

Third Edition • 80 Trails

Northern

GUIDE TO

Colorado Backroads & 4-Wheel-Drive Trails



EASY



MODERATE



DIFFICULT



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Third Edition

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Thanks to everyone with whom we traveled or met on the trails for allowing us to use pictures of you and/or your vehicles. If we published pictures that you took of us, we gave you credit at the bottom of the picture.

We would also like to thank staffers and rangers at the U.S. Forest Service, BLM and other government land agencies for their time and patience answering our many questions.

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DISCLAIMER

Travel in Colorado's backcountry is, by its very nature, potentially dangerous and could result in property damage, injury or even death. The scope of this book cannot predict every possible hazard you may encounter. If you drive any of the trails in this book, you acknowledge these risks and assume full responsibility. You are the final judge as to whether a trail is safe to drive on any given day, whether your vehicle is capable of the journey and what supplies you should carry. The information contained herein cannot replace good judgment and proper preparation on your part. The publisher and authors of this book disclaim any and all liability for bodily injury, death or property damage that could occur to you or any of your passengers.

We have made every effort to update trails to match U.S. Forest Service Motor Vehicle Use Maps (MVUMs) that were available at the time of this writing. We cannot match maps that have not yet been issued or keep up with annual changes to existing maps. We will attempt to report changes on our Web site, but make no guarantee of accuracy. You are ultimately responsible for following the latest and correct MVUM. In addition, OHV laws described in this book change constantly.

We do our best to keep up with them; however, you are ultimately responsible to know the correct and latest laws. The publisher and authors of this book disclaim any and all liability for fines or other punishment that could result from being on the wrong trail or breaking the law.

Note: Telephone numbers and Websites that appear in this book were verified Jan. 2011.

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TRAIL LIST

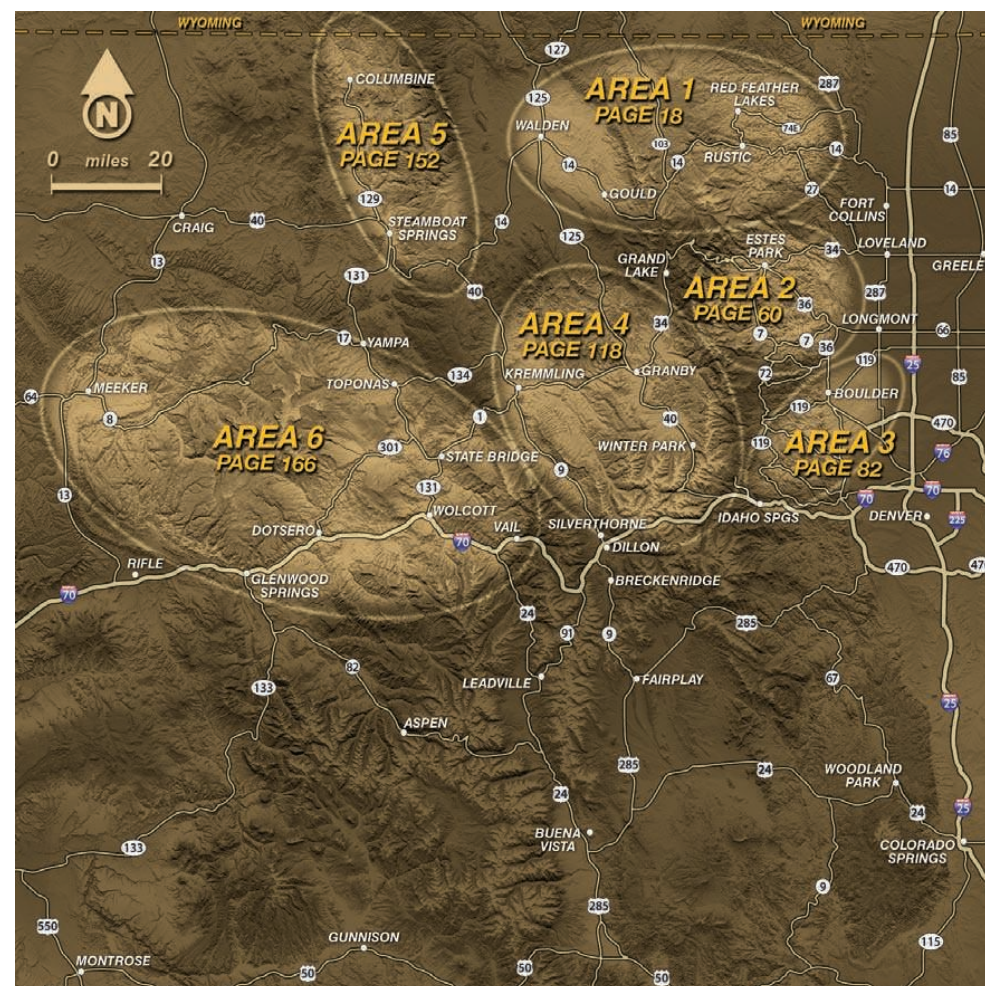
Green = Easy, Blue = Moderate, Red = Difficult

