and specific manner. The fences and gates that you may see are critical to managing the livestock and meeting the resource objectives that are planned for this area. Please close all gates that you open as you travel through the area. Controlling the livestock in the manner that we have planned is important.



Be prepared for inclement weather at all times. Familiarize yourself with the area.



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Length 13.3 Miles



Photo taken at South Smith Fork
By Vic Wlvey 6/2001

Gunnison National Forest
Paonia Ranger District



For any questions or comments please contact:
Paonia Ranger District
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Paonia, CO 81428
Phone: (970) 527-4131 Fax: (970) 527-4151 or
E-Mail: lbroyles@fs.fed.us or vullrey@fs.fed.us



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Trail Beginning: At the Throughline Trail Head along Coal Creek, off FSR #709.

Trail Ending: At the south end of the Smith Fork River, FSR #712.

Access #1: VIA a short jeep road off road #712, 9 miles east of Crawford.

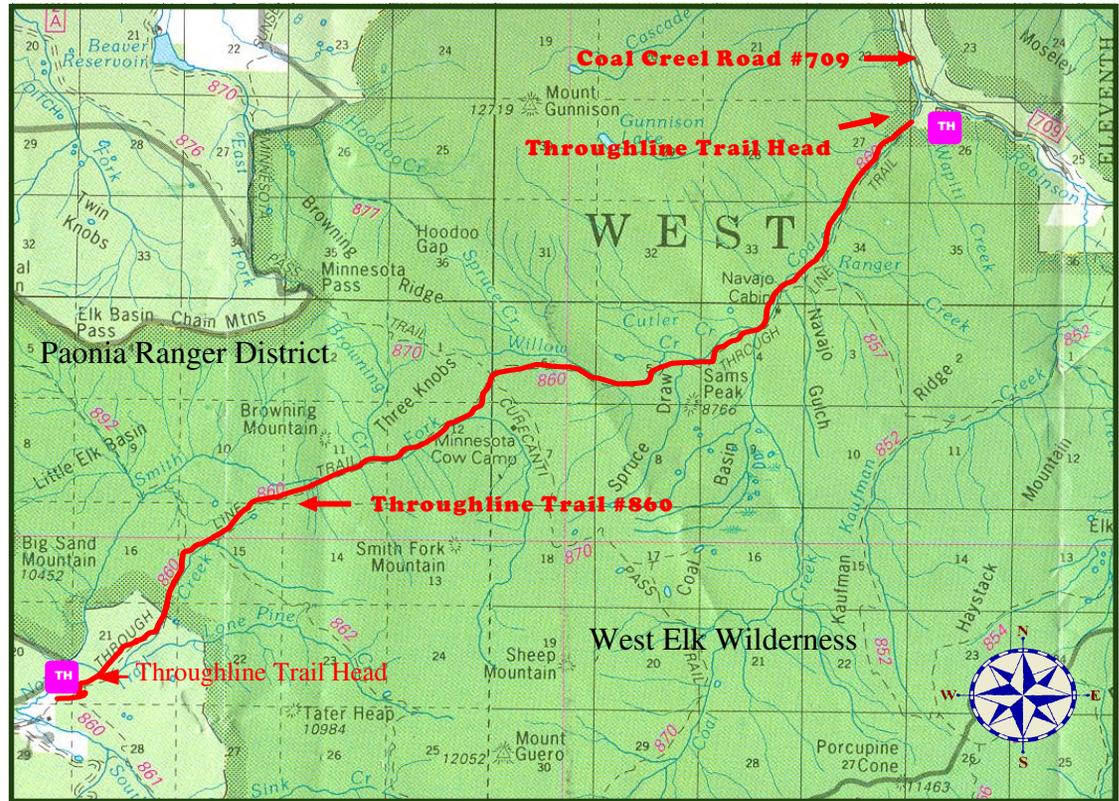
Access #2: Road #709, just across Robinson Creek, the Throughline Trail Head.

Recommended Seasons:



USGS Quad Maps:
Mt. Guero, Minnesota Pass, West Beckwith Peak

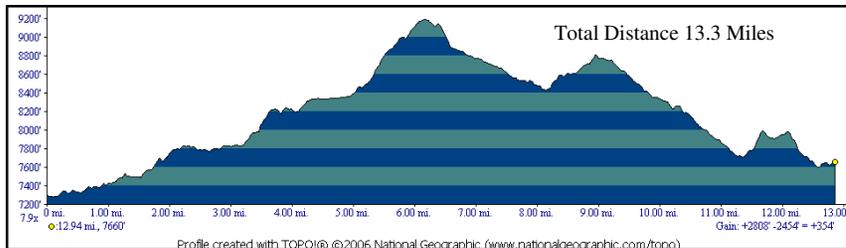
Fire Safety:
Check in with your local Forest Service office to see if fire bans are in effect.



Dispersed Camping

Dispersed camping is permitted in most areas of the Forest. Recreation maps are available at all local Forest Service offices and personnel can answer questions on specific sites. Camping in undeveloped areas requires more from the camper to help keep the site in the condition in which it was found. **If you Pack it in-Pack it out!**

Elevation Profile:



Principles of Leave No Trace:

1. Plan Ahead & Prepare
2. Travel & Camp on Durable Surfaces
3. Dispose of Waste Properly
4. Leave What You Find
5. Minimize Campfire Impacts
6. Respect Wildlife
7. Be Considerate of Other Visitors