

# GALLATIN NATIONAL FOREST BOZEMAN RANGER DISTRICT HIKING TRAILS

The Bozeman Ranger District offers many opportunities for hiking, ranging from short strolls near a campground to extended backpacking trips. The terrain ranges from 5,000 feet to over 10,000 feet. Dense stands of timber, open meadows, rock outcroppings, spectacular mountain peaks, waterfalls, clear mountain streams, lakes, and a wide variety of flora and fauna can be found throughout the area.

A little planning and a few precautions will improve your hike:

1. Study maps of the area. A Forest Visitor's Map is available for purchase at the Bozeman Ranger District office or local sporting good stores. More detailed topographical maps are also available at sporting good stores.
2. Bring insect repellent. Mosquitoes and biting flies can be bad at certain times of the year.
3. If you plan to hike longer distances, bring along a raincoat or warm jacket. Thunderstorms can occur at anytime during the spring, summer, and fall months.
4. Be careful with fire, pack out all non-burnable trash, and leave a clean camp or picnic site.
5. Remember, wild animals are unpredictable. Give them a wide berth. Contact the District office if you'd like more information about safety precautions while hiking in bear country.
6. While this area has beautiful lakes and clear streams, the parasite Giardia is found in most water sources. **DO NOT DRINK** directly from streams or lakes. Carry in your drinking water, purify it with a water filter, or boil it for an extended period.
7. The roads leading to these access points and hiking trails may be unsuitable for certain vehicles during periods of inclement weather.

For more specific information about road conditions and the following access points and hiking trails contact the Bozeman Ranger District, 3710 Fallon Street, Bozeman, MT, 59715 or phone (406)522-2520.

## Access Points

Bridger Range

- West Side

- East Side

#### Gallatin Range

- North End
- West Side

#### Madison Range

- East Side

## BRIDGER RANGE

There are many trailheads on either side of the Bridger Range with trails leading to the main trail, the Bridger Foothills National Recreation Trail. This 24-mile long trail starts at the "M" parking lot four miles northeast of Bozeman and ends at Fairy Lake. Take plenty of water along since most of the area is very dry during the summer and fall.

### ACCESS POINTS AND TRAILS (WEST SIDE):

#### *"M" PICNIC AREA*

Provides access to the southern end of the Bridger Foothills National Recreation Trail. Picnic tables and a toilet are available at this site, but there is no drinking water.

#### *SYPES CANYON*

This trailhead is at the end of the road within the Sypes Canyon Subdivison. Please respect private land and stay on the designated access. Motorized vehicles are prohibited on this trail which provides access to the southern end of the Bridgers.

#### *MIDDLE COTTONWOOD CANYON*

Provides access to the southwestern portion of the Bridger Foothills National Recreation Trail. There is a developed parking area at the end of the access road.

#### *TRUMAN GULCH*

Provides access across private lands to the west central Bridgers. There is a developed trailhead at the end of the road with a parking area and horse loading ramp.

#### *CORBLY GULCH*

Designated access across private land to the west central Bridgers. Please respect private land and stay on the designated access. There is a parking area at the end of the road. The last one mile of road is very rough and is not suitable for low clearance vehicles.

#### *NORTH COTTONWOOD*

A State of Montana lease with a landowner provides an access along the north section line of Section 23, T2N, R5E. This allows access to National Forest land and the trail in North Cottonwood Creek.

#### *JOHNSON CANYON*

Provides road access to National Forest land. There are no end-of-road facilities and there are no maintained trails.

### **ACCESS POINTS AND TRAILS (EAST SIDE):**

#### *FLATHEAD PASS*

Road access is best from the east side of the range. This area allows access to the south toward Hardscrabble Peak and to the north along trails toward Zade and Horse thief Mountains.

#### *FAIRY LAKE CAMPGROUND*

A developed campground with drinking water and toilet facilities. Fairy Lake covers about 20 acres and contains cutthroat trout. This campground is near a trailhead for the central part of the Bridger Range. It provides access to the Bridger Foothills National Recreation Trail and Hardscrabble and Sacagawea Peaks.

#### *ROSS PASS*

The Middle Fork of Brackett Creek road provides primitive road and trail access to Ross Pass. This access is an old logging road which climbs up the east slope of the Bridgers to about one mile below the pass. The last two miles of road is not recommended for low clearance vehicles. Ross Pass can also be reached via a trail off of the South Fork of Brackett Creek Road.

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## **GALLATIN RANGE (NORTH END)**

This area varies between the lowland forested valleys of Bozeman Creek to high alpine country with exceptional scenery, steep canyons, many creeks, lakes and waterfalls. Hiking trails are good and peaks above 10,000 feet offer excellent opportunities for mountaineering, hiking and climbing.

### **ACCESS POINTS AND TRAILS:**

#### *NEW WORLD GULCH*

The parking area for this trail is located near the end of the Bear Canyon Road. The trail climbs the divide between New World Gulch and the Bozeman Creek drainage and then ends at Mystic Lake. A Forest Service recreation cabin near the lake is available to rent.

#### *BOZEMAN CREEK*

This route follows a logging road along Bozeman Creek to Mystic Lake. The lake offers good fishing for rainbow and cutthroat trout.

### *BLACKMORE CREEK*

This is a large developed trailhead and picnic area adjacent to Hyalite Reservoir with parking, accessible toilets, and drinking water. The main trail leads to Blackmore Lake and continues on to Mt. Blackmore. From the same parking area you can also take a trail along the west shore of the reservoir and return via the Crescent Lake trail.