* New Trails

#	Name	Pg.	#	Name	Pg.	#	Name	Pg.
AREA 1 MAP			AREA 3 MAP			AREA 5 MAP		
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TRAIL FINDER

To find a trail, use list at left and these maps to determine in which area a trail is located, then turn to the page indicated. Detailed area maps will direct you to individual trails.



TRAIL RATINGS DEFINED

Trail ratings are very subjective. Conditions change for many reasons, including weather and time of year. An easy trail can quickly become difficult when washed out by a rainstorm or blocked by a fallen rock. You must be the final judge of a trail's condition on the day you drive it. If any part of a trail is difficult, the entire trail is rated difficult. You may be able to drive a significant portion of a trail before reaching the difficult spot. Read each trail description carefully for specific information.

Easy

Gravel, dirt, clay, sand, or mildly rocky road. Gentle grades. Water levels low except during periods of heavy runoff. Full-width single lane or wider with adequate room to pass most of the time. Where shelf conditions exist, road is wide with minor sideways tilt. Clay roads, when wet, can significantly increase difficulty. Some trails can be driven in 2WD under ideal conditions. Others will need 4WD and, in some cases, low-range gearing.



Moderate

Rutted dirt or rocky road. Careful tire placement may be necessary. Some grades fairly steep but manageable if dry. Soft sand possible. Sideways tilt will require caution. Narrow shelf roads possible. Backing may be necessary to pass. Water depths passable for stock high-clearance vehicles except during periods of heavy runoff. Mud holes may be present especially in the spring. Undercarriage may scrape occasionally depending on ground clearance. Rock-stacking may be necessary in some cases. Brush may touch vehicle. Four-wheel drive, low range, and higher ground clearance required in most cases. Standard factory skid plates and tow hooks recommended on many trails.



Difficult

Grades can be very steep with severe ground undulation and large boulders. Sideways tilt can be extreme. Sand hills very steep with soft downslopes. Deep water crossings possible. Shelf roads extremely narrow; use caution in full-size vehicle. Passing may be difficult with backing required for long distances. Brush may scratch sides of vehicle. Body damage possible. Some trails suitable for more aggressive stock vehicles but most trails require vehicle modification. Lifts, differential lockers, aggressive articulation, and/or winches recommended in many cases. Skid plates and tow hooks required.

Author's Vehicles: (See photos)

A. 2005 Ford Escape: Stock 4-cyl. 4WD, no low, street tires and no off-road package.

B. 2002 Grand Cherokee: Stock 4WD, skid plates and tow hooks, A/T tires and CB radio.

C. 2001 Jeep® Wrangler: Equipped with TeraFlex 3" lift with long-arm kit, 9,000 lb. Warn winch, Dana 44 rear axle; 410 gears, Tera Low 4/1 transfer case, ARB lockers front and rear, York on-board air system, Predator skid plates, High-Country rocker panel guards, Curry bumpers, Alumiflex tie rod, Xenon extended flairs, stock 4-liter engine, 33 x 12.50 BFG A/T tires and CB radio.

