

Uneva Pass

by Dave Cooper



Scenic views of the Gore Range from Uneva Pass

One consequence of the abundant rainfall the mountains have enjoyed this summer is the explosion of wildflowers. A favorite destination of ours for viewing them is the Gore Range, so we recently headed up that way.

The southern end of the Gore Range Trail starts near the Copper Mountain exit off I-70 (Wheeler Junction) at the Scenic Area. Heading north, the Gore Range Trail wanders for 45 miles along the eastern side of the range, skirting some of the most rugged terrain in the state.

The trail crosses many drainages along its journey, but only two named passes. These passes, Uneva and Eccles, reach the high points of the Gore Range Trail at around 11,900 feet. Uneva Pass, the southernmost of the two, makes a good destination for a day hike, with an excellent trail and outstanding views along the way.

Getting to the Trailhead: The trailhead is located at the Scenic Area exit on I-70, 0.7 miles east of Wheeler Junction (Exit 195) or 2.3 miles west of the Officers Gulch exit, and is only accessible by westbound traffic. If driving from the west, continue to the Officers Gulch exit, cross under the highway and drive west on I-70 to the Scenic Area exit.

Hike Statistics: From the parking area to the Wheeler Lakes: 1550 feet in 3.2 miles one way. To Uneva Pass (11,900 feet), including the detour to the Wheeler Lakes, the total elevation gain will be approximately 2,600 feet in 12.4 miles round trip.

Difficulty: Moderate but quite long, on good trails.

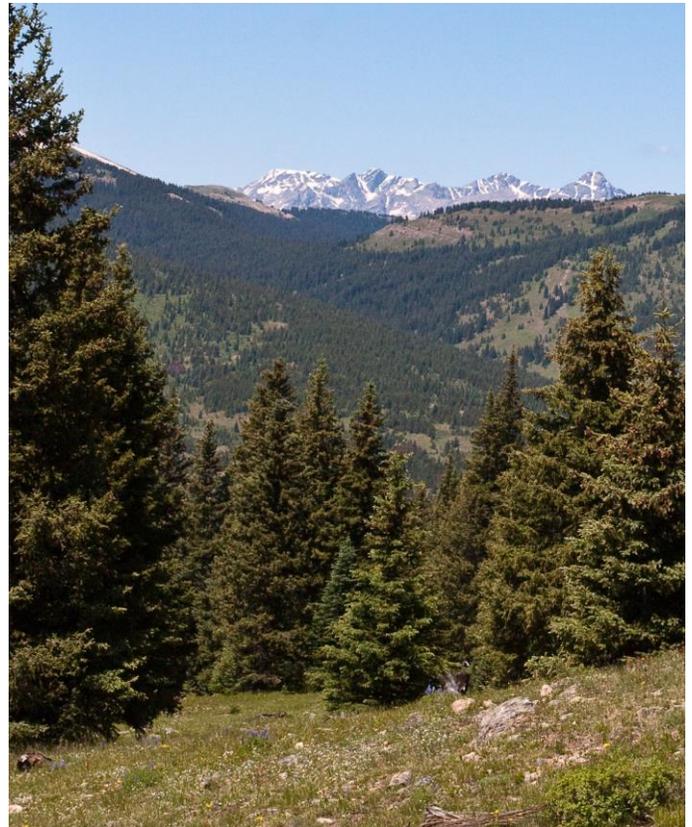
USGS Quad: Vail Pass, CO.

Hike Description

From the Scenic Area parking, cross the wooden footbridge, register at the information booth and head south along the old two track, paralleling I-70. Pass the old parking area at mile 0.7 (now posted “No Parking”) and continue on the trail as it curves to the west. At mile 1.0 the trail starts to gradually climb away from the highway, reaching the wilderness boundary (Eagles Nest Wilderness) at mile 1.6. The trail passes through many scenic meadows along the way, allowing good views of Mount of the Holy Cross, the Tennile Range and more.

At mile 2.8 you’ll reach a trail junction. The spur trail to the two Wheeler Lakes is only 0.3 miles each way and worth the short detour. This also makes a nice destination if you’re looking for a shorter day.

Mount of the Holy Cross.jpg



Hikers enjoying the side trip to the Wheeler Lakes-small-1016-2.jpg

Return to the trail junction and continue northwest on gentler terrain. Pass some unnamed ponds at mile 4.5. Beyond the ponds the trail contours around a couple of ridges before reaching Lost Lake (how many “Lost Lakes” are there?) at mile 5.6. There were still huge cornice remnants hanging off the ridge above the lake on 16 July. This is a very scenic lake and it’s worth spending some time here.



Lost Lake Panorama

Continue past the lake and hike the remaining 0.9 miles to Uneva Pass (mile 6.5). See if you can identify some of the peaks lying to the north. Closest is Uneva Peak, tempting but still one and a half miles away. The pass was our turnaround point for the day.

