

The Peaks Trail – Breckenridge to Frisco

by Dave Cooper

With all of this wonderful early season snow we've been getting, we decided to try out an old favorite. The Peaks Trail winds through forests of Lodgepole Pine beneath the rugged ridgeline of the Tenmile Range. Consider this trail when winds and / or avalanche danger are too high to venture above treeline, or when you feel like tracking through the woods on usually predictably good snow.

The outing is described here starting from near the base area of Peak 8 at Breckenridge and ending in Frisco at the Miners Creek Trailhead. The ski works equally well in either direction, although this way you maximize the downhill. For a really good workout, do both directions and avoid the need for two vehicles or having to take the Summit Stage shuttle bus back to your starting point.

This trail can be snowshoed as well as skied, but the moderate, rolling terrain allows a person on skis to cover the miles more efficiently.

Getting to the Trailhead: Head to Breckenridge. As you enter the town, continue on Main Street to Ski Hill Road (traffic light). Head west (uphill) on Ski Hill Road for 2.4 miles to the Peaks Trail parking area, a short distance past the Peak 8 base area.

For the Miners Creek Trailhead, at the southern edge of Frisco turn south onto CR 1004 from US 9 at the traffic light. Drive one tenth of a mile and turn right onto the Miners Creek Road. Follow the Miners Creek Road for 0.15 miles to the gate and parking area.

If you plan to do the whole route, rather than taking two vehicles it is possible to use the free bus system which operates between Frisco and Breckenridge. For more information about the "Summit Stage", check out "<http://www.co.summit.co.us/summitstage/schedules.htm>" or call 970.668.0999.

Statistics: Gain 450 feet and lose 950 feet of elevation in 7.5 miles.

Difficulty: Moderate cross country ski / snowshoe

USGS Quad Frisco, CO, Breckenridge, CO



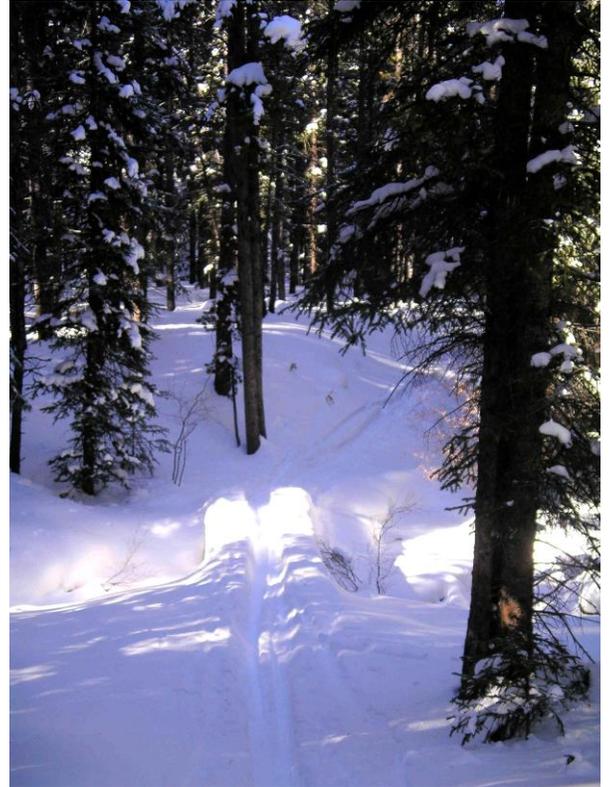
The Tenmile Range provides the spectacular backdrop for this outing

Trail Description

From the parking area (Waypoint TRAILHEAD) locate the start of the Peaks Trail (marked with the ubiquitous blue plastic diamonds) and not one of the many alternate tracks created by people heading who knows where!

The trail climbs gradually for the first mile or so, crossing a ski area access road near Cucumber Creek. For several miles the trail contours around the lower slopes of the Tenmile Range, crossing several small drainages on footbridges. These stream crossings can be quite interesting – on one outing a few years ago a friend missed the footbridge and impaled her ski tips in the opposite bank, requiring careful extraction by several of us!

Also watch out for small trees laying across the trail - these can provide an unwelcome interruption while schussing downhill.



One of the many stream crossings



Downed trees create ski challenge

At Waypoint “TRAIL TURNS LEFT OFF ROADBED”, three-quarters of a mile past Middle Barton Creek, look for a sign directing you to head left. Continue on to a clearing with new-growth trees.

