

GALLATIN NATIONAL FOREST, YELLOWSTONE DISTRICT (LIVINGSTON AREA)

TRAIL DESCRIPTIONS

(edited 4/15/2013- kjh)

Absaroka Range (Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness):

Suce Creek Trail #44

Total Mileage: 3.3

Overall Condition: good

Types of uses: foot, stock, x-country skiing, snowshoes

Amount of Use: medium

Topo Maps: Livingston Peak

This trail begins at Suce Creek trailhead, or alternatively can be reached from the Livingston Peak Trail #449. The trail also provides access to Livingston Peak. From the trailhead, the trail drops to Suce Creek, then begins climbing until it reaches the junction of #449.

Livingston Peak Trail #449

Total Mileage: 6 miles

Overall Condition: fair to poor in East Baldy basin

Types of uses: foot and stock, x-country skiing, snowshoes

Amount of Use: medium

Topo Maps: Livingston Peak, Brisbin

This trail starts up at the Livingston Peak trailhead. To get here, take Swingley road east of Livingston and turn at the Forest Service sign; continue on the main road to the trailhead, where you run into a gate. The trail starts here; you can take either the road or a trail through the forest. About a quarter mile up the trail a water trough will be in a big meadow; up the hill from the trough is the junction of Suce Creek trail #44. Continuing on #449 to the pass, the trail climbs and can be steep and rutted in places. From the divide, you descend east and the trail becomes indistinct or nonexistent until it ends at Elephanthead Trail #37. This portion of the trail is hard to find and requires good navigation skills and a map.

Livingston Peak Bike trail #450

Total Mileage:

Overall condition: poor, not yet complete

Types of uses: foot, stock, mountain bike

Amount of use: low

Topo Maps: Livingston Peak, Brisbin

North Fork Deep Creek, Trail #45

Total Mileage: 6.5 miles

Overall Condition: good, lowers to fair towards top

Types of Uses: foot and stock, x-country skiing, snowshoes

Amount of Use: medium

Types of Uses: foot and stock (Sept. 16 to Dec. 1) x-country skiing, snowshoes, ice climbing

Amount of Use: high

Topo Maps: Dexter Point, Mount Cowen

This is perhaps the most popular trail in the Absarokas. The trailhead is located at the Pine Creek Campground up Pine Creek Road. After the first quarter mile, a junction with the George Lake Tie Trail #684 is reached. This .5 mile trail leads to the George Lake Trail #184 described below. A mile from the trailhead, one reaches Pine Creek Falls, which is a popular turnaround point for many people. From the falls, the trail begins a steep ascent up Pine Creek. At approximately mile 2, the trail crosses the creek; no bridge exists and the crossing can be challenging in early summer run-off. Eventually the trail terminates at Pine Creek Lake after a total of 5 miles. There are many sights along the way, including the dramatic valley, many cascades, and Jewel Lake below Pine Creek Lake. Both lakes are heavily used for overnight camping and have decent fishing. The rugged cirque above Pine Creek Lake is spectacular and culminates in Black Mountain, which can be reached from a non-technical but off-trail scramble. It is best to camp at the lakes mid-week when the crowds will be less of an issue. Note that this area burned in the fall of 2012. The first 1-2 miles burned very sporadically and are barely effected. Beyond this point, however, the trail travels through some highly burned areas. Be aware of snags and falling trees when hiking through these areas and it is not recommended to camp anywhere in the burn, especially under snags.

George Lake, Trail #184

Total Mileage: 5.23 miles

Overall Condition: fair to good

Types of Uses: foot and stock (when clear of trees), mtn. bike

Amount of Use: low

Topo Maps: Dexter Point

The trailhead is reached by taking a right turn off of Pine Creek Road right before entering the campground. The trail can also be accessed from Pine Creek Trail #47 via the George Leo Tie Trail #684. The trail climbs for the first 3 miles, then drops for 1 mile to Cascade Creek, then begins a steep ascent to George Lake. The latter part of this trail is in disrepair but is still passable. The prospects for camping at George Lake are not great due to rocky, uneven ground; a day trip is recommended.

