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United States Department of Agriculture



HIKING

MAROON-SNOWMASS TRAIL #1975 to Snowmass Lake

Length: To Maroon Lake- 17 miles one-way
(27.36 km); to Snowmass Lake— 8.3 miles (13.4 km)

Difficulty: Difficult

Trail Use: Heavy

Highest Elevation: 12,500 feet (3810 m)

Beginning Elevation: 8,400 feet (2560 m)

Ending Elevation: 9,580 feet (2920 m)

USGS Map(s): Maroon Bells, Snowmass Mtn, Capitol Peak

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 trail is one of the most heavily used trails in the Aspen area. Hikers, backpackers and horse travelers enjoy the wildflowers, views and access to other areas within the Wilderness. Camping at Crater Lake (designated sites only) and Snowmass Lake can get very crowded. Expect a large numbers of campers at Snowmass Lake, especially on the weekends.

ACCESS: Drive 6 miles west of Aspen on Highway 82 and turn left onto Brush Creek Road. Continue on Brush Creek Road 5.5 miles and turn right onto Divide Road. Divide Road turns into a gravel road and passes the Krabloonik Restaurant and Kennels. The road descends steeply to the valley bottom where it forks. Take the left fork. The Maroon-Snowmass Trailhead is at the end of the road. A high clearance vehicle is recommended.

NARRATIVE: From the parking area the trail climbs into the aspen trees behind the information board. The trail climbs on the east side of Snowmass Creek for about 6 miles. It continues above and to the left of a large beaver pond and soon crosses Snowmass Creek at a second beaver pond. Sandals are recommended for this stream crossing. You will most likely get wet. The trail then continues south climbing several switchbacks before entering the forest. As the trail levels you will come to a wooden sign post. Continue straight ahead to get to Snowmass Lake. Take the left fork to remain on the Maroon-Snowmass Trail or to find the large group and campfire sites. Continue on the Maroon-Snowmass trail to another signed junction. Stay left (going right will put you on the Geneva Lake trail and will also return you to Snowmass Lake). The trail descends through forest and crosses Snowmass Creek. The trail ascends into the valley and begins a steep climb to Buckskin Pass. From the top of Buckskin Pass the trail drops steeply into a vast alpine meadow (please, no camping in the meadows). The trail continues through the meadow to a sign for the Maroon-Snowmass/Willow Lake junction. Take the right fork to continue on the Maroon-Snowmass Trail. The trail descends steeply through Minnehaha Gulch which provides excellent camping (remember, your site must be 100 feet from the trail or stream) then continues its steep descent to the junction at Crater Lake. You can camp in designated sites at Crater Lake or continue to the left towards Maroon Lake. From Maroon Lake you can catch the bus back to Aspen before 5:00 PM. between mid June- September. Otherwise you will have to make other arrangements to get back into Aspen.

ETHICS/REGULATIONS: The Maroon-Snowmass Trail is within the Maroon Bells-Snowmass Wilderness. Please, educate yourself on these rules and other Wilderness Ethics:

- * **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!!

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 hiking trip.