

Beaver Creek Ski Tour by Dave Cooper



Heading up the Beaver Creek Road. Mount Silverheels can be seen in the distance.-small.jpg

In a “normal” winter we expect to get out the cross-country skis sometime in early November. Not this year! It was the first weekend in December before a busy schedule and marginal snow conditions allowed us to check out some of the local conditions. Anxious to take advantage of a foot of new powder on the ground, we headed over to an old standby, the Beaver Creek Trail. Though the snow on the road had been packed down by a variety of trail users (including snowmobiles) we found sufficient snow to enjoy a pleasant outing. As the skies darken in advance of the next storm, I expect that the imminent new snow will add to this base to provide good skiing for the coming months.

Getting to the Trailhead: Drive to the town of Fairplay on Highway 9. Turn northeast on 4th. Street and drive 0.3 miles to a T-junction. Turn left at the T on Bogue Street and drive generally northwest on Bogue Street (County Road 659) for 2.5 miles to a junction signed “National Forest Access - Beaver Creek Road”. Turn right (east) on this road and drive 0.2 miles to the parking area immediately before an open gate.

Statistics: The route described here gains and loses a little over 800 feet in 6.5 miles round trip.

Difficulty: An easy to intermediate ski mostly on a roadbed, with an optional trail ski on a gentle but narrow trail.

USGS Quad: Alma, CO.

We explored two routes - the first, known as the “Short Loop”, takes off from the parking area and is accessible only to non-motorized traffic. This loop joins the Beaver Creek Road after 0.9 miles of moderate trail skiing. For a short day you can turn right when you hit the road and head back to the parking lot. For a

longer day, head left up the Beaver Creek Road towards Beaver Ridge and Mount Silverheels. Either way you decide to go, I think you'll agree that the area provides a pleasant setting in which to get the kinks out and start another season on those skinny skis.

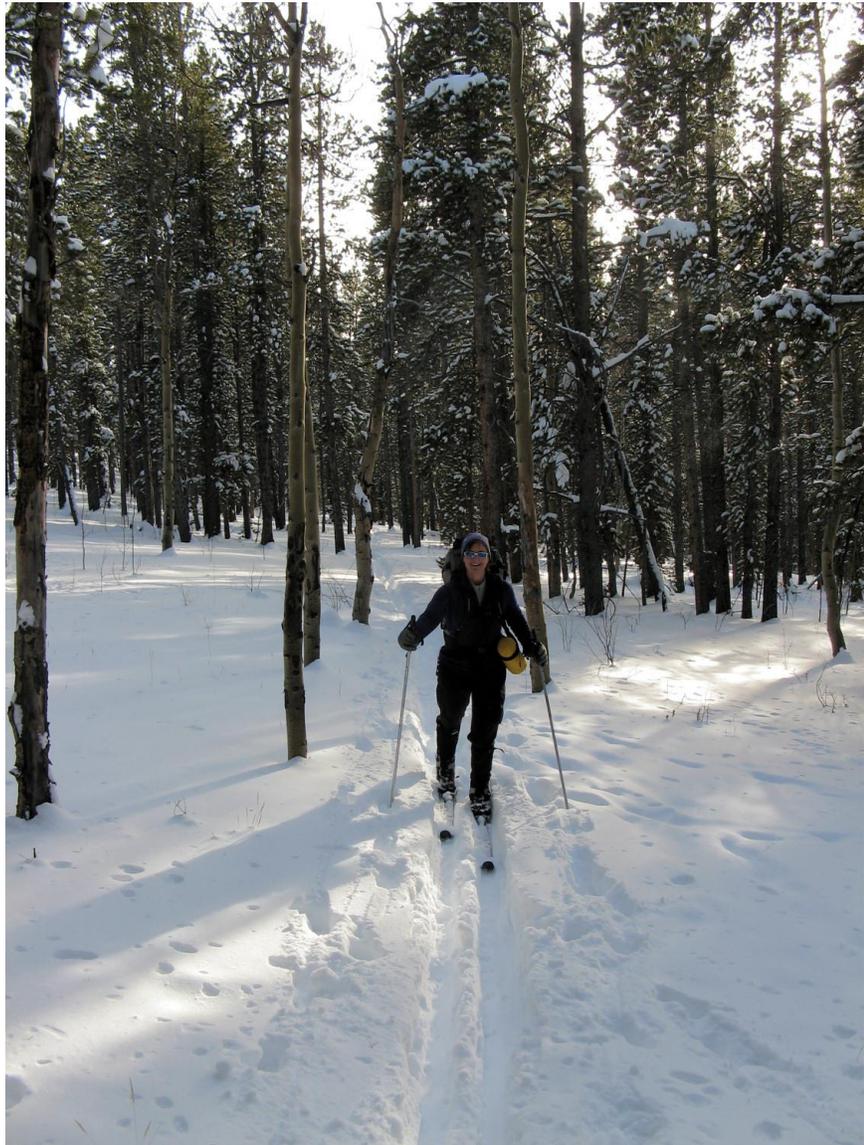
Tracking fresh powder on the Short Loop Trail-small.jpg

Trail Description

For the short loop, from the parking area pass through the chicane in the fence and start skiing northwest. The trail gains elevation gradually before reaching a small hilltop. Continue on undulating terrain as the trail curves to the north before joining a logging road at 0.6 miles for the gentle downhill run northeast, down to a meadow adjacent to Beaver Creek Road. To return to the parking area follow the Beaver Creek Road south for 0.7 miles.

