



Bear Creek Trails #241, 241.1A, 242

Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forest

Access: From Ouray take U.S. 550 two miles south. Trail parking is on the east side of U.S. 550 immediately south of the tunnel.

Restrictions: #241 – Hiker only; #241.1A and #242 are open to hiker and horse

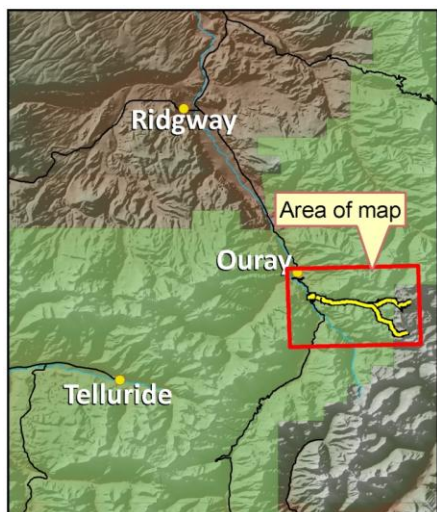
Length: #241 is 3.5miles #241.1A is 2.3miles #242 is 2.6miles

Trail Beginning:

Elevation 8,440 feet
Latitude 38.0029, Longitude – 107.6616
NAD 83 Datum
Use caution when crossing Hwy 550 to access the trailhead.

Trail Ending:

Elevation: #241 - 11,100' #241.1A - 12,350'
#242- 12,800'
#241 Ends at the junction near Yellow Jacket Mine. #241.1 A and #242 end at American Flats



Bear Creek trail is recognized as a National Recreation Trail because of its particularly unique and spectacular nature. The trail is steep and narrow with many switchbacks at the beginning. Travel time to the Yellow Jacket Mine is about a 4 to 5 hour hike. Distance to the mine is approximately 3.5 miles.

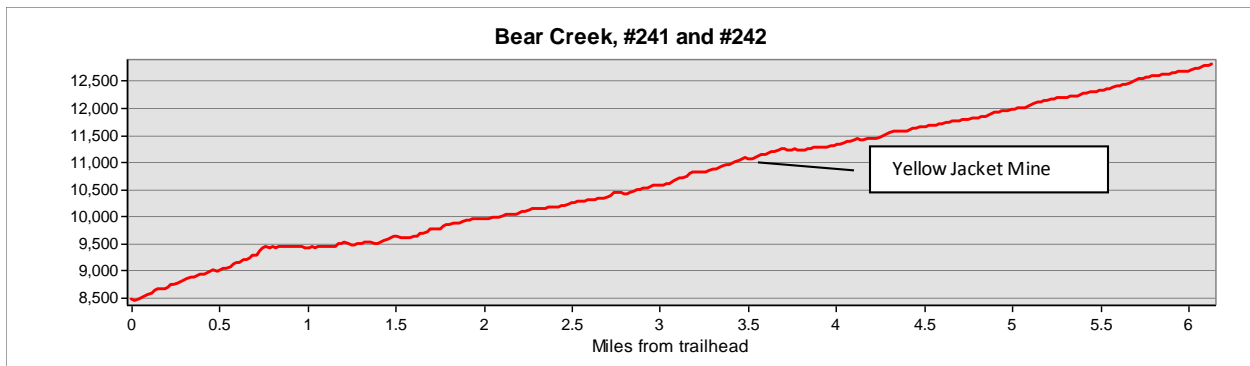
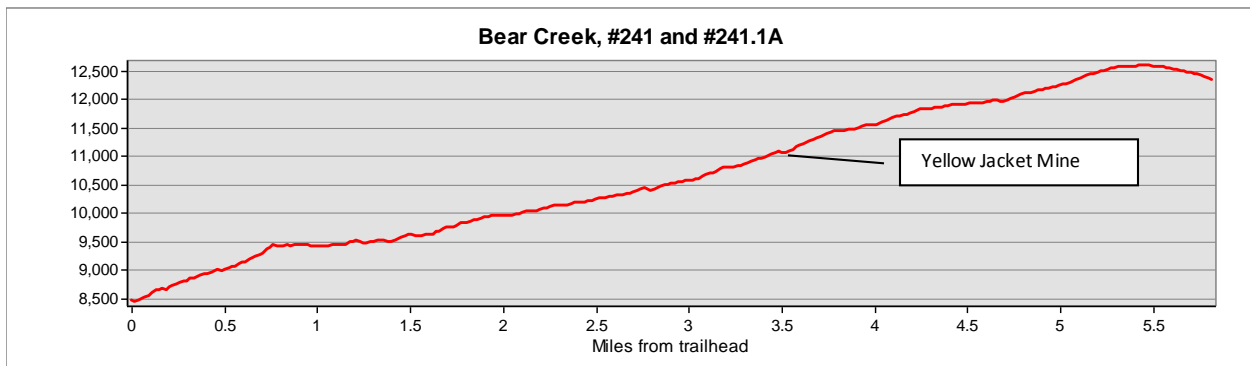
For about 1/2 of the trail's length there are many ledges and cliffs. The first section of the trail crosses a large talus field with unstable rock. Just after the switchbacks, the trail narrows with a sheer drop off. Hikers with a fear of heights may opt to turn around here. Travel off the trail is not advised and hikers should be cautious of falling rock. Hiking with dogs is not recommended. Camping sites are very limited. The first suitable location is within a mile of the Yellow Jacket mine.

