

Cathedral Lake

by Dave Cooper



Sunrise on Cathedral Peak, which forms the backdrop to Cathedral Lake-small.jpg

Surrounded by surreal rock pinnacles, Cathedral Lake sits nestled in a high cirque below the well-named Cathedral Peak.

A favorite destination for hikers and fishermen, the lake also serves as a gateway to climbs of Cathedral and other peaks, though at least the climb of Cathedral is best done on snow, rapidly disappearing from the normal route as of June 24 of this year. After the snow is gone the approach gullies become unpleasant scree slopes and the peak is best left for another year.

The lake, accessible via a short but steep hike, is well worth a visit.

Getting to the Trailhead:

From the large roundabout on US Highway 82 at the north end of Aspen, take the Castle Creek Road (signed to Ashcroft) for 12.0 miles. Turn right on the road signed to the Cathedral Lake Trailhead. Drive on this ungraded dirt road for 0.7 miles to the parking area.

Hike Statistics: Trailhead to Cathedral Lake (11,866 feet): 2200 feet of total elevation gain in 2.7 miles one way.

Difficulty: A moderate but steep trail hike.

USGS Quad: Hayden Peak, CO.

*Looking down on Cathedral
Lake.jpg*

Hike Description

From the parking area take the excellent but rocky trail as it contours south into the Pine Creek drainage. After a quarter mile the trail turns west and starts to climb more steeply along the north side of the drainage, keeping a remarkably constant grade for the next 2 miles. You will pass the Wilderness Area boundary after 0.6 miles.

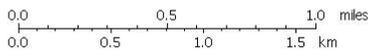
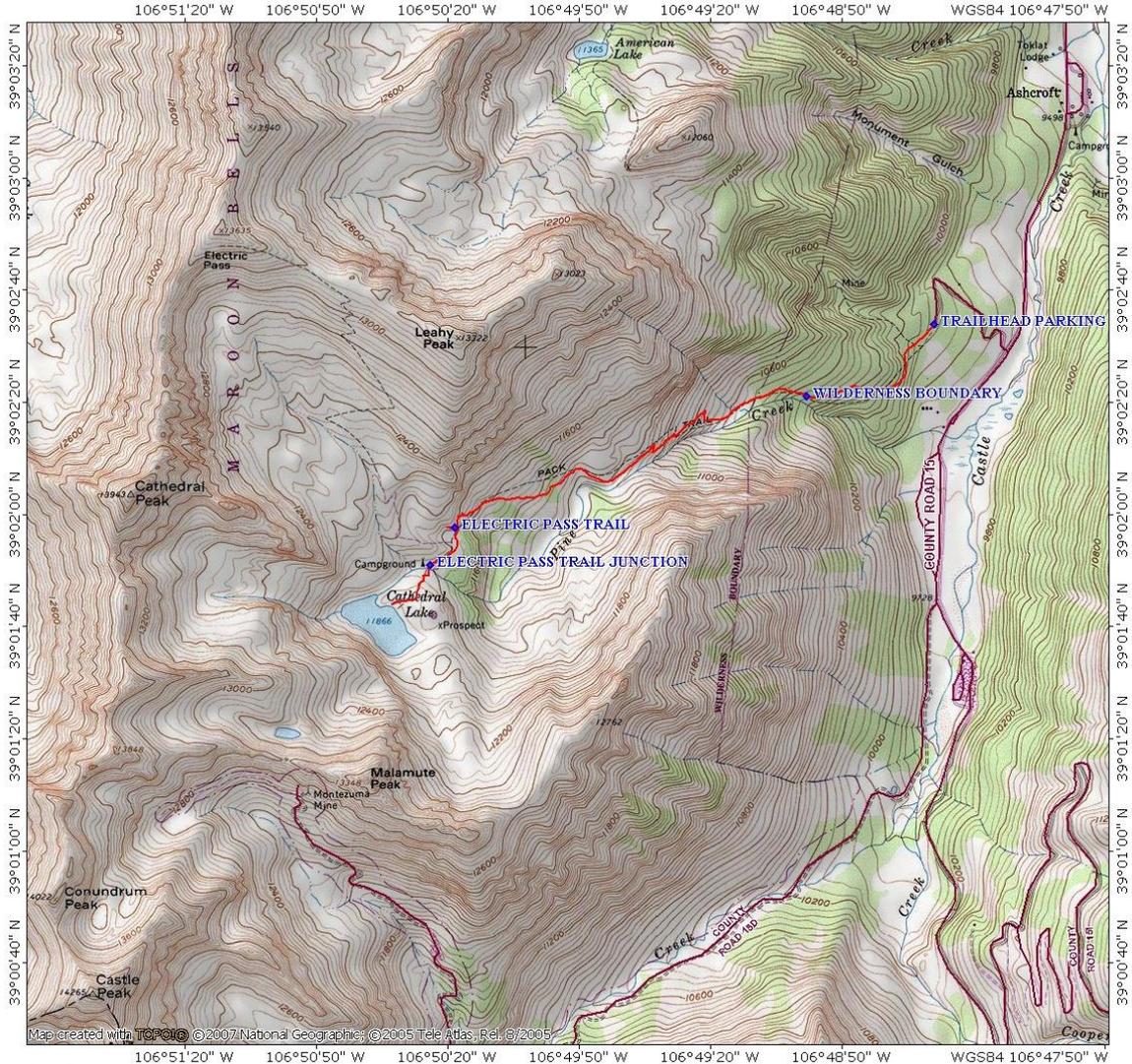
Much of the hike is above treeline so the views are unobstructed. Malamute Peak is the first mountain you'll see. Malamute separates the Pine Creek drainage from Montezuma Basin, the approach for the area's fourteener, Castle Peak.

Continue up a series of switchbacks and pass a trail leading to Electric Pass. It is in this area where you get your first views of Cathedral Peak. We were able to catch this view at sunrise, which provided wonderful lighting on the spires guarding Cathedral's slopes and which must surely be the reason the peak received its name.

Continue on to the lake, passing another trail junction signed to Electric Pass immediately before crossing the lake's outlet. If you decide to camp in the area, make sure to know and abide by the Wilderness rules for campsite location, etc.



TOPO! map printed on 07/03/07 from "Untitled3.tpo"



TN MN
10 1/2°
07/03/07

GPS Latitude / Longitude NAD83 (Deg., Min., Sec.)
 TRAILHEAD PARKING: 39,2,34N / 106,48,29W, 10538 feet
 WILDERNESS BOUNDARY: 39,2,21N / 106,48,58W, 10299 feet
 ELECTRIC PASS TRAIL: 39,1,58N / 106,50,19W, 11784 feet
 ELECTRIC PASS TRAIL JUNCTION: 39,1,51N / 106,50,24W, 11831 feet