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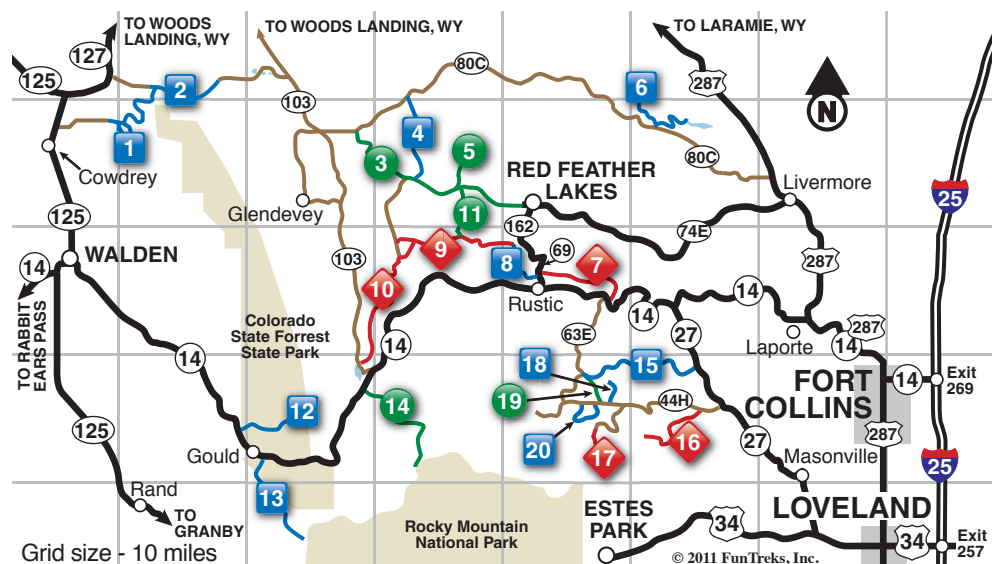
Introduction

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Fort Collins, Walden, Red Feather Lakes, Buckhorn Canyon

Highway 14 passes through Poudre Canyon west of Fort Collins. It is one of Colorado's most popular scenic drives. Consequently, it sees heavy traffic as hikers, bikers, fishermen, rafters, kayakers, campers and motorized recreationalists escape to the mountains on summer weekends. Established campgrounds along this major highway fill quickly and reservations are almost always necessary. Fortunately, as you head farther north and west, traffic dissipates quickly. Here you'll find solitude and lots of free dispersed camping. Plan your trip carefully, however, as gas stations are few and many miles apart.

Thirteen new routes have been added to Area 1, including a little-known back way into the *North Sand Hills* Recreation Area. The payoff of this route is the last few miles, where a rough, steep road descends rapidly through the forest and opens to incredible views above the dunes. Two new routes, *Bald Mountain* and *Sevenmile Creek*, connect *Kelly Flats* to *Green Ridge Road*, forming one of the longest and most punishing hard-core trips in Colorado.



Trail #2 allows backcountry access to North Sand Hills from the Red Feather Lakes area.



Dowdy Lake is located on east side of town before start of Deadman Road (see map detail).



Lots of dispersed camping along Deadman Road.



West end of Deadman Rd. above Laramie Riv. Rd.

Historical Highlight: Red Feather Lakes: A post office was first established in 1896 at what was then called the Perry Ranch. The area was first called Westlake, but later became Red Feather Lakes. Businessmen decided to develop the area in the early 1900s. Ditches and dams were built to create many of the lakes. In 1923, an association was established to develop what has become an outstanding recreation area. About 500 people live here year round.

Overview: Deadman Road is a major county road that provides access to many OHV roads in the Red Feather Lakes area. Unlicensed vehicles cannot ride on the road, but much free camping is available, so people tow in and camp near their favorite OHV trail. The road is closed in the winter from Dec. 1 through June 14.

Rating: Easy. Wide, dusty and rocky in places, but generally traffic moves swiftly. Intermittent road damage is very common until the road dries out, usually by midsummer.

Stats: Length: 23 miles. Time: 1½ to 2 hours. High point: 10,300 ft. Best time to go: Mid July-Late Sept.

