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United States Department of Agriculture



HIKING

CRESTED BUTTE **EAST MAROON TRAIL OVER EAST MAROON PASS TO GOTHIC**

Length: 14 miles one-way (22.5 km)

Difficulty: Difficult

Trail Use: Heavy

Beginning Elevation: 8,709 feet (2655 m)

Highest Elevation: 11,800 feet (3596 m)

USGS Map(s): Highland Peak, Maroon Bells, Gothic

PERMIT INFORMATION: In order to provide quality recreation experiences and to protect the wilderness lands the Forest Service must gather data regarding visitor use and travel patterns. Each **party overnighiting** in the Maroon Bells-Snowmass Wilderness is **required to self-register at the Trailhead and to carry a copy of the registration with them** during their visit. There is no fee charged and no limit to the number of permits issued.

DAY/BACKPACKING OVERVIEW: This hiking trail to Crested Butte is 5 miles longer than the shortest trail to Crested Butte, but it is most direct and the easiest to hike. It provides outstanding views of Pyramid Peak, scenic wooded walks, fields of wildflowers, several challenging river crossings and access to Copper Lake. For those choosing an overnight stay the camp sites in the vicinity of Copper Lake are ideal. The trail ends two miles past the small town of Gothic, seven miles from Crested Butte. Gothic provides lodging and specialized facilities for groups involved in agricultural and environmental experiments. The road through the town is closed to hikers. Transportation into Crested Butte should be arranged in advance. **Plan on starting this hike in the early morning as thunderstorms are common on the pass in the early afternoon. This trail is heavily used by those going to Crested Butte on horseback.**

ACCESS: Drive 1/2 mile west of Aspen on Highway 82 to the Roundabout. Go around the Roundabout and turn right onto Maroon Creek Road. Drive 6.4 miles on Maroon Creek Road to the East Maroon Wilderness Portal and turn left into the parking lot. The trailhead begins here. Access to this lot after 7:00 AM (during the summer months) requires a stop at the Forest Service Entrance Station on Maroon Creek Road where they will issue you an overnight pass. If the lot is full you may proceed up the road to the West Maroon parking lot. Cross the road to the trailhead and hike downhill to join the East Maroon Trail.

NARRATIVE: Use the trail guide for East Maroon Trail to East Maroon Pass until you reach the pass. As the trail descends from the pass Copper Lake appears below. For backpackers the area around the lake is an ideal place to camp. As the trail approaches the lake it divides, to the right a side trail goes to Copper Lake, to the left, the trail ascends to Triangle Pass. The main trail to Gothic continues straight ahead following an old jeep road. From this point the main trail descends sharply. Several false trails appear on either side. Continue to follow the road straight ahead. After the trail begins to level there are several stream crossings. Look for support from walking sticks left by hikers on either side of the crossing. If you use a stick please leave it for the next hiker. After the crossings the trail enters a wide valley. Soon you will hear the sound of roaring water in the distance. This is the road to Judd Falls, located in a deep canyon off to the left and well worth a stop. A trail register at the falls indicates that Copper Lake is 4 miles behind you.

The road is gated and the trail bears to the right meandering for 1/2 of a mile through an aspen grove to the upper parking lot of the trailhead. Another parking lot closer to Gothic is 1/2 of a mile to the left on the dirt road. If you are hitchhiking into Crested Butte, it is wise to begin asking for a ride from passersby as soon as you reach Judd Falls.

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

- * **DOGS MUST BE LEASHED** out of consideration for both other people and wildlife.
- * Limit group sizes to 10 people and 15 stock/pack animals.
- * **SANITATION** - bury human waste 100 feet from water and 6 inches in the soil.
- * Lightweight campstoves are recommended and required above the timberline.

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

WILDERNESS AREAS are in a delicate state of natural balance, they are not renewable resources. Any careless act by man can upset this natural balance and result in the destruction of the beauty found in the wilderness. By following the above ethics and regulations you can help protect and preserve the natural features of the wilderness for future visits. **Please, respect the land and right of others!**