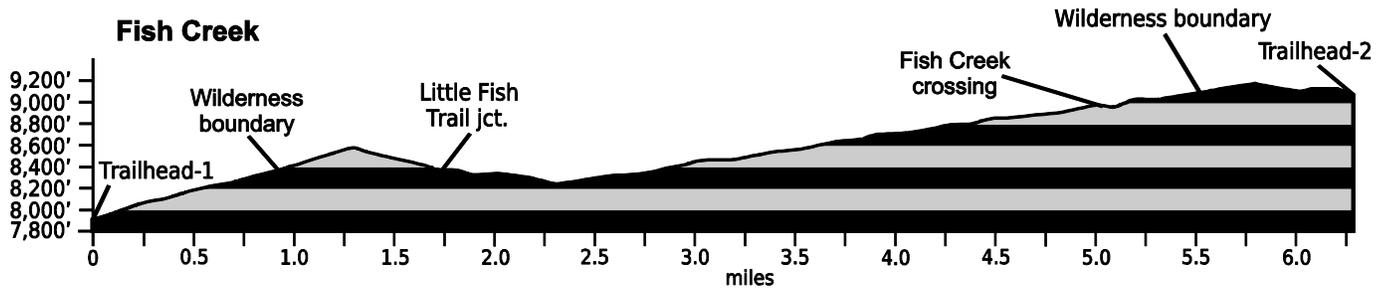


Feb. 28, 2022

Public Trail Information: Fish Creek

Trail(s): Fish Creek #993 (#1009)	
Ratings / restrictions:	Hikers – Moderate Stock riders – Easy Dogs must be on a hand-held leash with hikers See complete REGULATIONS below DESCRIPTION
Cautions:	Burn area
Typically accessible:	Year-round (see SEASONAL below)
Wilderness:	Comanche Peak
One-Way Length:	6.3 miles
Beginning / Peak Elevations:	7,903 / 9,190
Gain/Loss/Net Gain:	1,633/450/+1,183
Map(s) - Trails Illustrated:	#112 Poudre River Cameron Pass
Map(s) - USGS 7-1/2' Quadrangles:	Pingree Park



TRAILHEAD LOCATION:

Pingree Park Area: Drive 26.5 miles on CO-14 from Ted’s Place) to the Pingree Park road – CR-63E (at mm 96.1), cross the Cache La Poudre River, and drive up this gravel road.

There are three different ways to access this trail:

Via the NE (lower) Fish Creek Trailhead (Trailhead-1) located along the Pingree Park Road: Drive 8.0 miles up the Pingree Park Road. The Fish Creek trailhead is on the right just before you cross a bridge over the South Fork of the Poudre. Facilities are available at Jacks Gulch Campground.

Water (South Fork Poudre River) is available at this trailhead. Limited stock trailer parking is available at this trailhead or nearby, along Monument Gulch Road.

Via the SW (upper) Fish Creek Trailhead (Trailhead-2) at Sky Ranch near the Tom Bennett Campground: Drive 15.9 miles up the Pingree Park Road to the Tom Bennett Campground turnoff on the right side. Cross over the South Fork of the Cache La Poudre River and continue on to Sky Ranch. The trailhead is located at the entrance to Sky Ranch. Facilities are available at Tom Bennett Campground. Stock trailer parking is available at this trailhead but water is not. Note that Trailhead-2 is not accessible in the winter (see SEASONAL below).

Via the Little Beaver Creek Trailhead above Jacks Gulch Campground: See the Little Beaver Creek trail description for details.

CAUTIONS: This trail was in the Cameron Peak Fire of 2020, the largest fire in Colorado history, which burned nearly 209,000 acres. This trail was severely burned, much of the trail is black, there is risk of falling trees, and it may be very difficult to follow the trail in some sections.

Cautions in Burn Areas:

- Falling Trees
 - Tree root systems can be burned – compromised or non-existent. Thus, trees in burned areas fall at a high rate for some time after a fire.
 - There may be a large number of trees on the trail.
- Stump Holes -- Tree stumps sometimes burn below ground level and can leave dangerous holes, often filled in loosely by ash or needles.
- Difficult to Follow Trails
 - At times the trail can be difficult or impossible to follow with no vegetation or tread visible.
 - Even in formerly familiar terrain, the landscape can be disorienting.
- Rock Slides are more likely, due to lack of vegetation and root damage.
- Flash Flooding is likely even with small rainstorms and may occur way downstream from rain.

WATER: Available - Water is easy to access along the middle portion of this trail because the trail closely

follows the creek [note that the first two miles above the lower trailhead (trailhead-1) on the Pingree Park Road and the upper 1.4 miles below the upper TH (trailhead-2) at Sky Ranch, are dry].

