

Key:

Vertical Gain/Steepness:	E=Easy , 0' to 400' gain per mile M=Moderate , 400' to 800' gain per mile D=Difficult , 800' to 1200' gain per mile X=Extreme , 1200' + gain per mile
Surface/Terrain:	E=Easy , mostly sand, dirt or pine needle covered on established trail M=Moderate , small rocks and roots present on established trail D=Difficult , loose and rocky on established trail X=Extreme , very loose, with large rocks and possibly scrambling required. Trail may not be established or easily recognizable

Trail Name:

Lewis Creek Trail (Trail #1331, TH Elev. 6,840)

Trail Location:

From Westcliffe, CO travel east on Hwy 96 approximately 23 miles. Look for the brown and white NFS access sign indicating the turn to Lewis Creek Trail. The road (NFS road 310, a bit rough but accessible by car) to the trailhead looks very much like a driveway because you have to go through private land to get to the parking area. The entry to the road is gated, and is typically kept closed. Do the land owner a favor and close the gate after you pass through. Head up the road for about ½ mile to get to the parking area at the trailhead.

Trail Summary:

This trail is an excellent early/late season hike, and during low snowfall years can pretty much be hiked through the winter. The high point of the trail terminates on NFS road 315 (secondary NFS road, high clearance may be required) at 9,960', so this trail offers the option of hiking bottom to top, top to bottom, or in/out in either direction. The information provided in this document is relative to a bottom to top, in-out hike.

Accessibility: This trail is in San Isabel National Forest and accessible via foot/horse, motorcycle or bicycle travel. Accessible all seasons.

Trail Length and Type: 10 miles total, in/out

Vertical Gain and Steepness: 3,120' gain, 30% E, 30% M, 20% D, 20% X

Surface/Terrain: 60% E, 20% M, 20% D

Trail Experience:

This trail seems to have it all, with the exclusion of a mountain lake at the end of your uphill climb. If you routinely hike in the Sangre deCristos and want a hike to help stay in shape when the Sangres are buried in snow, this is it. Or, if you are new to the area and want to build your stamina without battling the lack of oxygen you face hiking the Sangres, lower altitude front range hikes like this are a great stepping stone to the high altitude hikes.

This is a long trail, but you do not have to hike the whole thing to get a true mountain hiking experience. The first two miles of the trail are predominantly under forest cover, with a wide variety of pines, some aspens, and about eight water crossings (if the Wet Mountains are “wet”). The water crossings are not difficult, usually having rock or log stepping points. The first half of this two mile forested section is mostly easy hiking, and excellent for taking your dog for a walk, enjoying the birds, or the just taking in the sights and sounds of the forest. The second mile of the forested section begins to get a bit steeper, and as you approach mile 1.75 you will definitely feel the incline. Just after you reach the 2 mile point you will reach your second switchback. At this point you will have a beautiful view of some rock outcroppings just to the north, and vistas looking over the foothills of the Wet Mountains will appear to the east.

