

Aspen Ranger District
806 W. Hallam
Aspen, CO 81611
(970) 925-3445—Voice
(970) 925-5277—Fax



United States Department of Agriculture



RICHMOND HILL #123

Length: 11 1/2 miles one-way (18.5 km)

Difficulty: Moderate

Trail Use: Moderate

Beginning Elevation: 11,212 feet (2965 m)

Ending Elevation: 11,928 feet (3636 m)

USGS Map(s): Aspen, Hayden Peak

ATTRACTIONS/CONSIDERATIONS: Richmond Hill extends from the top of Aspen Mountain to the south, forming the eastern ridge of the Castle Creek Valley. From this vantage point skiers have a great view of Hayden Peak, the Maroon Bells, Pyramid Peak, Independence Pass and many of the surrounding mountains in the Aspen area. Most skiers ski Richmond Hill as a day tour, riding the Silver Queen Gondola up Aspen Mountain to get to the start of the tour. This route is also used by backcountry skiers to get to some of the huts in the Braun Hut System. Since the whole route is above 11,000 feet, cold and windy weather can make this trip miserable, and the visibility can also be quite bad at times. In good weather, however, Richmond Hill gives the best overall views of the mountains of any cross-country ski trails in this part of the state. The snow also holds up well here because of the high elevation. The trails are packed by snowcats and snowmobiles. You have your choice of skiing the packed trails or going off into the untracked snow alongside.

ACCESS: Richmond Hill is reached by taking the Silver Queen Gondola (for a fee) to the top of Aspen Mountain and then going off the back (south) side of the mountain and following the tracks made by snowcats and snowmobiles. It can also be reached by driving 1/2 mile west of Aspen on Hwy. 82 to the Roundabout. Go around the Roundabout and turn right onto Castle Creek Road. Drive approximately 3 1/2 miles to Road #118 (Midnight Mine Road). Turn left and park where winter maintenance ends.

NARRATIVE: The route follows the ridge so it's hard to get lost. The route starts with a gradual uphill. Some of the route is in the open with scattered trees while other parts go through the trees. To the right you will be looking across the Castle Creek and Maroon Creek valleys. Farther off to the west Mt. Sopris dominates the skyline. To the south you will be looking toward Crested Butte, and to the left up the Roaring Fork Valley toward Independence Pass, the Sawatch Range, and the Collegiate Peaks. Behind you to the north is Aspen, the Williams Range, the Hunter Creek Valley and Red and Smuggler Mountains. This is all fantastic scenery.

ETHICS/REGULATIONS: Before you go out check into available routes, their condition, ownership of land, posted area, regulations that apply and the following rules:

- * **Respect private property.** Ask permission before entering.
- * **Avoid disturbing wild animals** by staying out of elk and deer wintering areas. Detour if you spot wildlife.
- * **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.