East Fork Mill Creek, Trail #51

Total Mileage: 12.8 miles

Overall Condition: good

Types of Uses: foot and stock, x-country skiing, snowshoes

Amount of Use: high

Topo Maps: Knowles Peak, The Pyramid, The Needles

This popular trail is located up Mill Creek Road and provides access to Elbow Lake, Agate Springs, Crystal Caves, Silver Pass, and Mill Creek Pass. The trail is in good shape with wide tread suitable for stock. A good hike with level terrain for the first five miles, the trail then climbs steeply to a stunning terminus at Silver Pass, approximately 12 miles from the trailhead. From Silver Pass, one can continue down to the Main Boulder via Fourmile Creek.

Mill Creek Pass, Trail #251

Total Mileage: 4.2 miles

Overall Condition: good

Topo Maps: The Pyramid

Reach this trail by hiking approximately one mile up the Crow Mountain Trail #58 described above. From here, it is nearly 8 miles to the signed junction with the Anderson Ridge Trail #54. This trail sees very little use, so it is a good bet for solitude. Portions of this trail run through meadows and can be difficult to find, so bring a map. Large portions of this trail were burned in recent years; be aware of snags and associated hazards when traveling through these areas.

Pyramid Mountain, Trail #290

Total Mileage: 5.0 miles

Overall Condition: poor

Types of Uses: foot

Amount of Use: low

Topo Maps: The Pyramid

This is an obscure trail leading off of the Moose Park Trail #221 and terminating at the East Fork Mill Creek Trail #51 about 2 miles above Agate Springs. It has not been maintained by Forest Service crews in numerous years and travels through a recent burn. The junction with Moose Park is not signed and may be confusing. The trail is well defined for the first 1.5 miles until a small basin is reached. From here there are several steep trails leading up to a broad, grassy plateau beneath The Pyramid. Whichever route you choose, the way is up. There are metal posts marking the route across the plateau, and the views here are spectacular. The plateau leads to a pass where one looks down into the Pyramid drainage. For the next 1-2 miles the trail is hard to find or nonexistent, but with a map the general route is fairly obvious. Eventually you will find a fairly defined trail that leads down to an unsigned junction on the East Fork Mill Creek.

Passage Creek, Trail #58

Total Mileage: 7.5 miles

Overall Condition: good to fair

Types of Uses: foot and stock, mtn. bike (outside the Wilderness), x-country, snowshoes

Amount of Use: medium

Topo Maps: Knowles Peak, The Pyramid, Mount Wallace, Mineral Mountain

This trail is located up Mill Creek Road, and leads into the rugged heart of the southern Absarokas. The trail is in good condition with clear signs. After approximately 1.5 miles, a junction is reached. Taking the right trail continues to a scenic vista of Passage Creek Falls .5 miles distant. Please be aware that this trail ends at Passage Falls, continuing on past the falls leads to private property. Taking a left at this junction continues up Passage Creek, where another junction is encountered near the Wilderness boundary. Again, one can continue up Passage Creek by veering right, or head up the steep and challenging Wallace Pass by staying straight. The Passage Creek trail goes through numerous meadows (watch for blazes) and recently burned areas (watch for snags). The upper mile is steep and rugged, and might be difficult for stock. Combined with Trail #623 on the Gardiner Ranger District, an overnight loop can be done that connects Wallace and Passage Creeks.

Colley Creek, Trail #275

Total Mileage: 4.0 miles

Overall Condition: fair

Types of Uses: foot and stock, x-country skiing, snowshoes

Amount of Use: low

Topo Maps: The Pyramid, Mount Wallace

This trail is located up Mill Creek Road and is four miles long connecting to Lambert Creek Trail #280. There is no sign at the junction with Lambert Creek, so be sure and take a map.

Lambert Creek, Trail #280

Total Mileage: 11.4 miles

Overall Condition: fair east of Colley Creek, west of Colley Creek rebuilt in 2008

Types of Uses: foot and stock, x-country skiing, snowshoes

Amount of Use: low

Topo Maps: The Pyramid, Mount Wallace

From the Lambert Creek trailhead at the end of Mill Creek Road, the trail climbs up Lambert Creek and eventually reaches Colley Lake. Camping near the lake is minimal to nonexistent. Continuing past the lake, one reaches the junction with Colley Creek Trail #275. A nice one-way hike takes the Colley Creek Trail down to its trailhead where one could leave a shuttle vehicle. Continuing on the Lambert Creek Trail, one climbs up to a divide. From here, the trail was rebuilt in 2008 and follows a ridge with stunning views of Mt. Wallace before taking numerous new switchbacks down to Wallace Creek.