### *HYALITE CREEK*

This is a very popular trailhead with parking and a toilet at the end of the main Hyalite Creek Road. Hyalite Creek is adjacent to the trailhead, but there is no developed drinking water available. One trail leads to various waterfalls and Hyalite Lake at the head of the canyon. From there it continues south toward the Gallatin Crest Trail and other lateral trails. The 1 1/2 mile Grotto Falls trail also begins at this trailhead and provides persons with disabilities access to scenic Grotto Falls.

### *EAST FORK HYALITE CREEK*

This trail provides access past Horseshoe Falls to Heather and Emerald Lakes. There is a developed parking area at the end of the East Fork of Hyalite Creek Road.

### *PALISADE FALLS NATIONAL RECREATION TRAIL*

This very popular 1/2 mile nature trail is paved to provide disabled users access to Palisade Falls. There is a picnic area and an accessible toilet at the trailhead. No drinking water is available.

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## **GALLATIN RANGE (WEST SIDE)**

There are dense timbered valleys and ridges with rugged peaks rising to nearly 10,000 feet. Petrified wood is common in this area. Collection permits are available at local Ranger District Offices. A portion of this area is inhabited by grizzly bears.

### **ACCESS POINTS FROM THE GALLATIN CANYON:**

#### *STORM CASTLE CREEK*

This is an undeveloped site at the end of Storm Castle Creek road. The trail from the end of the road leads to the Hyalite Peak area with access to the Gallatin Crest Trail. The last two miles of road are not recommended for low clearance vehicles.

#### *GARNET MOUNTAIN*

The trail begins at a small parking area along Storm Castle Creek road and climbs to the top of Garnet Mountain offering spectacular views of the Spanish Peaks and the Gallatin Range. The lookout at the top is available for rent through the Forest Service recreation cabin rental program.

#### *WINDY PASS/GOLDEN TROUT LAKES*

The Trailhead has parking for both the Windy Pass Trail (along the Gallatin Range Divide) and the Golden Trout Lakes Trail. Routes from this access point have the potential for several good "loop" trips. The trailhead for the Hidden Lake

Trail, which connects with these other trail systems, is also nearby. The historic cabin near Windy Pass is available for nightly rental.

#### *PORCUPINE CREEK*

Trailhead with parking for trail going up the Porcupine Creek drainage. This trail intersects several other trails and has the potential for several good "loop" hikes.

#### *TWIN CABIN*

Developed trailhead with horse ramp, picnic table and toilet. The Twin Cabin Trail ties into the Porcupine trail after about two miles. This trail is closed to all motorized use.

#### *ELKHORN CREEK*

Developed trailhead at the south end of Red Cliff Campground provides trail access to Elkhorn Creek. Drinking water and toilet facilities are available within the campground.

#### *BUFFALO HORN CREEK*

Trailhead with a horse ramp and toilet. This trail provides access to many other trails up the drainage with good opportunities for a "loop hike".

#### *TEEPEE CREEK*

Trailhead with parking for a trail that provides access to the area between Buffalo Horn Creek drainage and Yellowstone National Park. No other facilities are available.

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## **MADISON RANGE (EAST SIDE)**

Alpine glaciation has produced steep, rugged peaks, knife-edge ridges and numerous cirques containing lakes surrounded by alpine meadows. Elevation of several peaks exceeds 11,000 feet. The Lee Metcalf Wilderness comprises a large portion of the range. The wilderness consists of four separate units in the Madison Range: The Spanish Peaks, Taylor-Hilgard, Monument Mountain, and Bear Trap Canyon. Grizzly bears are not usually seen in the Spanish Peaks, but the Taylor-Hilgard and the Monument Peak units of the Lee Metcalf area are within occupied grizzly bear habitat area.

### **ACCESS POINTS:**

#### *SPANISH CREEK*

This large and popular trailhead has developed parking areas, picnic sites, toilets, and drinking water. This is the north entrance to the Spanish Peaks, with trails up Little Hell Roaring Creek, South Fork Spanish Creek and a trail up the north end of the Madison Range.

#### *SPANISH PEAKS (East Access)*

Four trailheads between Gallatin Gateway and Big Sky along U.S. Highway 191 provide access into the Spanish Peaks. Indian Ridge (Logger Creek) and Hellroaring Creek have developed parking areas. Cascade Creek (Lava Lake) and Deer Creek have parking as well as toilet facilities.

#### *SPANISH PEAKS (South Access)*

Near Big Sky, trails lead to Bear Basin (North Fork Trail) and Beehive Basin at the south end of the Spanish Peaks.

*BUCK CREEK RIDGE*

A small parking area at the end of the Doe Creek Road is the start for this trail that follows the ridge line between Buck Creek to the south and the Big Sky area to the north. It connects with numerous side trails.

*CINNAMON CREEK*

There is a developed parking area near the historic Cinnamon Ranger Station. The route from the trailhead leads west and climbs to the old lookout on Cinnamon Mountain. The main trail continues up to the Buck Creek area.

*WAPITI CREEK*

Several trails leave from parking areas near the junction of Wapiti Creek and the Taylor Fork Road. They provide access to the northern portion of the Cabin Creek Recreation and Wildlife Management Area.

*SAGE CREEK*

This parking area is adjacent to US Highway 191 just south of the Taylor Fork road. The trail follows Sage Creek and leads into the Monument Mountain Unit of the Lee Metcalf Wilderness. Several "loop" trips are available.

*BACON RIND*

This trailhead (along US Highway 191) and first few miles of trail are located within Yellowstone National Park. The trail leads into the Lee Metcalf Wilderness.

*TEPEE CREEK*

A small parking area is at the end of the Tepee Creek Road. Several trails provide access to the southern portion of the Cabin Creek Recreation and Wildlife Management Area.