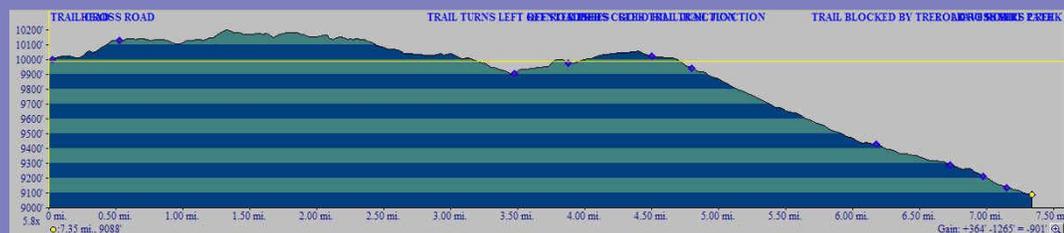


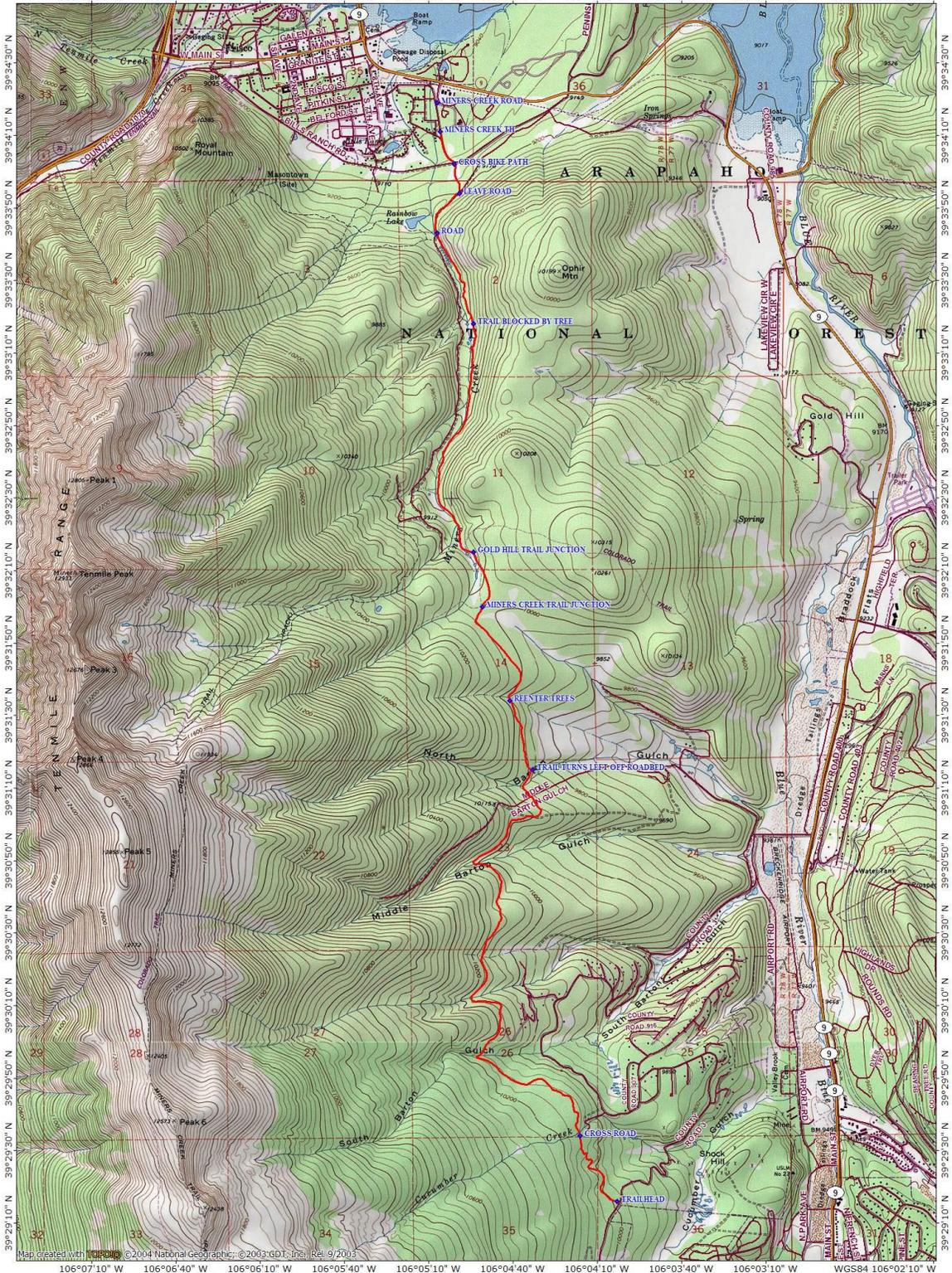
Skiers crossing the clearing

Cross this clearing and continue on to the intersection with the Miners Creek trail. For the first time, the Tennmile Range becomes visible. Stay on the Peaks Trail. A third of a mile further on, the Gold Hill Trail comes in from the right. Again, stay on the Peaks Trail (signed to Frisco and Rainbow Lake). Now the fun begins! The trail heads downhill and narrows as it parallels Miners Creek. This can provide a nice, fast run to the road, interrupted only by downed trees, one of which requires a short detour into the willows.