Thompson Lake, Trail #282

Total Mileage: 5.0 miles to Thompson Lake, 9.9 miles to District Boundary

Overall Condition: good

Types of Uses: foot and stock

Amount of Use: high

Topo Maps: Mineral Mountain

This popular trail is located up the West Fork of Mill Creek. The first portion of the trail climbs through a broad, open valley with evidence of a forest fire that burnt the area several years ago. The trail is approximately five miles to the lake and used by horse riders, hikers, and fisherfolk. About half-way up, Trail #279 turns off and heads towards Lonesome Pond and Monitor Peak. If taking stock to the lake, please do not tie horses within 100 feet of water nor to trees for extended periods of time. Beyond Thompson Lake, it is just under five miles to a broad pass with a handful of small lakes and the Gardiner District Boundary.

South Fork Sixmile, Trail #61

Total Mileage: 9.5 miles

Overall Condition: good to fair

Types of Uses: foot and stock, x-country skiing, snowshoes

Amount of Use: medium

Topo Maps: Mineral Mountain, Monitor Peak

This trail begins at the Sixmile Trailhead up the Sixmile Road. In the first mile, the trail crosses the creek several times; this could be quite a challenge in the spring. After approximately one mile, the trail appears to head into a meadow towards an outfitter camp, when in fact it crosses the creek to the north. Make sure you have a map and pay attention so you don't miss this crossing. After this, the trail follows the drainage for quite some time. It is generally high above the creek, but often crosses side creeks. The trail climbs steeply at the head of the drainage until it reaches the divide above the North Fork Sixmile Creek. From this point, follow a faint tread, cairns, and posts to a beautiful high basin with views of Monitor Peak. There are two historic sheep camps located in this area. At this point the tread disappears, but you can continue up the basin until you

tread becomes less defined and you will follow cairns to the top of the divide. Here one looks into the Sixmile drainages, at Emigrant and beyond.

Gallatin Mountain Range

Big Creek, Trail #180

Total Mileage: 14.20 miles

Overall Condition: good, gets fair to poor near Gallatin Crest

Types of Uses: foot, stock, x-country skiing, snowshoes

Amount of Use: high to medium

Topo Maps: Lewis Creek, The Sentinel, Ramshorn Peak

The trailhead is located at the end of the Big Creek Road, about 2 miles past the Mountain Sky Guest Ranch. This trail is very well marked, and is moderately angled for the majority of the hike. It is extremely popular during hunting season and several outfitters maintain camps in the drainage. Also be advised that the Mountain Sky Guest Ranch uses this trail frequently, so expect to see horse traffic for the first 3 miles. There are numerous creek crossings, so don't be afraid to get your feet wet, especially during spring runoff. Many trails head off of the Big Creek Trail and ascend the various tributary drainages; many climb all the way to the Gallatin Crest. Some of these trails are well-defined and signed, others are not. The last 1-2 miles of the Big Creek Trail becomes less distinct as it climbs to Porcupine Pass, terminating at a junction with the Gallatin Crest Trail #96. The Junction at the basin is not well marked, but look for the cairns, painted rock and blazes.

Bark Cabin Creek, Trail #159

Total Mileage: 6.1 miles

Overall Condition: fair, poor near Gallatin Crest

Types of Uses: foot, stock, x-country skiing, snowshoes,

Amount of Use: low

Topo Maps: The Sentinel

This trail is located off the Big Creek Trail #180 to the north at a signed junction. It follows the creek for the majority of the hike. At some points the valley becomes very broad and meadowlike, and Bark Cabin Creek becomes very slow and meandering. In the first such meadow, look for the remains of the old Bark Cabin. Towards the end of the trail, it enters a large open basin before climbing steeply to the Gallatin divide. The trail through this basin can be difficult to follow; watch for cairns. Pick up the tread once again and ascend very steeply to the ridge. At this point the trail joins the Gallatin Crest Trail #96. Total distance from Big Creek to the crest is about 5 miles.

