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United States Department of Agriculture



HIKING

MAROON LAKE TO WILLOW LAKE #1978

Length: 6.5 miles one-way(10.5 km one-way)

Difficulty: Difficult

Trail Use: Heavy

Beginning Elevation: 9,580 feet (2920 m)

Ending Elevation: 11,795 feet (3595 m)

Highest Elevation: Willow Pass 12,600 feet (3840 m) **USGS Map(s):** Maroon Bells

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.

ACCESS: From mid-June through September Maroon Creek Road beyond the T-Lazy Seven Ranch is closed from 8:30 am to 5:00 PM. You will need to take a shuttle from Aspen Highlands Ski Area. Ask Forest Service visitor information personnel for bus schedule info and September road closure hours. If you get an early start drive 1/2 of a mile west of Aspen on Highway 82 to the Roundabout. Go around the Roundabout and turn right on Maroon Creek Road. Drive 9-1/2 miles to the Day Use parking lot at Maroon Lake. Backpackers may use the road at any time. Stop at the Forest Service Entrance Station to pick up a pass for overnight use in the Overnight parking lot at the lake. If the lot is full you can park 1/4 mile down the road at the West Maroon parking lot.

NARRATIVE: The trail starts at the Maroon Lake and follows lakeside until it reaches the Forest Service bulletin board near the end of the lake. Stay on the Maroon-Snowmass Trail which climbs on rocky paths through the aspens to a rock "garden" before it descends to Crater Lake (1.8 miles). At the Crater Lake bulletin board the trail forks to the right and climbs steeply through aspen and spruce forest for 1 mile to Minnehaha Gulch. A stream divides the nearly 1 mile long gulch in half with campsites available before and after the stream crossing. The trail continues its steep ascent exiting the gulch into an alpine meadow with Buckskin Pass looming ahead. Camping is prohibited in the meadow. A trail sign for the Maroon-Snowmass/Willow Lake Junction appears in another 1/2 mile. Take the right fork. Follow the trail which traverses the hillside then switchbacks steeply into a basin where Willow Pass looms ahead. Another series of steep switchbacks leads to the top of the pass and provides a view of Willow Lake off to the right. As a day hike this is a good turn around point. Willow Lake is about 1-1/2 miles farther.

ETHICS/REGULATIONS: Willow Lake 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!!

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.