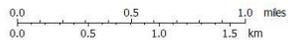
When you hit the four-wheel drive road, the journey is almost over. Follow the road downhill for a quarter of a mile and look for a ski track heading left. This is the way most skiers go, although you can stay on the road as it makes a long turn to the left. This shortcut deposits you at the intersection of the four-wheel drive road and the bike path. Take the road for two tenths of a mile to the Miners Creek Trailhead.

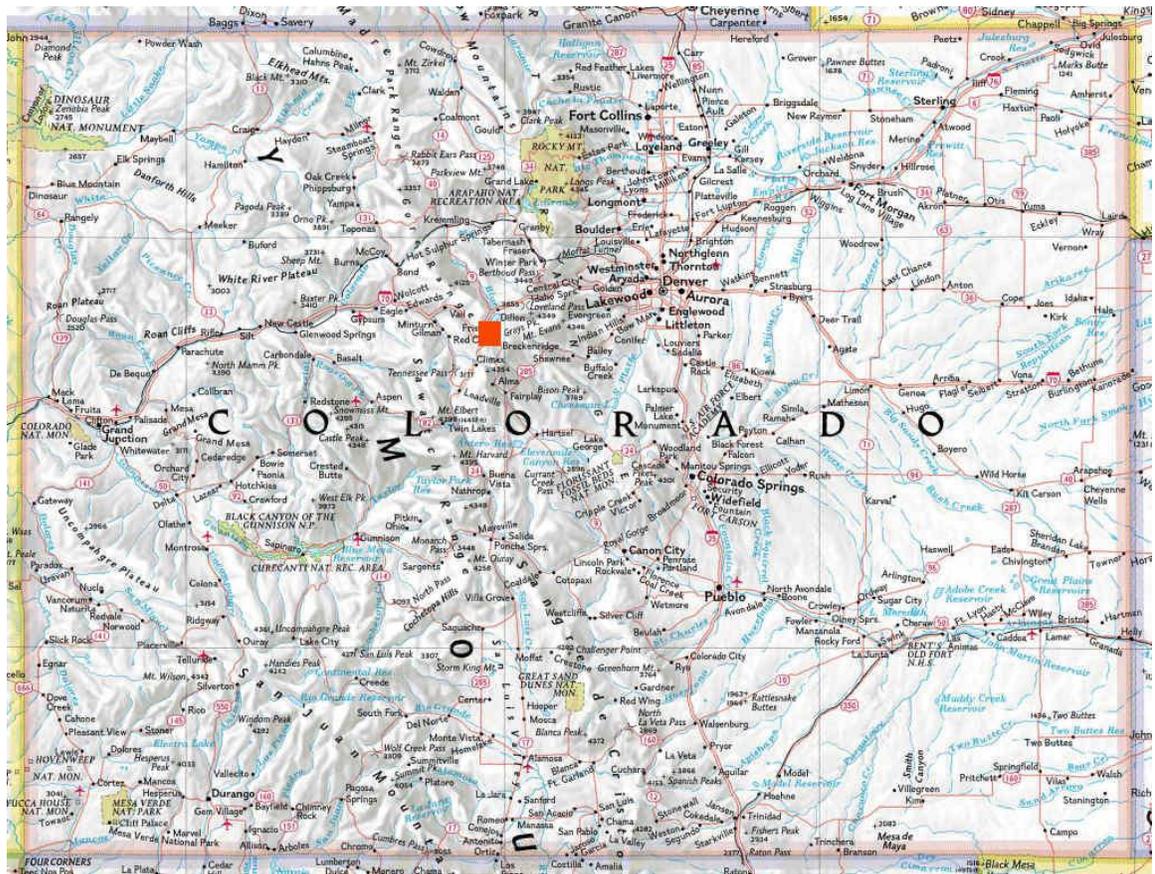
GPS Latitude / Longitude NAD83 (Deg., Min., Sec.)
 TRAILHEAD: 39,29,16N / 106,04,03W, 10010 feet
 CROSS ROAD: 39,29,34N / 106,04,16W, 10322 feet
 TRAIL TURNS LEFT OFF ROADBED: 39,31,15N / 106,04,33W, 9984 feet
 REENTER TREES: 39,31,34N / 106,04,41W, 10020 feet
 MINERS CREEK TRAIL JUNCTION: 39,32,00N / 106,04,51W, 10141 feet
 GOLD HILL TRAIL JUNCTION: 39,32,15N / 106,04,54W, 10098 feet
 TRAIL BLOCKED BY TREE: 39,33,18N / 106,04,54W, 9465 feet
 ROAD: 39,33,43N / 106,05,07W, 9360 feet
 LEAVE ROAD: 39,33,54N / 106,04,59W, 9304 feet
 CROSS BIKE PATH: 39,34,2N / 106,05,01W, 9222 feet
 MINERS CREEK TH: 39,34,11N / 106,05,06W, 9131 feet
 MINERS CREEK ROAD: 39,34,19N / 106,05,07W, 9104 feet





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Colorado locator map