



Wheeler Geologic

Colorado State Natural Area

What to Expect

Wheeler Geologic Natural Area is a mass of pinnacles and domes, some more than several hundred feet high. Erosive forces have sculpted these forms in white, beige and lavender layers of lava and ash. This mass of volcanic rock was deposited approximately 28 million years ago during the Oligocene, and has been identified as a significant geological site in Colorado. This site rests within the San Juan Mountains, the largest volcanic area within the state. The geologic features occur within virgin forests of Engelmann spruce and subalpine fir.



Volcanic ash pinnacles



Fireweed in bloom

About the Natural Area

Location: Mineral County, 8 miles east of Creede

Landowner: US Forest Service-Rio Grande National Forest

Size: 669 acres

Address: Creede, CO 81130. [Google maps link to Hanson's Mill Campground.](#)

Know Before You Go

This site is normally accessed starting from the Hanson's Mill Campground. From here, visitors can backpack the ~9 mile East Bellows Trail #790 or drive an extremely rough, 14-mile 4WD road (Pool Table Road 600). Restrooms, facilities, and overnight camping exist at the Hanson's Mill Campground. Camping and campfires are not allowed inside the formation area. Please plan ahead and be aware of changing weather and road conditions. Pack out all trash to help preserve the primitive nature of the site. For more information, visit the [USFS's page on the Wheeler Geologic Area](#) or contact the [USFS Divide Ranger District](#) in Creede to inquire about 4WD road conditions.



East Bellows Creek

For more information about the Colorado Natural Areas Program (CNAP) visit [CNAP's website.](#)