The first 3.5 miles of the Bear Creek Trail from U.S. Highway 550 to the Yellow Jacket mine are included in the National Recreation Trail System. It is only a part of a system of trails in this area. At the Yellow Jacket mine, the trail forks. The south fork (#242) travels southeast to Engineer Mountain Pass. The north fork (#241.1A) ties into the Horsethief Trail on American Flats. The Bear Creek trail was constructed in the late 1800's for miner's access to claims along Bear Creek and as an alternate route over Engineer Mountain to avoid paying toll on the Million Dollar Highway. When originally constructed, it was a substantial, well-built route hewn out of rock ledges and supported by log and rock cribbing secured to the rocks with drill ore, rails and iron pine. Buildings, equipment shafts and adits still remain as evidence of the trails historic past.

A wide variety of geological structures can be seen along the trails. The lower portion of the trail switches back through quartzite and slate of the Uncompahgre formation. This formation is exposed only in this area south of Ouray and is the oldest Precambrian formation in Colorado that displays ripple marks and striations

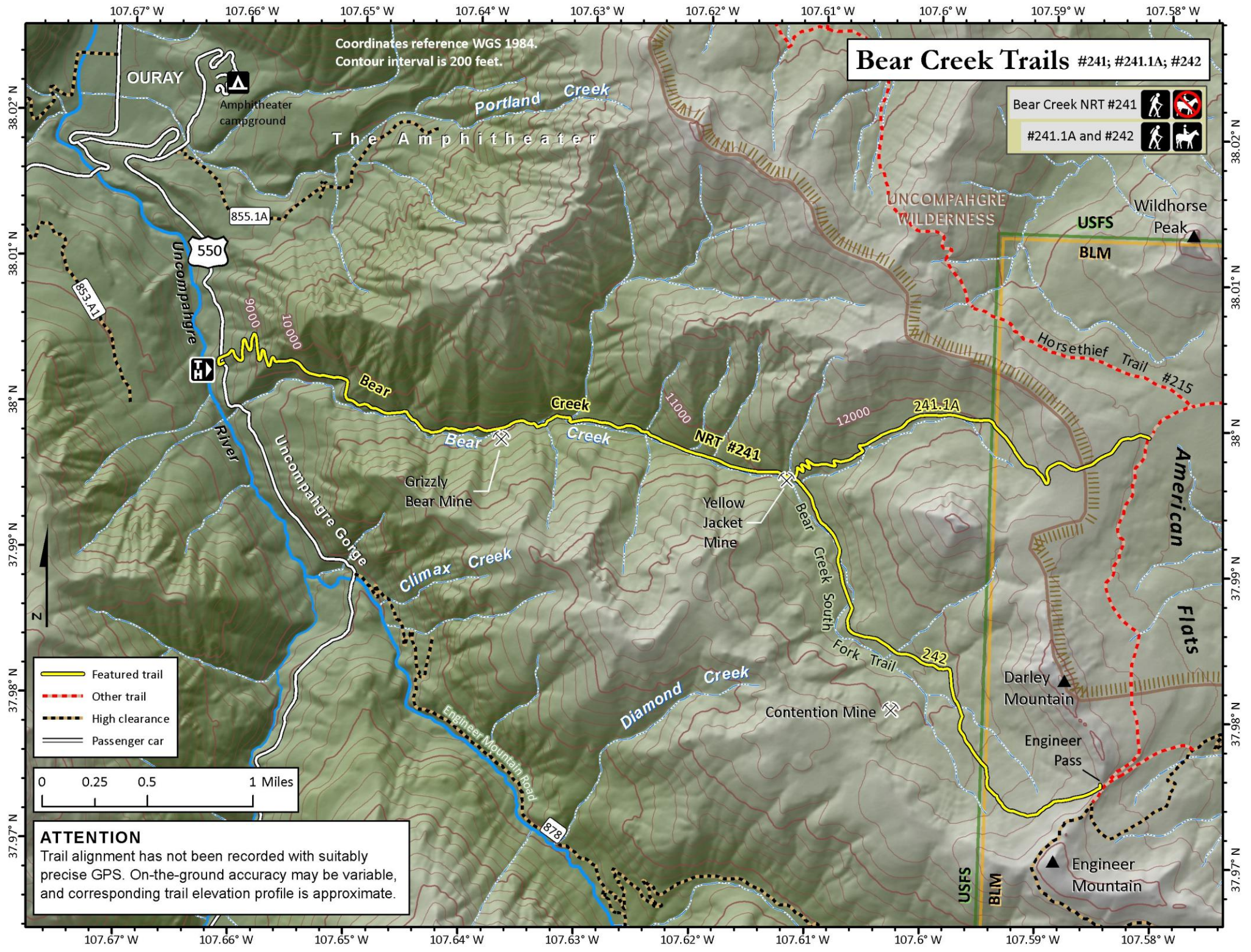
of graded bedding, displaying its sedimentary origins. The trail climbs into the San Juan formation composed of volcanic tuff. Here the rock is intersected by veins containing pyrite, with rich deposits of silver, lead and zinc sulfides. Higher along the trail, above timberline, the rock changes into the Silverton volcanic series. Its glaciated valley characterizes this section. A large rock glacier can be seen on the north-facing slope. Vegetation varies widely dependent upon the elevation. White fir, Douglas fir, gambel oak, and aspen typify the lower section. Engelmann spruce, sub-alpine fir and aspen grow along the central section of the trail. Still higher, the trees give way to grasses, sedges and forbs typical of alpine tundra. The principal big game animals in the area include elk, mule deer, and bighorn sheep. Mountain lions are occasionally seen. Other wildlife includes marmots, pikas, grouse, and ptarmigan.

