

TRAIL - North Fork Trail aka Dunraven Trailhead

AREA - west of Loveland, CO

MILEAGE - 10 miles, from trailhead to Lost Lake. Much longer if choose to go on to Bulwark Ridge Trail, Meadows Trail, Rocky Mountain National Park.

DIFFICULTY - Easy to Moderate (moderate rating more for the rockiness, and several water crossings.)

TRAIL PHOTOS can be seen at: RockyMountainTrails.net/TrailNorthFork/Dunraven

MANAGEMENT - USDA Forest Service, Canyon Lakes District (phone # ?) for the section in the wilderness - to - US Park Service, Rocky Mountain National Park (970)586-1206

(www.rocky.mountain.national-park.com) ** If you go only to The Meadows, you will not reach the Rocky Mountain National Park.

TRAIL LOCATION - From Denver, take I-25 north to exit # 257B / US-34 (Eisenhower Blvd) go left/west for approx. 26 miles. (Note: exit # 257B is a sharp turn, slow down!) Will pass thru Loveland town, will pass thru Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park. When the road forks at the Drake turnoff, take Hwy/CR 43 going right/northwest approx. 6 miles. Look for a brown sign on the road identifying the Crosier Mountain trailhead - the turn you are looking for will be after the brown sign, on the right. Take CR 518 (Dunraven Glade Rd) go right/north approx. 2 miles to trailhead on the left. NOTE - If you do miss the Dunraven Glade Rd turnoff, then shortly after passing this exit, you'll come to a medium sized turnaround on the left side - this is at a bend in the road, so make that turnaround quickly - heading back to the Dunraven Glade Rd. Dunraven Glade is a narrow winding gravel road, 25 mph limit, but not too much traffic usually. Deadends into the Dunraven Trailhead parking lot. Large parking lot can hold approximately 12-15 trailers, when parking carefully. Large groups may wish to trailer-pool. Be sure to park so you can get out easily (watch out for other trail users blocking you in.) Trail access is to the left side of the parking lot, passing by the restrooms.

AMENITIES - Park kiosk map. Water for horses from the Big Thompson River which parallels the trail most of first half. Riders should bring their own water. Shed style restroom.

TERRAIN - The trail is well marked, single track most of it's length with a little bit of side-by-side. Trail surface is rocky in most spots. Shoes strongly recommended! The points which give this trail "Moderate" rating are... Immediately after starting the trail, you will go down to the river in a moderate slant with rocky spots and exposed roots. This is not too difficult - just allow your horse to pick their footing. The second spot is a climb later in the trail, from The Meadows to the Park. And thirdly, it's very rocky! Overall, the trail follows the Big Thompson River's North Fork (thus the trail's name) until you reach The Meadows. There are a half dozen bridges - most you can water cross, one bridge must ride over, or can hand walk over if your horse is nervous on wood bridges. The river bottom throughout is rough and very rocky - cross with care and will be fine. Lots of opportunities to practice water crossings - some quiet water, some spots fast flowing. The trail goes through shady forest with open sections. You'll see several backcountry camping areas as you go. There is a stable near the trail, near the youth camp (Cheley Camp.) The Meadows is a good spot for a lunch n' graze stop. Just beyond The Meadows, you'll enter lodgepole pines for quite a ways. There is a short stretch that is dirt surface, one of the few not-rocky bits of this

beautiful trail! There is one spot about half way that the trail has a steep rock wall on one side and about a 300' drop on the other side. Plenty of room for a horse, but not a place one should take a spooky/green horse. (If such a horse, might want to hand walk past this point.) Shortly after you have left The Meadows, the trail begins a steady long climb, switchbacking, until you reach the national park - then the trail levels out for about a mile before starting to climb again, eventually reaching Lost Lake. This long climb from The Meadows to Lost Lake is very rocky, to not excessively steep. Out of condition horses may have trouble beyond The Meadows. It is about 10-11 miles one way from trail head to lake. Be aware, horses are not allowed at the lake's shore.

PARTICULAR NOTE - At the North Boundary Trail, which is marked, leading up to the McGraw Ranch - this is a steep and difficult branch! Once in the Park, there are some rocky & steep places along the trail, which is where the "Moderate" rating comes in again.

CAMPING - Not at the trailhead. Yes for the deeper back country. The jurisdiction varies - part of the camping is in Rocky Mountain National Park, part in Comanche Peak Wilderness area. Remember the "12 Heartbeats" per group rule is in effect here. The Meadows is in the National Forest part, so do not need a back country permit to camp there - may contact the National Forest Office to make sure.) Further in the back country, the sites are within the National Park and not set up for horse camping (the Park discourages this.) The Park boundary is marked.

REGULATIONS - No fee. ?Open year round.

SHARED TRAIL USERS - Hikers, picnickers. Dogs on leash until come to Rocky Mountain National Park. The trail is sometimes busy on weekends with backpackers and dogs, not so often for bikers. Rangers patrol the area regularly - remember the "12 Heartbeats" per group rule!

COMMENTS - This ride is gorgeous for the wonderful views and enjoyable water crossings! Bright colored bushes and ground cover not to mention plenty of Aspens and Pine forest. At times you will be in the shade of the forest - other times wide open meadows where you can get great vista views. You can also get amazing views of the Rocky Mountains. Sometimes Elk and Moose can be seen - there is a Bear warning sign at the trail head (some riders recommend to bell horses.)