



## **MT. ELBERT 14,433**

**USGS MAP(S):** Independence Pass, Mt. Elbert

**RECOMMENDED SEASON(S):**

Late Summer

Mt. Elbert at 14,433 ft. elevation is the highest point in Colorado. It is the second highest peak in the adjacent 48 states. Samuel H. Elbert (1833-1899) was an outstanding and widely known civic leader in the Territory and the State of Colorado. Mt. Elbert as well as Elbert County and the town of Elbert, Colorado were all named in his honor. Elbert served as Colorado's Territorial Secretary, Territorial Governor, and State Supreme Court Justice. Active in the formulation of mining legislation and reclamation projects, he prompted concepts of conservation and irrigation which were ahead of his time.

**TRAIL REVEGETATION:**

Due to heavy erosion on the North Elbert Trail, the US Forest Service reconstructed a three-mile section of this heavily used trail in 1992. Restoration of the old route is estimated to take 50-100 years, due to the fragility of the alpine vegetation. Please keep this in mind and help us and these alpine landscapes by staying on the established routes.

**CLIMBING THE PEAK:**

Technical ability or special mountain climbing experience is not required to climb Mt. Elbert. Good physical condition is necessary, the ascent and return require a full day of strenuous hiking. Altitude can affect even the healthiest people. Be aware of the signs of altitude sickness- headaches, dizziness or nausea. If you feel any of these symptoms get to a lower elevation immediately! Always bring plenty of water and food for quick energy.

**TRAILHEADS:**

**South (Main) Elbert Trail-** (5.5 miles) From Leadville travel south on US Hwy 24 15 miles to the junction of State Hwy. 82. Travel west approximately 3.75 miles to Co. Rd 24 (look for Lakeview Campground signs), turn right. Go north on this road about 1.5 miles to the Shore Pretty Overlook where you may park. The South Elbert Trail follows the Colorado Trail on FS Road 125.1B for the first 1.8 miles. This section of the route may be traveled in a 4WD. Soon after the road, the Elbert trail takes a sharp left turn off the Colorado Trail and climbs steeply to the west.

**Black Cloud Trail-** (5.5 miles) From Leadville travel south on US Hwy 24 to the junction of Hwy 82. Travel west towards Independence Pass approximately 10 miles to a turn off marked with the Black Cloud sign. The trail climbs north up Black Cloud Creek. This trail is generally considered to be the most challenging ascent route.

**North Elbert Trail-** (5 miles) From Leadville travel south on US Hwy 24. Turn west just past Malta curve following signs for the Fish Hatchery and Halfmoon Campground. Beyond the railroad track, turn left at the Halfmoon Campground road sign. Follow this road to just beyond the Elbert Creek Campground to the Mt. Elbert Trailhead on the south side of the road.

**SAFETY:** Snow, thunder and rain storms are common. Daytime temperatures range from 40-75 degrees at the trailhead in the summer months. Be prepared for changing weather. Carry rain gear and extra layers of warm clothing.



Lightning storms build rapidly and occur almost daily throughout the summer. It is best to turn around at the earliest sign of thunder and lightning. When bad weather sets in, landmarks can be obscured by clouds.

Know the symptoms of altitude sickness. Severe headaches, dizziness and nausea are warning signs that indicate a person should descend to lower elevations immediately.

Be aware of exposure to intense sunlight. Wear sunscreen and a hat.

It is your responsibility to know the hazards involved in your activities and to use the proper safety procedures and equipment to minimize inherent risks and hazards related to your activity. As a user of National Forest System Lands, you have significant responsibility for your personal safety during any activity you may pursue.

**PERMITS:**

Groups of 10 or more must obtain a permit from the Leadville Ranger District Office in advance of their trip.

**CAMPING:**

Nearby campgrounds are Lakeview, Whitestar, Parry Peak, Twin Peaks, Halfmoon and Elbert Creek. There are a few dispersed backpacking sites along the trail route. Please use one of the already existing sites- practice minimum impact techniques!

**HUMAN WASTE DISPOSAL:**

Proper disposal of your human waste will be appreciated by future visitors. Below treeline, dig a hole 3-6 inches in the soil and cover when done. Above treeline in the alpine tundra, cover waste with a rock. Never leave your toilet paper. Please pack it out!

**The peaks in the Pike/San Isabel do not have designated routes to the top. The Forest Service is currently studying the present, user-created trails to determine the feasibility and desirability of designated routes. For further information, please contact the Leadville Ranger District at (719) 486-0749.**