GENERAL INFORMATION

Within the boundaries of the Colorado State Forest lie 71,000 acres of the great outdoors as it was meant to be. Eye-filling mountain beauty greets the visitor and provides a setting unequalled for hiking and mountain biking opportunities. There are over 90 miles of hiking trails and 130 miles of mountain biking trails.

The State Forest is high country, ranging in elevation from 8,500 to 13,000 feet, so visitors may find they need time to acclimate. Sunburn is possible in the high, thin cool air and in the summer mosquito repellent is a necessity.

The park stretches along the west side of the Medicine Bow Mountains and into the north end of the Never Summer Range. From Ft. Collins, visitors can take Highway 14 over Cameron Pass, a 75 mile drive. From Denver, the route leads over Berthoud and Willow Creek passes to Walden, a 150 mile trip.

The State Forest’s recreational uses are administered by Colorado State Parks, which has leased the area for public recreation from the Colorado Board of Land Commissioners since 1972.

Not included in this guide are our 3 nature trails (Beaver Lodge, Ranger Lakes, and Mountain View). These short enjoyable, educational hikes are wonderful for families or those who are short on time and want to experience the park. Another short hike is a trail that goes around Ranger Lakes. For more information on these trails please pick up the respective brochure for them. Mountain bike trails not included in this guide are the Gould Mountain Loop and the Diamond Peaks Trail. Information on these trails can be found in our OHV brochure.

SHARE THE TRAIL

State Forest State Park is a multiuse park and on many of the trails its is possible that you will encounter different types of recreational users. It is important to be courteous to other users on the trail. Here are some tips to take into consideration:

- Stay on the center of the trail to minimize impact
- Be ready to yield to others on the trail whether going up or down
- Move to uphill side of trail to let others pass
- Alert other users before passing
- Slower traffic has the right-of-way
- Do not shortcut trails
- Do not pick flowers or collect natural items
- Don’t litter

HIGH-COUNTRY CONSIDERATIONS

Lightning

When in the high-country in Colorado you must be prepared for the possibility of being stuck in an lightning storm. Every year at least a few people are injured or even killed in Colorado because of lightning. Below are some tips to help limit the chance of this occurring and what to do if you are caught in a storm:

- Check current weather conditions before heading out and be observant while hiking.
- Try to be off a summit or an exposed ridge by noon.
- If caught in a storm when you are exposed try to get to a lower elevation.
- Get rid of any metal objects that are on you and put some distance between them and you.
- Try not to be the highest object around and don’t crouch near any tall objects.
- Stay at least 15 feet apart from other group members
- Crouch or kneel to reduce exposure but don’t put your hands on the ground or lie flat on the ground

Acute Mountain Sickness

Although infrequent, this is the most common high altitude illness, occurring usually above 8,000 feet. Some people will experience it at lower altitudes. It can affect anyone regardless of age, gender, physical fitness, or previous altitude experience. Symptoms generally begin with a headache and are followed by: loss of appetite, nausea, fatigue, light-headedness, difficulty sleeping, or shortness of breath. Children may experience these symptoms plus vomiting.

Tips to avoid Acute Mountain Sickness include:

- Give your body a few days to acclimate if possible.
- Do some light activity the next day after acclimating.
- Keep hydrated with water and eat carbohydrates.
- Avoid alcohol, caffeine, sleeping pills, or pain medication.
- If you experience any symptoms descend immediately until your symptoms subside.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

State Forest State Park
56750 Highway 14
Walden, CO 80480
(970) 723-8366
Email: state.forest@state.co.us
www.parks.state.co.us

Emergency Numbers:

- First Aid is available at the Moose Visitor Center located on Highway 14 in Gould, CO.
- A medical clinic is located in Walden, CO.
- The nearest hospital are in Fort Collins, CO or Laramie, WY.

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EMERGENCY AND MEDICAL

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Emergency Numbers:

- Park Office …………………………(970) 723-8366
- Jackson County Sheriff ……………(970) 723-4242
- Emergencies…………………………911

Visit all your Colorado State Parks at www.parks.state.co.us
Hiking/Mountain Biking Trails

Michigan Ditch Trail
Length: 6.5 miles one way
Difficulty: Easy
Access: Park at the summit parking lot on Cameron Pass and cross Hwy 14 to access the trail.

Ruby Jewel Trail
Length: 3 miles one way from the lower trailhead and 1.5 miles one way from the upper trailhead.
Difficulty: Moderate
Elevation Gain: 2,100 feet from lower trailhead and 1,200 feet from upper trailhead
Access: Most people park 1.5 miles below the trailhead at the corral just past the yurt. The upper trailhead is 3 miles further up a rough 4WD road. This trail leads you up to Ruby Jewel Lake. You can also access Clark Peak from the Ruby Jewel trail. Instead of following the trail to the lake take the trail on the right side of the valley which will allow you to gain the ridge to Clark Peak. There is also a geocache located on the trail.

Pennock Trail
Length: 1.1 miles one way
Difficulty: Easy (Hiking) advanced beginner (Mountain Bike)
Elevation Gain: none
Access: Go for 4 miles on CR 41 take right for Bockman campground and trailhead is on the left across from Pennock trailhead.

Lumberjack Trail
Length: 1.27 miles one way
Difficulty: easy
Elevation Gain: none
Access: Go for 4 miles on CR 41 take right for Bockman campground and trailhead is on the left across from Pennock trailhead.

Kelly Lake Trail
Length: 6.5 miles one way
Difficulty: difficult (hiking) difficult (Mountain biking)
Elevation Gain: 2,100 feet
Access: From Hwy 14 turn right onto CR 41 for 8.75 miles to the end of CR 41. It is a great hike for backcountry or a mountain bike ride. The trail leads to a high alpine lake with spectacular views. At times the trail can be a little hazard- ous and has a few stream crossings that can be somewhat hazardous during spring runoff.

Clear Lake Trail
Length: 7 miles one way
Difficulty: Difficult (Hiking)
Elevation Gain: 2,055 feet
Access: From Hwy 14 turn right onto CR 41 for 8.75 miles to the end of CR 41. It is a great hike for backpackers. The trail leads to a high alpine lake with spectacular views. Fly and lure fishing permitted. No fires above timberline. You can also access the Canadian Trail, Kelly Lake Trail, and the N. Canadian Yurt on the way.

Hidden Valley Trail
Length: 2.5 miles one way
Difficulty: difficult
Elevation Gain: 150 feet
Access: Most people park 1.5 miles below the Ruby Jewel trailhead at the corral just past the yurt. Go past the campground, take a right, and go a 1/2 mile to the trailhead on the left. Easy hike or mountain bike ride that can be done from either Bockman road or the Grass Creek road. Trail takes you through two meadows and a stand of pines, spruce, and fir. The trail also offers the chance to see wildflowers/wildlife. There is also a geocache located on the trail.

Lake Agnes Trail
Length: 8 miles one way
Difficulty: moderate
Elevation Gain: 340 feet
Access: From Hwy 14 turn into Crags entrance and go 3/4 miles. Turn right for 1.5 miles staying right to the trailhead. Short hike into the Lake Agnes scenic area. Spectacular views of Nokhu Crags. Fly and lure fishing permitted at Lake Agnes. Historic cabin at the trailhead. No camping/fires or mountain biking permitted.