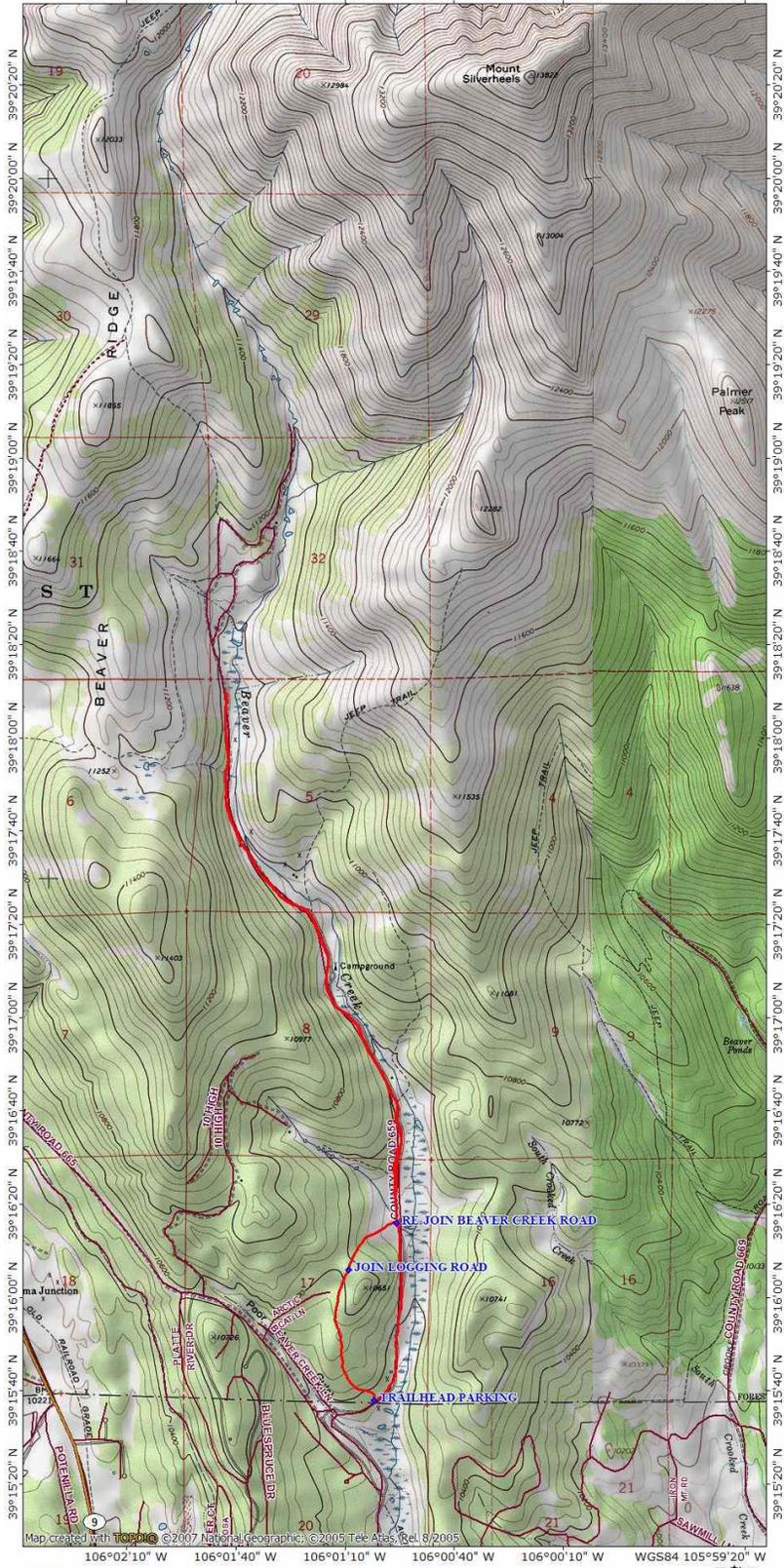
For a longer ski, turn north on Beaver Creek Road and follow it potentially for several miles. The shoulder of Mount Silverheels will be visible before long. In fact this approach along Beaver Creek is one way to climb Silverheels, though not the recommended route in winter.

We turned around after skiing 3.3 miles, though it is possible to continue, either on the Beaver Creek Road or on one of the other roads that take off and cross the creek. The return trip south down the road was much quicker, even though the average grade is only 6%. The gentle grade required a combination of double-poling, skating and kick and glide.



TOPO! map printed on 12/05/07 from "Untitled1.tpo"

106°02'10" W 106°01'40" W 106°01'10" W 106°00'40" W 106°00'10" W WGS84 105°59'20" N



0.0 0.5 1.0 miles
0.0 0.5 1.0 1.5 km

10°
12/05/07

GPS Latitude / Longitude NAD83 (Deg., Min., Sec.)
TRAILHEAD PARKING: 39,15,38N / 106,1,2W, 10410 feet
JOIN LOGGING ROAD: 39,16,6N / 106,1,9W, 10636 feet
RE-JOIN BEAVER CREEK ROAD: 39,16,16N / 106,0,56W, 10502 feet

