



Bitter Creek Trail #028



Length: 10.8 miles (17.3 km)

Use: Light

Difficulty

Motorcycle: Most Difficult

Horseback: Most Difficult

Hiking: Most Difficult

USGS Maps: Bernard Mtn, Wild Buck Peak, Bull Creek Hotsprings

Recreation sites nearby: Silver Creek Summit Trail, Stratton Creek Trail, Silver Creek Campground

Attractions and Considerations

The trail begins in a narrow canyon beside the Long Fork of Silver Creek. It parallels the Long Fork of Silver Creek and Bitter Creek, passes through meadows, and from the top of the Silver and Bitter Creek drainages offers views of the mountains and valleys to the west and east. Huge granite outcrops border the north and south sides of the trail.

The trail levels, then descends to meet the creek again near a large blade-shaped granite wall. The trail climbs steeply away from the Long Fork of Silver Creek. The trail passes through a large meadow, then several small ones.

The trail crosses the Long Fork of Silver Creek for the last time about a quarter mile from its highest point--the top of the Silver Creek drainage. At the crossing, the creek is only a narrow, shallow trickle. Grassy slopes are replaced by boulder fields as the trail climbs steeply to a saddle dividing the Silver Creek and Bitter Creek drainages. The trail crosses the saddle and descends steeply into the Bitter Creek drainage where it soon levels.

Within three miles, the trail traverses a lodgepole flat, then fords Deadwood River. At a dispersed campsite on the river's east side, the trail overlaps a short, narrow road and ends at its intersection with National Forest Road 555 (NF-555).

Trail Beginning

Elevation: 4960 ft

The trail begins on the east side of a large clearing at the end of NF-671E.

Trail Ending

Elevation: 5600 ft

After overlapping a short road, the trail ends when it intersects with NF-555.

Access 1:

Start at Banks on State Highway 55 and travel east on the Banks-Lowman Highway about 10 miles to the Crouch turn-off. Head north through Crouch on the paved road, which becomes NF-698. Continue north of NF-698 to the intersection with NF-671, then travel northeast on NF-671 about 10 miles to the intersection of NF-671E. Continue north on NF-671E about 2 miles to an unsigned but blazed trailhead on the east side of a large clearing, just north of the Long Fork of Silver Creek, which is identified by a sign. Parking is available at the trailhead for 10 to 15 vehicles.

Access 2:

Start about 1/2 mile northeast of the South Fork Lodge in Lowman on State Highway 21 at the intersection of NF-582 (Clear Creek Road). Head north on NF-582 for 22 miles to the intersection of NF-563, then travel northwest for 7 miles to the intersection of NF-579 (Stanley-Landmark Road). Go west on NF-579 for 11 miles to the intersection of NF-555 and head south on NF-555 for 1/4 mile to the unsigned but blazed trailhead on the west side of NF-555. The trail is identified on NF-555 by two large posts with no sign, and overlaps a short road that ends at a dispersed campsite near a registration box. After fording the Deadwood River, the blazed trail continues on the river's west bank.