CAMPING: There are three good potential campsites spread out in the large meadow about 2.7 miles above trailhead-1, above and on the north side of the trail - at GPS locations:

N40°36.24' W105°33.32';

N40°36.23' W105°33.39'; and

N40°36.22' W105°33.46' (just uphill of a large, split-trunked ponderosa).

Camping just uphill of the ponderosa pine trees at these sites will screen tents from hikers and riders passing along on the trail below. See REGULATIONS below.

SEASONAL: Trailhead-1 (NE [lower] Fish Creek Trailhead) is usually accessible in winter. Park off the road, just north of the bridge over the South Fork of the Poudre River at trailhead-1. Be sure you can get out if the snowplow comes by. Snowshoes or skis are usually needed.

Trailhead-2 (SW [upper] Fish Creek Trailhead) is not accessible in the winter. The road (FR 145) to the trailhead is closed and gated in winter. Park near, but not in front of, the gate. Be sure you can get out if the snowplow comes by.

Note that during high stream flows, the stringer bridge crossing of Fish Creek (at 5.5 miles above trailhead-1) may be challenging.

DESCRIPTION: This trail passes through forest and some large, open meadows but the trail is very difficult

to follow in places, after the Cameron Peak Fire burned most of the area, especially on the eastern end. From the NE trailhead-1 to the Sky Ranch trailhead-2: The first 0.8 mile of this trail goes through multi-use National Forest. From trailhead-1 the trail climbs via switchbacks up a steep forested ridge and then enters an open forest area. There are great views of the Mummy Range from this spot. The trail continues its climb up a ridge for another mile or so, entering the Comanche Peak Wilderness along the way. The trail reaches a high point along this section, about 1.3 miles from the lower trailhead-1. At about 1.7 miles the trail reaches a signed trail junction on the west (right). This is the southern end of the Little Fish Trail, which connects the Fish Creek and the Little Beaver Creek trails.

From here the Fish Creek Trail turns to the south, dropping down through another meadow and a small aspen grove, then climbing up the side of a ridge before dropping down into another valley and heading west up the Fish Creek drainage. From here the trail climbs gradually along the banks of Fish Creek for approximately 2.5 miles. At about 5.5 miles from trailhead-1, the trail turns to the south, crosses Fish Creek, and climbs uphill through lodgepole pine, eventually reaching the upper Wilderness boundary along a ridge (about 0.8 mile from the upper Fish Creek trailhead-2). The Wilderness boundary is signed – look for a birdhouse sign placard on the south (left) side of the trail. From here the trail continues on through National Forest, dropping gradually downhill to the upper Fish Creek trailhead (trailhead-2) at Sky Ranch.

