

Grizzly Gulch-ski tour by Dave Cooper

The Bakerville Exit from I-70 is the starting point for two fine ski tours. The better-known Stevens Gulch heads up the valley leading to two popular Fourteeners - Grays and Torreys Peaks. For the path less traveled, we'll take Grizzly Gulch, the drainage to the north of Torreys Peak. The road maintains a moderate grade as it heads up the forested valley, finally opening up to afford excellent views of Torreys and Grizzly Peaks. Open glades on the slopes along the road and near the head of the valley offer plenty of opportunities to get in some turns when avalanche conditions allow.

Trail Description

From the southern end of the parking area start up the unplowed road as it heads initially to the east. The road climbs gradually through several switchbacks as it trends generally south. After 1.0 mile you'll reach the junction of Stevens Gulch and Grizzly Gulch. A sign to Grays Peak marks the Stevens Gulch Road. We turn right on the road into Grizzly Gulch.

Turn right into Grizzly Gulch at this road junction-small.jpg

One third of a mile past the junction to Stevens Gulch there is another road junction by an old cabin. Stay to the right on Forest Service Road 189.1C and continue southwest. 1.6 miles from the parking area you will pass a house, which marked the end of the snowmobile tracks when we skied this route recently.



Getting to the Trailhead: Take I-70 to the Bakerville Exit (Exit 221), 6.7 miles west of Georgetown. Park in the large parking area south of the frontage road.

Statistics and Difficulty: For the intermediate tour described, the trail gains 1400 feet in 3.4 miles.

USGS Quads: Grays Peak, CO.



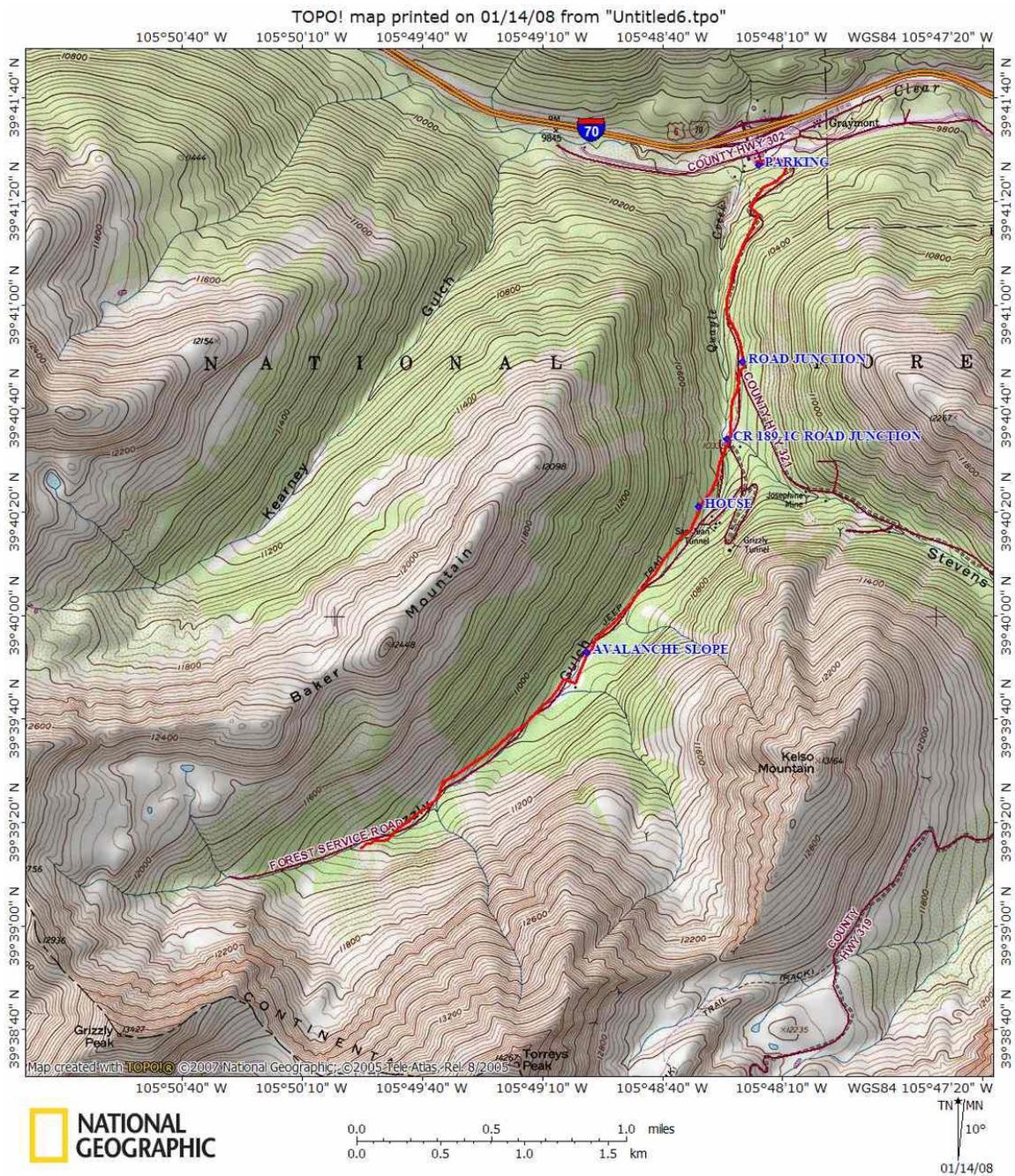
Stay right on Forest Service Road 189.1C-small .JPG

After 2.3 miles you'll reach an avalanche runout area, obvious because of the large trees that have been snapped like matchsticks: it's best to cross this one at a time. It's interesting to note that until a few years ago this chute wasn't there. We were skiing the trail one time and reached this spot, shortly after the avalanche had run. The debris made crossing this area quite a challenge. It made us realize that even when skiing through dense forest, there's still a chance that an avalanche can take out large, established trees.

Approximately a tenth of a mile beyond the avalanche chute the trail emerges into an open area and crosses to the northwest side of the drainage. This sharp right, then sharp left turn can be hard to spot when the trail is untracked, so be alert. The trail then continues in trees along a roadcut on the northwest side of the drainage.

How far you continue is up to you. Most parties stop at one of the clearings, approximately 3.4 miles from the parking area. From these clearings you'll have good views of the surrounding high peaks.

If snow conditions are stable there are several moderate slopes suitable for telemarking. The bowl at the head of the valley should be left until the springtime. The trail back down to the car is steep enough that the return trip usually goes quite quickly.



GPS Latitude / Longitude NAD83 (Deg., Min., Sec.)
 PARKING,39,41,27,-105,48,16,9810 feet
 ROAD JUNCTION: 39,40,49N / 105,48,20W, 10331 feet
 CR 189-1C ROAD JUNCTION: 39,40,34N / 105,48,24W, 10344 feet
 HOUSE: 39,40,21N / 105,48,31W, 10499 feet
 AVALANCHE SLOPE: 39,39,53N / 105,48,59W, 10748 feet

