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United States Department of Agriculture



AMERICAN LAKE TRAIL #1985

Length: 3.20 miles one-way (5.15 km)

Difficulty: Difficult

Trail Use: Low

Beginning Elevation: 9,400 feet (2865 m)

Ending Elevation: 11,365 feet (3464 m)

USGS Map(s): Hayden Peak

ACCESS: Drive 1/2 mile west of Aspen on Highway 82 to the Roundabout. Go around the Roundabout and turn right on Castle Creek Road. Drive 10 miles to the Elk Mountain Lodge and turn right into the American Lake parking lot. The trail begins here.

ATTRACTIONS: A moderately difficult day trip to a high mountain lake through groves of aspen, pine forests and open meadows offering limited views of surrounding peaks. Fishing is considered fair.

NARRATIVE: The trail rises steeply, switchbacking through the aspen for about 1-1/2 miles before reaching a spruce forest. From this point to the lake the trail levels with periodic ascents of an easy to moderate grade. This trail should only be travelled approximately 2 miles. The avalanche danger increases as you get closer to the lake. Beware of travel across the meadows.

ETHICS/REGULATIONS: American Lake is within the Maroon Bell-Snowmass Wilderness, please educate yourself about Wilderness Ethics and the following rules:

- * **Respect private property.** Ask permission before entering.
- * **Be considerate** of other winter back-country travelers. Remember we're all out to enjoy the outdoors.
- * **Avoid disturbing wild animals** by staying out of elk and deer wintering areas. Detour if you spot wildlife.
- * **Wilderness Areas and Primitive areas are closed to motorized recreational vehicles.** Inquire at a local Forest Service office if in doubt. Obey all signs.
- * **BEWARE OF AVALANCHES!** Avalanches may occur at any time during the winter. Avoid mountainous terrain after heavy snowfalls or prolonged periods of high wind. Stay on the windblown side of ridges. Avoid crossing steep hillsides and entering narrow, steep canyons.
- * Remember to notify a responsible person of your travel plans.

PACK IT IN—PACK IT OUT!! LEAVE NO TRACE!!

This map is intended for use as a general guide only, not for actual land navigation. The White River National Forest suggests purchasing a topographical trail map prior to your cross-country/snowshoe trip.