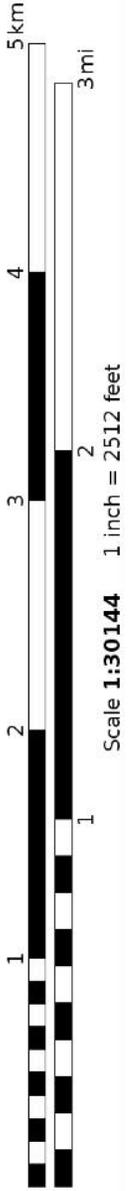
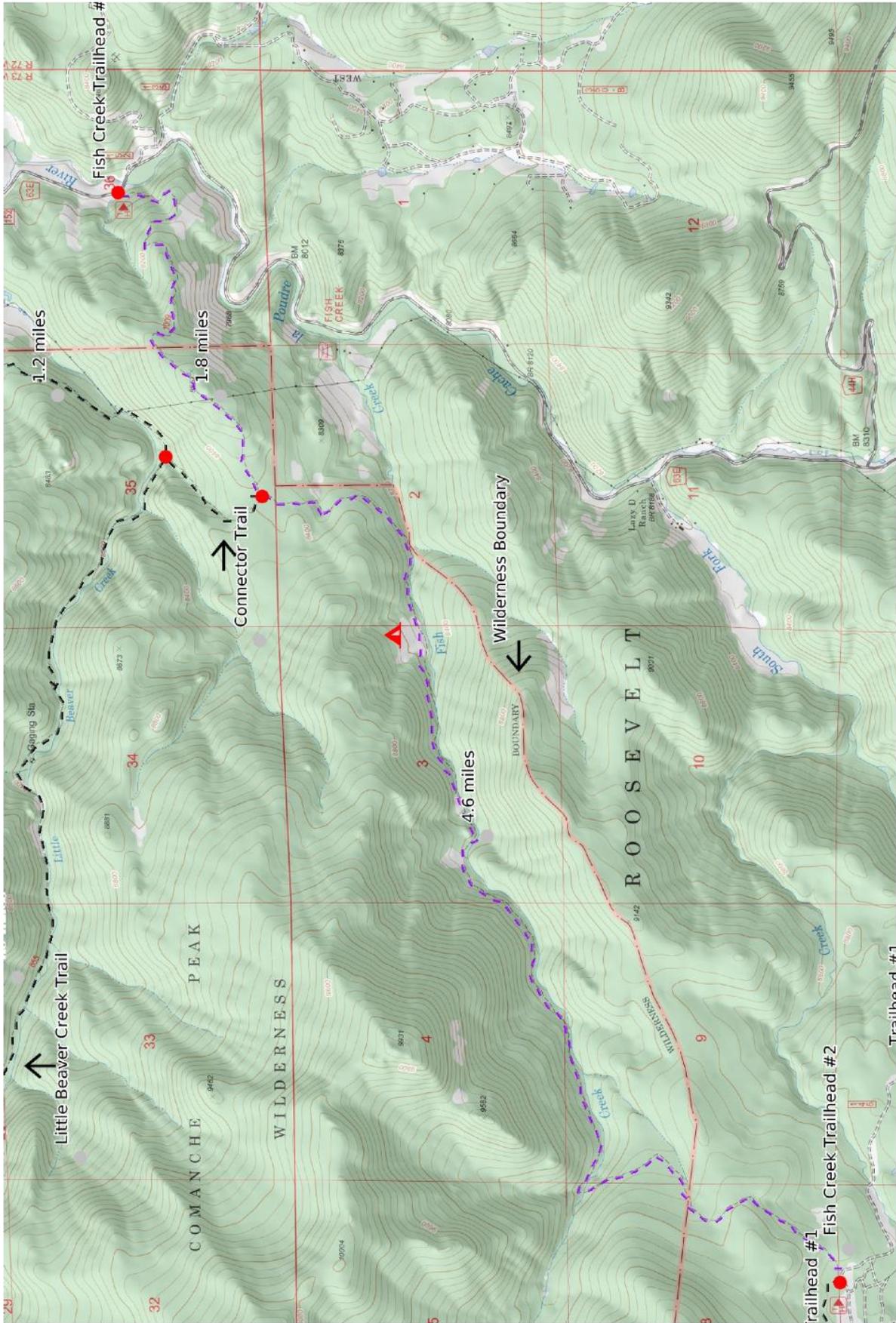
REGULATIONS:

- Camping and Fires - Prohibited within ¼ mile of trailhead #1 and within 200 feet of trailhead #2. Outside the Wilderness boundary: recommend at least 100 feet from water and trail. In the Wilderness: prohibited within 200 feet of water or trail.
- Dogs - Must be on hand-held leash with hikers; voice control with stock.
- Stock - To avoid spreading noxious weeds, recommend beginning 72 hours prior to the ride, stock should be fed only pellets or certified weed-free hay. Required: throughout the trip, stock *must* be fed only pellets or certified weed-free hay.
- Bicycles and Other Wheeled Conveyances - Prohibited.
- Motorized Transport - Prohibited.
- Motorized Equipment - Prohibited in Wilderness.
- Group Size - Outside the Wilderness boundary, a single group of more than 74 people must have a USFS permit. In the Wilderness, maximum 12 people and stock, combined.

Trail Adopted by: Backcountry Horsemen of America

Mileage	GPS Coordinates: datum = WGS84	Lat/Long	UTM	
0.0	trailhead-1 (on Pingree Park Road; CR-63E at SF Cache La Poudre River)	N40°37.11' W105°31.56'	455 ⁵⁰⁸ mE	4496 ⁵⁴¹ mN
1.0	lower Wilderness boundary	N40°36.99' W105°32.19'	454 ⁶²⁰ mE	4496 ³²⁰ mN
1.7	junction with Little Fish Trail	N40°36.66' W105°32.79'	453 ⁷⁶⁹ mE	4495 ⁷¹⁹ mN
5.5	upper Wilderness boundary	N40°35.32' W105°35.69'	449 ⁶⁹⁰ mE	4493 ²⁷⁰ mN
6.3	trailhead-2 (FDR-145 below Sky Ranch)	N40°34.85' W105°36.02'	449 ¹⁹⁰ mE	4492 ⁴⁰⁰ mN

(See next page for map of trail.)



Mercator Projection
 WGS84
 USNG Zone 13TDE
 CalTopo

Fish Creek: 4