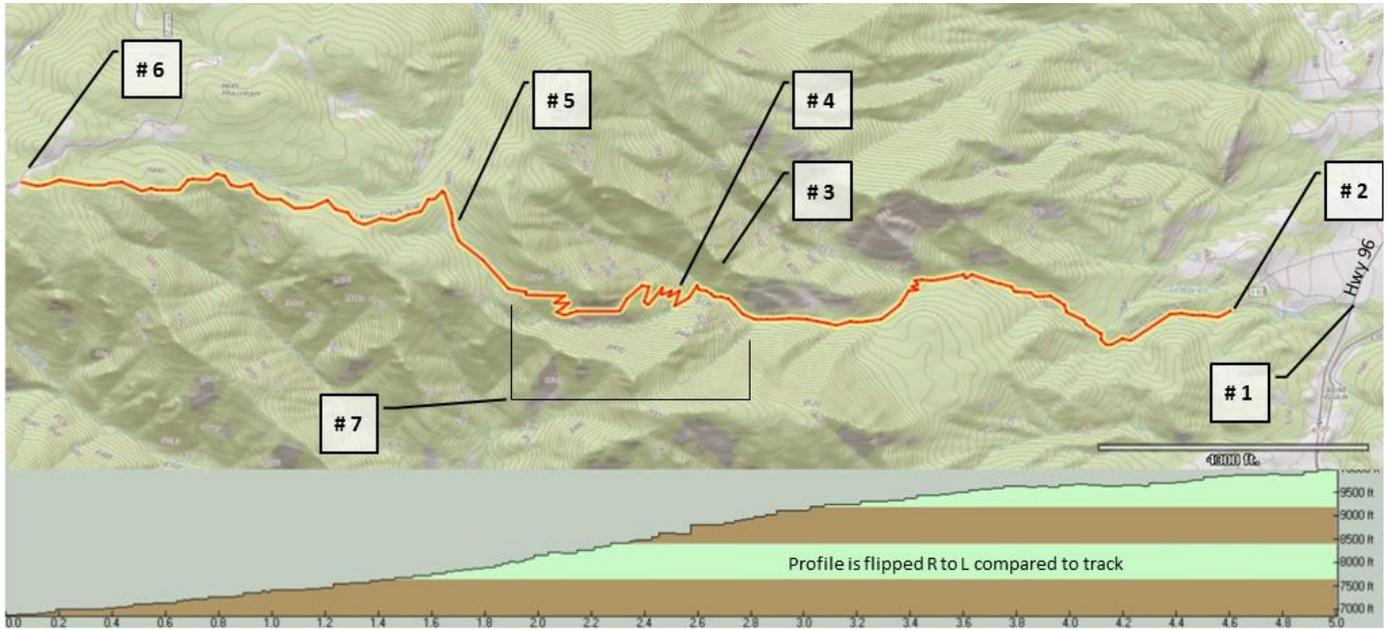
From mile 1.75 to mile 2.75 you will get a workout. From a steepness standpoint, this section of the trail is extreme, rising about 1400’ in one mile. This is also the section of the trail where the surface conditions are the most difficult, so step carefully and rest frequently. There are many opportunities to take in the vistas to the east while you switch back about ten times on this portion of the trail.

The next mile (2.75 – 3.75) gets back to a more reasonable incline, increasing only 700’ in one mile. The trail conditions also improve. At the end of this section the trail breaks out into an open, grassy, relatively flat field. The view from the top of this field looking east is beautiful.

The last section of the trail meanders back in to moderate tree cover. After climbing over 2,700’, the last 1.25 miles is a “stroll in the park”, increasing in elevation only about 350’.

(map on next page)

Map – Lewis Creek Trail (Trail # 1331)



- # 1 – Turn off from Hwy 96 to FS road 310
- # 2 – Trailhead Parking
- # 3 – Rock outcroppings viewable from switchback 2
- # 4 – Switchback 2
- # 5 – Open grassy field
- # 6 – FS road 315
- # 7 – The “workout” – 1,400’ gain in one mile

The Legal Stuff: The information contained in these trail summaries is intended to be a supplement to the typical tools and references used by people who are well prepared to venture into the mountains. Always carry a map specific to the area you are exploring. Failure to have the necessary experience, physical conditioning, and supplies or equipment can result in injury or death. Trails For All provides no warranties, either express or implied, that the information provided in our published Trail Summaries is 100% accurate or reliable. By using any information provided, you agree to absolve Trails For All from any responsibility for damage or other liability arising from the use of Trails For All Trail Summaries.

10 ESSENTIALS

For Hiking, Camping, Fishing, Backpacking, Hunting & Other Outdoor Activities



ALL THE RANGE

- 1. **Hydration:**
Water Filter, Extra Water
- 2. **Navigation:**
Map, Compass
- 3. **Sun Protection:**
Sunglasses, Sunscreen
- 4. **First Aid:**
First Aid Kit
- 5. **Shelter:**
Emergency Shelter, Bag
- 6. **Fire:**
Waterproof Matches, Fire Starter
- 7. **Illumination:**
Head Lamp, Flash Light
- 8. **Insulation:**
Extra Clothing, Gloves, Head Protection
- 9. **Nutrition:**
Extra Food for Overnight
- 10. **Knife Kit:**
Cutting Tool, Fishing Gear, Paracord, Whistle

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