Mist Creek, Trail #196

Total Mileage: 5.0 miles

Overall Condition: poor

Types of Uses: foot and stock

Amount of Use: low

Topo Maps: The Sentinel

Don't underestimate this trail. It heads north from an unmarked junction with Big Creek. It is a very poorly defined trail, has not been maintained in years, and requires good map

of the Gallatin Range trails lead up to the Crest Trail, some junctions are marked and others are not. Water can also be difficult to find along certain stretches of the crest. There is a short, rocky section at the head of Big Creek that is easily traveled on foot, but horses should bypass this section by dropping into the head of Big Creek where a trail can be found. This trail regains the Crest just east of Eaglehead Mountain. Another section of the trail worth noting is the section southwest of Crater Lake. The map shows the trail climbing above the lake to the south. A trail project circa 1995 relocated the trail so that the map is no longer accurate. The trail actually drops to the southwest down into Swan Creek for a short distance, then turns south. It then switchbacks steeply to regain the Crest. The Gallatin Crest Trail ends at Hyalite Peak.

South Rock, Trail #178

Total Mileage: 5.1 miles

Overall Condition: good

Types of Uses: foot, stock, x-country skiing, snowshoes,

Amount of Use: medium

Topo Maps: Ramshorn Peak

This trail begins at the South Rock Trailhead and eventually gains the Gallatin Crest just north of Fortress Mountain. The trail begins on an old roadbed, then drops into a meadow. The trail crosses two creeks, then climbs back into the trees. At approximately 3 miles, a meadow is reached. Continue along the trail (skirting above the meadow) and reach the Gallatin Crest; junction is not signed.

Lewis Creek, Trail #181

Total Mileage: 9.5 miles

Overall Condition: fair

Types of Uses: foot and stock, x-country skiing, snowshoes

Amount of Use: medium

Topo Maps: Lewis Creek

This trail begins at the Big Creek Trailhead. From the parking area, walk back down the road to a post before the crossing the bridge. The trail begins at this point, and heads east towards the Mountain Sky Guest Ranch before turning north up the Lewis Creek drainage. Be careful to stay on the system trail, rather than straying onto Mountain Sky's dude trails. The trail is in the drainage bottom at times and is therefore often under water. The trail is generally easy to follow and eventually gains the Gallatin Crest Trail #96 by Crater Lake. The junction with the Crest Trail is unsigned.

Cliff Creek, Trail #225

Total Mileage: 8.5 miles

Overall Condition: good, then poor

Types of Uses: foot and stock, x-country skiing, snowshoes

Amount of Use: low

Topo Maps: The Sentinel, Lewis Creek

This trail begins at the junction with Big Creek Trail #180, about one half mile from the trailhead. For the first several miles, it is very brushy, and is often underwater as it's in the drainage bottom. The trail is easy to follow until you reach a large avalanche path; here the trail crosses the creek. Continue further on good tread until the upper reaches of the drainage where it eventually disappears. If you have a keen eye and a map, you can

for falling trees. Be prepared for downfall along the trail. West Pine eventually intersects with the North Dry Divide trail.

Crazy Mountain Range

Note: Most of the trails described below cross creeks which can run very high in late spring and early summer due to snowmelt. Very few bridges exist and extreme care should be taken in fording these streams.

Shields Lowline, Trail #258

Total Mileage: 9.70 miles

Overall Condition: fair

Types of Uses: Bicycle, foot, horse, motorcycle (west of the Sunlight Trail #273), x-country skiing and snowshoes

Amount of Use: Low

Topo Maps: Campfire Lake

The Shields Lowline Trail is found in the Northwest section of the Crazies. It offers hiking, horseback riding, mountain bike and motorcycle opportunities on designated routes. This trail begins in Section 30, T 5N, R 11E along the Shields River Road. It travels in a southwesterly direction past the Sunlight trailhead to Bald Ridge and the Porcupine Rental Cabin. This trail has not been regularly maintained. In many sections it has little or no tread, and is difficult to find, but blazed trees are present. It also may have many down trees and obstructions. It is important to note that fences have been constructed, and extra time should be allotted to look for gates that differ from the original trail route. It proves to be a good challenge, and a quad map and compass are recommended. This trail's southern section has become a popular winter destination, because it is in close proximity to the Porcupine Cabin. (Rental Cabin Program) This trail intersects with the Sunlight Trail #273, and South Fork of Shields Trail #265.

