

Gold Dust Trail Ski / Snowshoe Tour
by Dave Cooper



Starting up the Gold Dust Trail

If gliding along through the winter forest, silent but for the wind rustling the treetops and the occasional creak of a dead tree leaning against its neighbor, is for you, then I highly recommend this tour. (I also have the accompaniment of a creaking ski binding, but that's another story).

A little-known gem, this winter cross-country ski trail (closed to motorized vehicles) forms the northern half of the summer trail which leads from near the town of Como almost to Boreas Pass. With perhaps the most comprehensive trail markings of any I've come across, this gentle trail is ideal for novices, but is so pleasant that skiers and snowshoers of any level should enjoy an outing here.

Extend the tour to include a visit to Boreas Pass and you'll have a nine mile round trip outing.

Hike Description

Skiing the flume

From the parking area cross the road to the trailhead and begin skiing northwest as the trail gradually gains elevation for the first half mile. The trail crosses private property initially, so please respect our ability to access this trail.

After the first half mile the trail follows an old flume which according to the Forest Service brochure diverted water from North Tarryall Creek to mining operations in the upper Tarryall Drainage.

Kick and glide, following the blue diamonds as the trail contours along the ditch for almost two miles before reaching North Tarryall Creek, 2.3 miles from the trailhead.

At 2.5 miles the trail crosses Forest Service Road (FSR) 801. One variation turns right on FSR 801 (shown on some maps as FSR 406, on others as CR 801) and follows it back down to County Road 50, which you join 1.2 miles southeast of your vehicle.

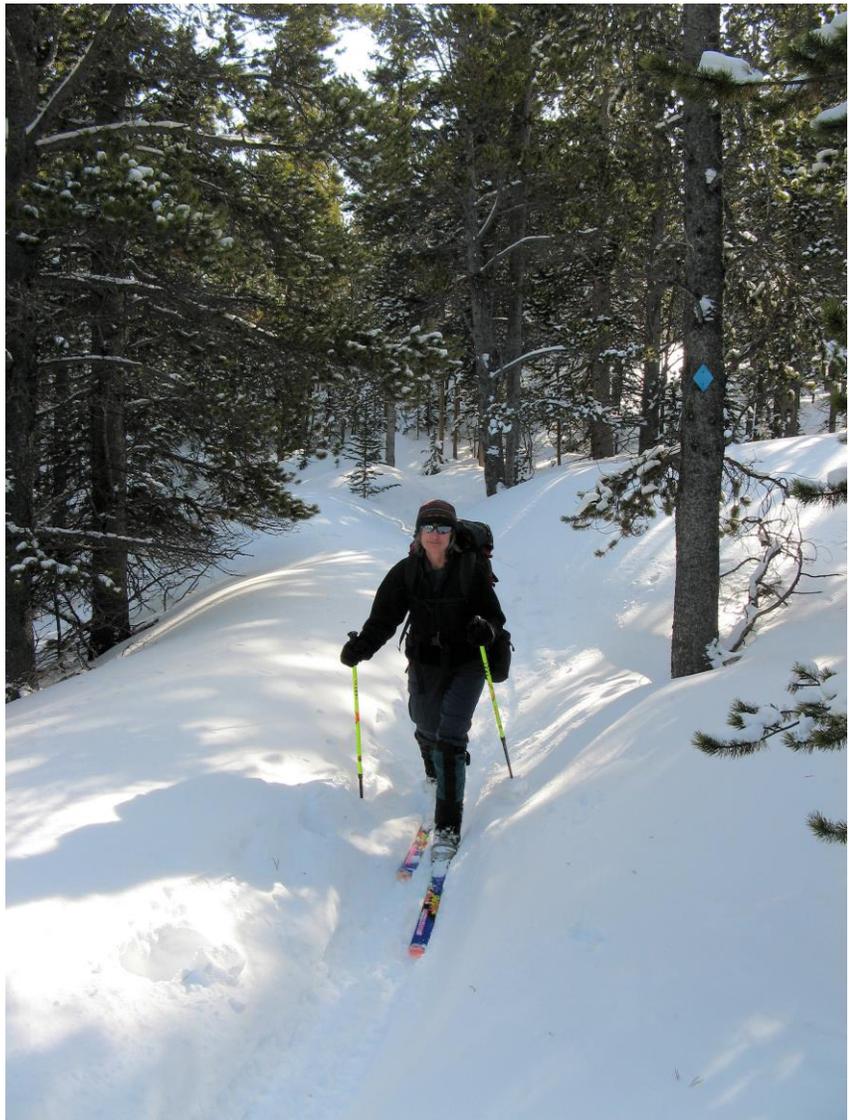
We will cross FSR 801 and continue on the ski trail, which now joins the old Boreas Pass Wagon Road.

Getting to the Trailhead: Drive to the Como turnoff from US 285. This is 9.4 miles northeast of Fairplay. From US 285 turn northwest on County Road (CR) 33 and drive 0.5 miles to the town of Como. Stay on CR33 as it makes a right turn (signed to Tarryall Creek and the Boreas Road) and heads out of town. 3.7 miles from US 285 is the intersection with County Road 50. Bear left and drive on County Road 50 to the Gold Dust Trailhead, 5.4 miles from US285. The Forest Service requests that you park just past the trailhead on the left side of the road where it widens a little. Since the trailhead is adjacent to a private home, please be considerate of those who live there.