Current Conditions: Roosevelt National Forest, Canyon Lakes R.D. Call (970) 295-6700.

Getting There: From Fort Collins, take Highway 287 northwest to Livermore and turn left on paved Red Feather Lakes Road 74E. Head west about 24 miles. Just past Red Feather Lakes, turn left off pavement onto Deadman Road, marked C.R. 162 (MVUM shows as C.R. 86). You can also reach Red Feather Lakes from Highway 14 near Rustic. Head north on C.R. 69 about 3 miles. Turn left where 68C goes right to Boy Scout Camp. Go west about a mile, then follow road north another 5.5 miles to Red Feather Lakes. When you reach paved 74E, turn left for Deadman Road.

START MILEAGE LOG:

- 0.0** Zero trip odometer [Rev. Miles]
Bear left off paved Red Feather Lakes Road 74E and head west on Deadman Road, Rd. 162. [23.0]
- 01** N 40° 47.53' W 105° 36.20' [23.0]
- 2.8** Forest Service gate (closed in winter). [20.2]
- 4.2** Picnic table on left with view to east. [18.8]
- 4.7** Continue straight past Killpecker Road, F.S. 300, on left. Good staging area here. [18.3]
- 02** N 40° 48.59' W 105° 40.52' [18.3]
- 6.9** North Fork Poudre F.S. Campground on right across bridge. [16.1]
- 7.1** Continue straight. Pearl Beaver Road goes right to C.R. 80C [15.9]
- 03** N 40° 48.72' W 105° 42.87' [15.9]
- 11.3** Roaring Creek Road, Trail #11, goes left. [11.7]
- 11.4** Continue straight. Right goes to Deadman Lookout, Trail #5. [11.6]
- 12.8** F.S. 319 goes left to Bald Mountain Road and Green Ridge Trail, Trails #9 and #10. [10.2]
- 13.4** Sand Creek Road on right, Trail #4. [9.6]
- 04** N 40° 48.89' W 105° 48.15' [9.6]
- 23.0** Deadman Road ends at C.R. 80C. Left goes to Laramie River Road 103 and Back Way to North Sand Hills, Trail #2. [0.0]
- 05** N 40° 52.38' W 105° 52.63' [0.0]

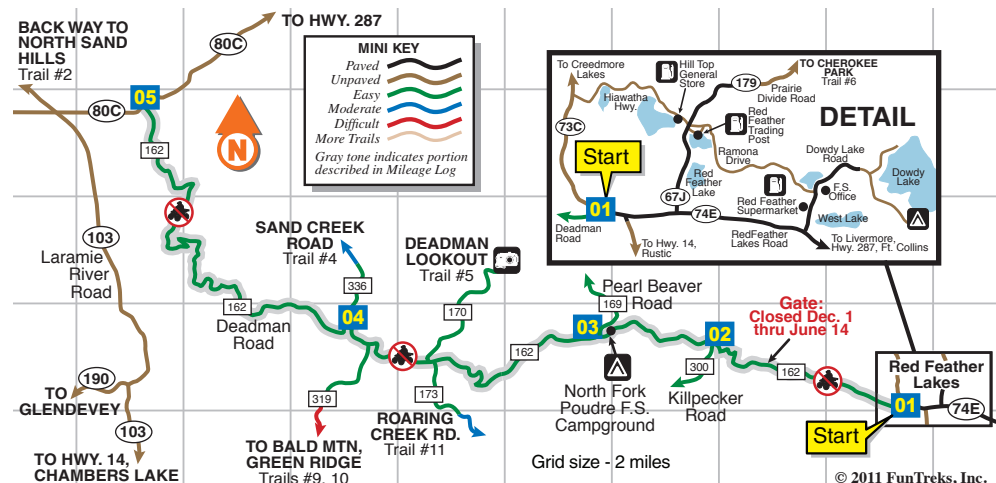
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Hill Top General Store.



Red Feather Super Market.



