



SAN JUAN  
MOUNTAINS  
ASSOCIATION



San Juan National Forest  
Public Lands Office  
15 Burnett Ct  
Durango, CO 81301

<http://www.sjma.org>

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/sanjuan>

# Popular Hiking Trails 550 Corridor Hermosa to Andrews Lake`



These trails are in the San Juan National Forest. Please Tread Lightly and take care of your Public Lands.

**All trails are at high altitude!  
Be prepared for changing  
weather and carry water,  
have good footwear and  
clothing.**

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL

**PHONE: (970) 247-4874**

## **Forebay Lake:** Elev. 8,120- 8,280

This easy, approximately 2 mile roundtrip, hike is a great one for kids and/or getting acclimated to the altitude. To get there take Hwy 550 to Haviland Lake Rd. about 18 miles. Drive 1 mile, stay left, go across the dam towards the campground. Go past the pit toilets near the lake and take your first right. There is an interpretive sign about the Stagecoach road. Park, hike begins through the gate and follow the trail. There are two lakes you can stop at the first and recommend to go to the second which is Forebay Lake.

## **Haviland Lake/ Chris Park:**

Elevation Range: 8,000-8,300 Great area with many easy to moderate trails. Includes Miner's Trace, Cowboy Cutoff, Aspen Loop and Chris Park. To get there take 550 about 18 miles to the Haviland Lake Rd. In about 500 feet there is a small turn out for parking in summer you can park near the lake. Trails are marked. Trail# : 720, 721, 722, 724, 731, 532, 730, 729

## **Spud Lake Trail:** #661

9,395 -9,870 This is an easy 2.3 mile roundtrip hike to a nice mountain lake. The drive time from Durango is about the same as the hike time and well worth it with beautiful aspen forests and an easy 430 foot elevation gain. From 32<sup>nd</sup> St. in Durango drive 27 miles to a right onto Old Lime Creek Rd, just after the big hairpin turn. Proceed 3.5 miles on dirt and rocky road (low clearance vehicles may need to park lower) The parking for the trail will be on your left near a small pond on the right.

## **Purgatory Flats Trail:#511**

**Moderate** Elevation 8,700-7,700 trail with a steep ascent out. To get there from Durango, head north on Main Avenue, which becomes U.S. 550, for about 26 miles. Across from the Purgatory Resort entrance turn right onto Tacoma Drive, and follow this road for 0.3 miles to a small parking area on the left on the shore of a small lake. The trail to reach the Animas River is 6 miles roundtrip but there are some amazing places to stop with perfect views. The trail is steep (1,000 feet elevation gain and loss) coming out but not technical.

## **Cascade Creek Trail #510: Easy/ Moderate.**

Elevation 9,200' -11,200'. There are multiple creek crossings making this trail best done after the runoff. A beautiful rambling hike up the Cascade Creek Valley the 12 mile roundtrip, trail gains about 2,000 feet. To get there travel 27 miles up to the hairpin turn, past the Cascade lodge, and take a left. Drive along the road until just before the flume. Use the trail on the west it is more pleasant; it stays closer to the stream and is moderate hiking. Directly across the creek is the end of the Cascade Trail, where the west-side trail ends (or turns into Graysill Trail). It is best to cross the creek up a little ways. To the east is Graysill Trail, which continues on until it ties into the Rico-Silverton Trail. There are several beautiful views and waterfalls. Plenty of water is available, but purification is recommended to avoid Giardia.

**Hermosa Creek Trail:** #514 7,473-8,878 This description is from North (near Purgatory) to South. The entire trail is 19 miles in distance end to end. This trail is part of the old Stagecoach road from Durango to Silverton. Starting near Purgatory, take Hermosa Creek Road past Sig Creek Campground and cross the East Fork of Hermosa Creek to the trailhead. Main road continues up to Bolom Pass and Hotel Draw.

You can also access this trail from Durango by taking Hwy 550 about 9 miles to Hermosa and turning left just before the railroad tracks onto CR 201 turns into FS 576. Drive about 6 miles up to the Lower Hermosa Campground. **Be aware** that the 416 fire, in 2018, caused significant damage to the area and caution is recommended as there are many dead standing trees in the area, trails on this south end may be in disrepair.

**Elbert Creek to Hermosa Creek #512: Elev:** 8,397- 10,448

**Moderate/Difficult** This is a great hike with spectacular views starting with 3 miles of 2,051' elevation gain along switchbacks up the front of Hermosa Cliffs. To get to the trailhead park just south of Purgatory at Needles Country Store. The trailhead is near Bubbas Boards on the south end of the parking lot. This is private property. Park in the lot near the corral, do not park in the area for Bubbas Boards or Needles Store. If the lot is full please try

another hike. We want to be sure the landowner continues to allow access to this wonderful hike. Look for the Forest Service signs near the corral. 1.2 miles up you will come to an old cabin, this is a great spot for a rest before the trail splits, take the left hand fork to Hermosa Creek. 9.9 miles, round trip

**Engineer Mountain:** There are two ways **(1. and 2.)** to get the mountain. The wildflower meadow is something to have on your list of places to see.

One way is **1. Engineer Mountain Trail #508: Moderate/Difficult Elev:** 9,064- 12,193 This trail is the longer trail and worth the effort for the amazing views in all directions. The meadow is about 11,800 feet. To get there: drive North from Purgatory about 2.5 miles. You will be looking for the dirt road on the left, past the State Highway buildings. Drive up the dirt road and you will come to a parking area and trailhead sign. To the meadow is about 3 miles. From here you can summit on the southeast ridge. There is a somewhat defined trail and be aware that it will be scrambling up through rocks and you are exposed. Caution is recommended and lightening can be prevalent in the area afternoons on most days in the summer.

The other way **2. Pass Creek Trail #500: Moderate/Difficult Elev:** 10,682-11,670 This trail starts up at

the top of Coalbank Pass. The trailhead is on the north side of the highway just before you start down the pass. You can park in the lots on the left or right side of the road. This trail can be busy on a beautiful day. This trail meets up with Engineer Mountain Trail. An early start is recommended for both trails to Engineer due to lightening afternoon. Be aware that the last portion to summit the mountain is scree/rock and can be difficult.



**Crater Lake Trail #623: Elev:** 10,754 -11,703. Beautiful, moderate to difficult, 12 mile roundtrip trail with a starting elevation of 10,800 feet and reaching the lake at 11,600 feet. To get there drive North on Hwy 550 from Purgatory 15 miles over Coal Bank pass and up to Andrew Lake. Take right to the lake and park in the lot by the lake. The trail starts by the dam and follows switchbacks up through conifers and meadows stay right, and please sign in at the Wilderness boundary trail head. The trail does not gain much in elevation but is long and high. Be prepared for adverse weather in the afternoon. This trail goes into the Weminuche Wilderness, please be aware that groups can be no larger than 15.

These are some of the popular trails in the area but is not all of them. To find more please go to: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/activity/sanjuan/recreation/hiking> for more backpacking and day hiking trails.



Please follow best Leave No Trace Practices (Int.org)

1. Plan Ahead
2. Travel and 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.



**Hiking with your Dog**

Please have your dog leashed and/or in strict voice command. Be prepared with waste bags and pack out the bags. Do not leave bags or waste on the trail.