Hike Statistics: Trailhead to County Road 33 (11,420 feet): 1200 feet of total elevation gain in 4.0 miles one way. If you extend the tour to Boreas Pass this adds 60 feet to the elevation gain in 0.4 miles.

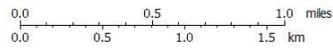
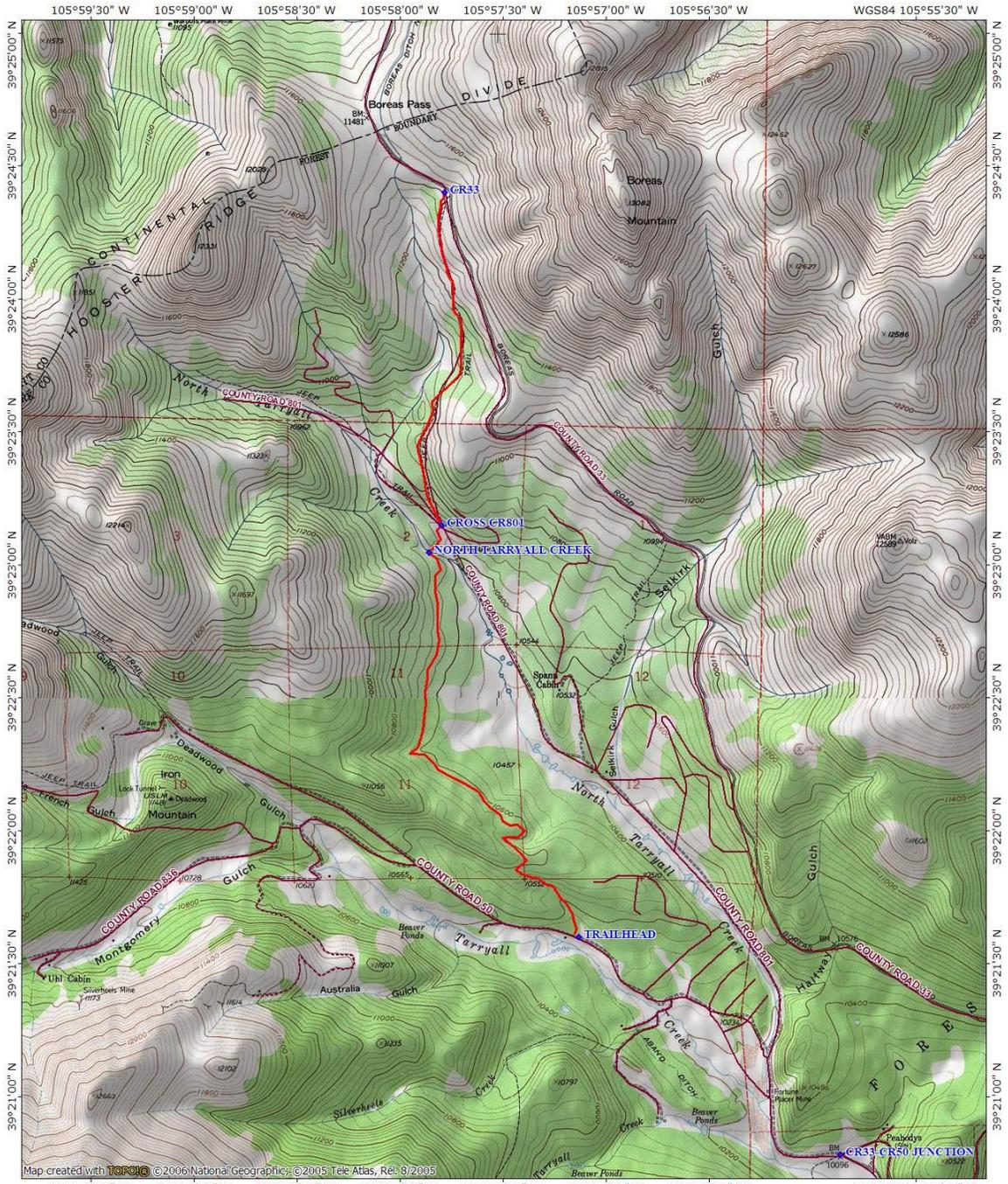
Difficulty: An easy ski/snowshoe tour, mainly along an old flume.

USGS Quads: Boreas Pass, CO; Como, CO



The road climbs steadily for the next mile and a half before reaching County Road 33 (a.k.a. FSR 404 on some maps), only 0.4 miles from Boreas Pass, a windy, desolate place in winter.

The section of trail along the Old Wagon Road has a constant 9% grade and with the endless powder snow we've had recently provides an excellent run down on the way back. Remember that the two mile segment along the flume will take just about as long to ski out as it did on the way in.



GPS Latitude / Longitude NAD83 (Deg., Min., Sec.)
TRAILHEAD: 39,21,36N / 105,57,8W, 10354 feet
NORTH TARRYALL CREEK: 39,23,3N / 105,57,52W, 10646 feet
CROSS CR801: 39,23,9N / 105,57,48W, 10718 feet
CR33: 39,24,24N / 105,57,47W, 11423 feet
CR33-CR50 JUNCTION: 39,20,47N / 105,55,52W, 10141 feet