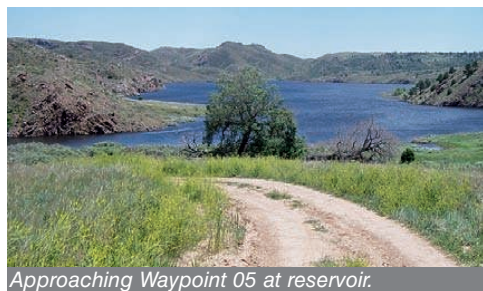
Cherokee Park, Halligan Reservoir



AREA 1 map on page 18



Gate at start of trail. Read regulations.



Approaching Waypoint 05 at reservoir.



Climb begins here on west side.



Rocky ledges between Waypoints 03 and 04.

Historical Highlight: Halligan Reservoir was built in 1911 for flood control and water retention for the city of Fort Collins. Due to heavy sedimentation problems, discussions have been underway to enlarge the dam to increase the size of the reservoir.

Overview: This is a fun little trip on a warm day with the top down. We found lots of wildflowers in mid July. Great views, especially at Waypoint 04 above the reservoir. Small challenges; not overwhelmingly difficult. Make sure you have a fishing license if you decide to fish. Closed to vehicles from September 1 to May 1. Call about regulations during hunting season.

Rating: Moderate. Rocky and steep at the top, but most high-clearance SUVs should be able to do it. Easy drive to reservoir.

Stats: Length: 13.8 miles if you drive everything described here. Time: About

2 hours. High point: 7,340 ft. Best time to go: June-late August.

Current Conditions: Colorado Division of Wildlife, Fort Collins office. Call (970) 472-4300.

Getting There: From Fort Collins: take Hwy. 287 northwest. Continue past Livermore about 3 miles and turn left on Cherokee Park Road 80C. Follow this wide dirt road 10.6 miles west to small parking area on right. Read and follow posted regulations. **From Red Feather Lakes:** Take Prairie Divide Road north. It is first marked 67J, then changes to 179. Turn right at 80C and go 3.6 miles to trail on left.

START MILEAGE LOG:

0.0 Zero trip odometer [Rev. Miles]

WEST SIDE:

After parking area, pass through gate and turn left. Go past toilet and follow road uphill. [2.8]

2.1 01 N 40° 52.75' W 105° 24.16' Climb steep, rocky section. [0.7]

2.6 Bear right. [0.2]

2.8 Stop here. Left ends where it is hard to turn around. Right ends at gauging station. Return to start. [0.0]

02 N 40° 53.89' W 105° 24.92'

Zero trip odometer

EAST SIDE:

From Waypoint 01, head east on 2-track road. [4.1]