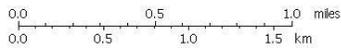
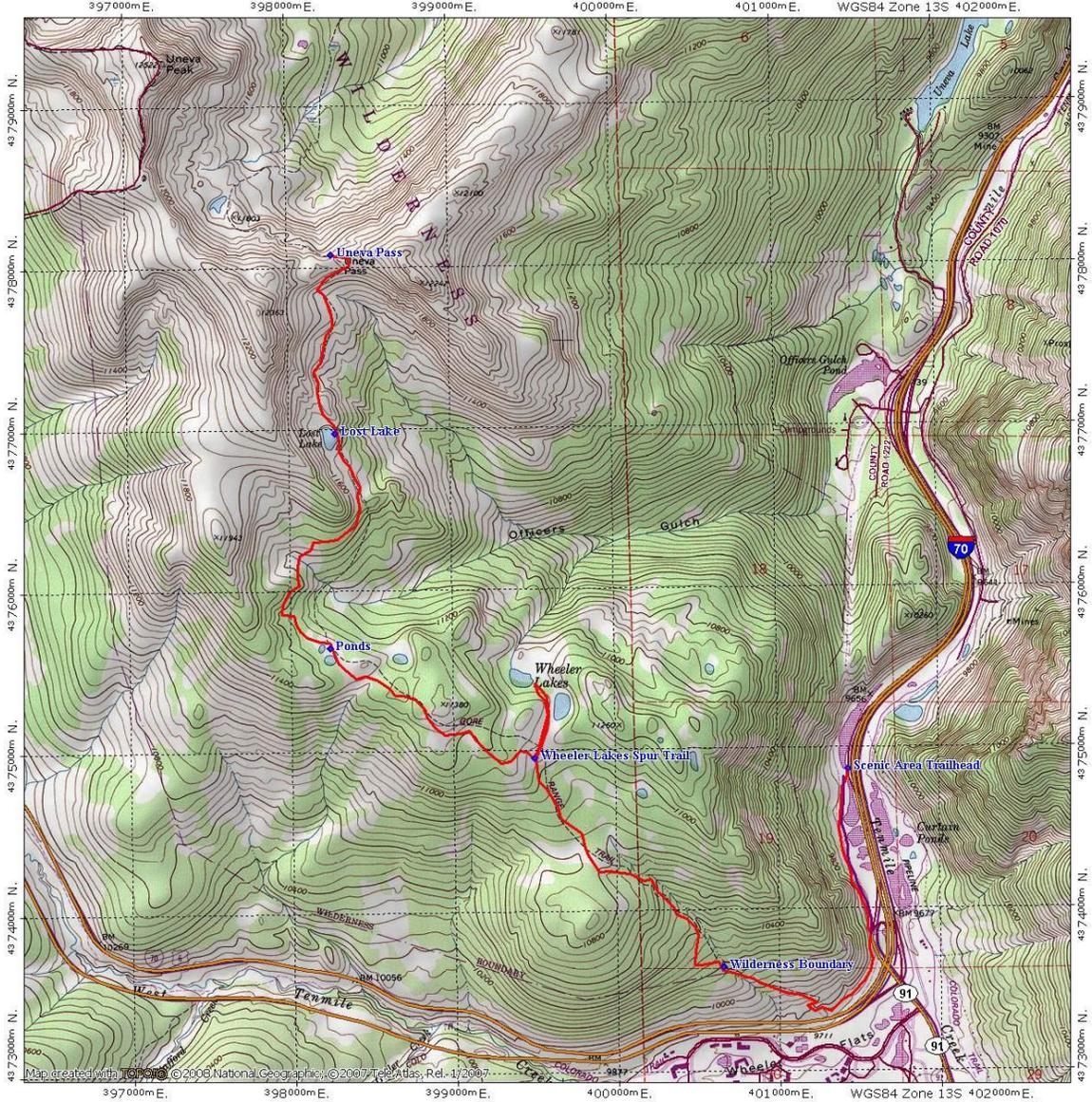
Lost Lake with views of Copper Mountain and the Tenmile Range beyond-small-1034-2.jpg





Wildflowers-small-1053-2.jpg

TOPO! map printed on 07/20/09 from "Untitled4.tpo"



TN 11N
9 1/2°
07/20/09

GPS Latitude / Longitude NAD83 (Deg., Min., Sec.)
 Scenic Area Trailhead, 39, 31, 4, -106, 8, 48, 9705 feet
 Wilderness Boundary, 39, 30, 24, -106, 9, 20, 10177 feet
 Wheeler Lakes Spur Trail, 39, 31, 6, -106, 10, 9, 10955 feet
 Ponds, 39, 31, 28, -106, 11, 2, 11345 feet
 Lost Lake, 39, 32, 11, -106, 11, 1, 11624 feet
 Uneva Pass, 39, 32, 47, -106, 11, 2, 11939 feet