South Fork Shields, Trail #265

Total Mileage: 3.80 miles

Overall Condition: fair

Types of Uses: bicycle, foot, & horse

Amount of Use: Low

Topo Maps: Campfire Lake

This trail located in the northwest section of the Crazies, and shares the same access points as the Shields Lowline Trail. This trail begins in an open meadow, by intersecting with the Shields Lowline Trail in section #11, approximately 1.5 miles past the Porcupine station, and follows the small Shields River. This trail has not been regularly maintained. In many sections it has little or no tread, and is difficult to find, but blazed trees are present. It also may have many down trees and obstructions. It proves to be a good challenge, and a quad map and compass are recommended. The blazed trail peters out approximately a mile below the head of South Fork Shields River. This trail offers views of Black Mountain and Sugarloaf Mountain to the West of the Trail. This trail has also become a popular winter destination, because it is in close proximity to the Porcupine Cabin. (Rental Cabin Program)

Overall Condition: Good.

Types of Uses: Bicycle, foot, & horse

Amount of Use: Medium-High

Topo Maps: Campfire Lake

Please note that currently the private land owner has denied public access to this trail.

This trail is located in the NW section of the Crazies and is accessed via the Porcupine Lowline trail approximately one and a half miles south of Porcupine Cabin. Look for posts crossing the meadow south of Porcupine Cabin. The trail crosses private land in this meadow thus please respect private property and follow the posts. It is approximately 3 ½ miles long and one of two trails on the Yellowstone R.D. (Trespass Tr. #268 being the other) that provide the quickest access to Campfire Lake.

Cottonwood Lake, Trail #197

Total Mileage: 5.24 miles

Overall Condition: good, gets fair after leaving road section

Types of Uses: foot, stock, mountain bike, snowmobile; ATV and motorcycle on road section only

Amount of Use: high

Topo Maps: Campfire Lake, Crazy Peak

This trail is located in the Southwest section of the Crazies, and begins at the Cottonwood trailhead. The first half of the trail follows a gated private/administrative use road. The trail is approximately 5.25 miles and leads via several steep climbs to Cottonwood Lake and the glaciated basin that contains it. At some of these points, tread might be difficult to find, but watch for cairns. It is important to note that horses, and mountain bikes are permitted but not recommended when ascending the steep section of trail that begins in Section 9, T 3N, R 11E.

Trespass Creek, Trail #268

Total Mileage: 6.00 miles

Overall Condition: Good

Types of Uses: snowmobile, mountain bike, foot, & horse

Amount of Use: High

Topo Maps: Campfire Lake

This trail is located in the Southwest section of the Crazies, and is accessed via the Cottonwood Trail #197. The trail is approximately 4 ½ miles long, follows an easy grade through scenic meadows and forest, and is the main trail on the Yellowstone R.D. that leads to Campfire Lake Trail. Note that bicycles are NOT allowed beyond the divide that separates Trespass and Campfire Lake basin.

Rock Creek (North), Trail #270

Total Mileage: 9.70 miles

Overall Condition: good, lowers to fair near Rock Lake

Types of Uses: foot; stock, mtn. bike, and motorcycle on lower section

Amount of Use: medium

Topo Maps: Fairview Peak, Crazy Peak

This trail is located in the Southern part of the Crazies and begins at the North Rock trailhead in Section #15, T 2N, R 11E. The first 1.5 miles of the trail crosses private property while crossing from the Little Rock to (main) Rock drainage before joining up with the road. The trail follows this road another 1.5 miles to a private guest ranch, which is also the general location of the old Rock Creek Campground (it can be found on the 1951 version of the Fairview Peak USGS quad). Approximately ¼ of a mile before