2.3 Bear left uphill. Rocky climb begins. [1.8]

03 N 40° 53.22' W 105° 22.57'

2.8 Stay right just before trail ends at rock outcrop with view of reservoir. Head back downhill. [1.3]

04 N 40° 53.53' W 105° 22.26'

3.3 Stay left towards reservoir. [0.8]

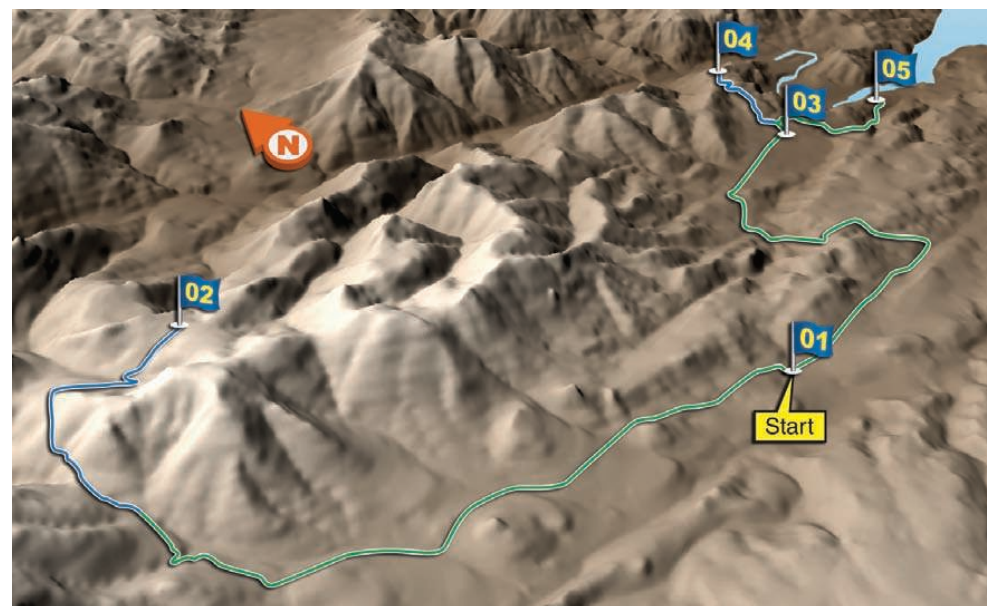
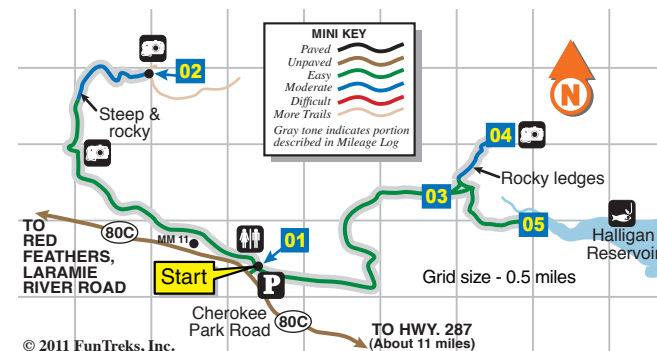
4.1 Road ends at small parking area to fish. Return to start. [0.0]

05 N 40° 53.08' W 105° 21.98'

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Left at Waypoint 02 quickly deadends at tight spot to turn around.





Start of trail across from parking lot.



Novice driver gets a few pointers on first climb.



Climbing to Waypoint 02.



Climb to Crystal Mountain is steep and rocky.

Overview: The trail begins and ends with fun rocky climbs. Abundant dispersed camping at various points along the route. The road to Crystal Mountain crosses a patchwork of private land. Stay on the route shown at all times to avoid landowner conflicts. Gates open June 15 and close Nov. 30 under normal conditions. Call ahead.

Rating: Difficult. Steep, rocky sections are easier with lockers, but most high-clearance, short-wheel-based 4x4s can manage the trail if the driver has some offroad experience.

Stats: Length: 9 miles to top of Crystal Mountain. Time: Allow 4-6 hours for

complete loop back to start. High point: 9,800 ft. Best time: July-September.

Current Conditions: Roosevelt N.F., Canyon Lakes R.D. (970) 295-6700.

Getting There: From Loveland: Take Hwy. 34 west and turn right on Hwy. 27 following signs to Masonville. Turn left at T in Masonville and continue another 10.7 miles to Buckhorn Road 44H on left. Go west 1.5 miles to F.S. 513 on left across from parking area. **From Fort Collins:** Follow directions for Old Flowers Road, Trail #15. Take Stove Prairie Rd. south 4 miles to 44H on right. **From Pingree Park Road:** See mileage chart on Page 57.

START MILEAGE LOG:

0.0 Zero trip odometer [Rev. Miles]

MOODY HILL:

Head uphill on steep, rocky F.S. 513. [5.1]

01 N 40° 34.26' W 105° 20.88'

0.1 Stay left. [5.0]

0.5 Steepest, rockiest section of trail. [4.6]

1.1 Stay left. 513A goes right to camp spot. [4.0]

1.6 Continue straight. Left goes to camp spot with so-so view. [3.5]

2.6 Turn left at top of long hill on F.S. 132. Right dead-ends at quarry. [2.5]

02 N 40° 33.80' W 105° 22.95'

2.9 Stay left on 132 where 132B goes right. Good camping here. [2.2]

5.1 After passing two roads on right, you reach major intersection. Right exits downhill to Buckhorn Road 44H. Left passes through private land. [0.0]

03 N 40° 32.73' W 105° 27.79'

0.0 Zero trip odometer

CRYSTAL MOUNTAIN:

To continue uphill to Crystal Mountain from Waypoint 03, proceed straight ahead on OHV road 344. [3.9]

1.5 Intersect with larger road. Stay right. [2.4]

04 N 40° 32.00' W 105° 24.48'

1.8 Bear right to stay on F.S. 344. [2.1]

05 N 40° 31.71' W 105° 24.64'

2.0 Driver's choice. [1.9]

2.1 Climb obstacle then bear right. [1.8]

2.3 Stay left. Lesser road to right. [1.6]

2.9 Another tough spot. [1.0]

3.1 Stay right. [0.8]

3.4 Stay right uphill. [0.5]

3.7 Continue straight where road goes right. [0.2]

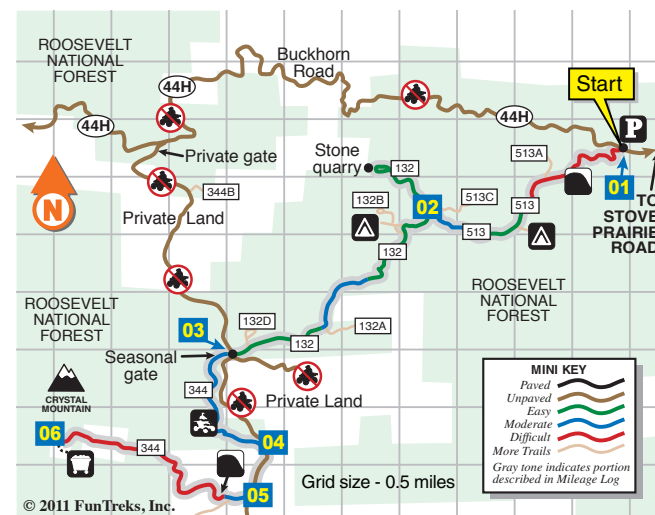
3.9 Wide spot in tight trees. Best to stop here where you can turn around. [0.0]

06 N 40° 32.18' W 105° 26.21'

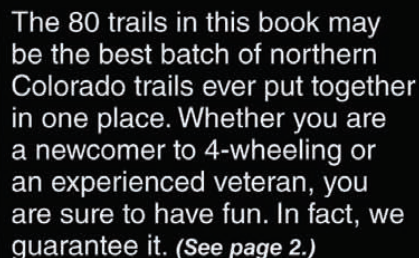
Road continues short distance left to quartz overlook. Return the way you came. Bear left at Waypoint 03 to Buckhorn Road in 2.5 miles. Gate is usually open at bottom.



This obstacle on F.S. 344 can be bypassed.

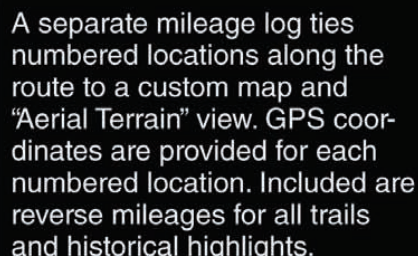


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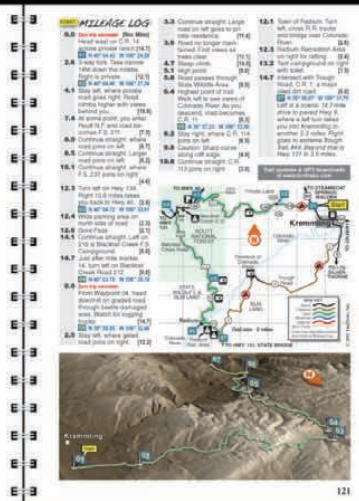


The trails are grouped into six key areas in the heart of northern Colorado's most beautiful high country. Most are convenient to Denver and the Front Range. (See pages 4-5 for complete Trail List and Trail Finder.)

A color format makes planning your next adventure simpler than ever. Easy, moderate and difficult routes are color coded, while symbols quickly show kinds of vehicles allowed on each trail. This includes unlicensed UTVs, ATVs and dirt bikes. (See pages 8-9.)



All this is supported by an active Web site, which includes free trail updates, GPS downloads and an e-mail newsletter.



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