Trail alignment follows the original route and design. Average tread width is 24 inches. The tread surface varies for solid rock to slate talus. Deterioration has occurred in some of the original cribbing and pinning. New Supports have been added, replacing portions where hazardous. Consistent grades, high elevation, cliffs, and rock types make the trail above average in difficulty for hikers not oriented to the types of trails in the Ouray area. With current improvements, the trail can be used for day trips or longer trips to the Grizzly Bear and Yellow Jacket mines. Reconstruction and new development are planned for connecting trails to Engineer Mountain and along the Horsethief trail to form a loop system.







ATTENTION





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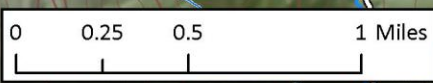


Bear Creek Trails #241; #241.1A; #242

Bear Creek NRT #241  

#241.1A and #242  

-  Featured trail
-  Other trail
-  High clearance
-  Passenger car



ATTENTION
 Trail alignment has not been recorded with suitably precise GPS. On-the-ground accuracy may be variable, and corresponding trail elevation profile is approximate.



Coordinates reference WGS 1984.
 Contour interval is 200 feet.



OURAY
 Amphitheater campground
 855.1A
 550
 853.1A
 Uncompahgre River
 The Amphitheater
 Portland Creek
 Bear Creek
 Climax Creek
 Diamond Creek
 Grizzly Bear Mine
 Yellow Jacket Mine
 Contention Mine
 Engineer Mountain Road
 878
 UNCOMPAHGRE WILDERNESS
 USFS
 BLM
 Wildhorse Peak
 Horsethief Trail #215
 American Flats
 Darley Mountain
 Engineer Pass
 Engineer Mountain
 241.1A
 242

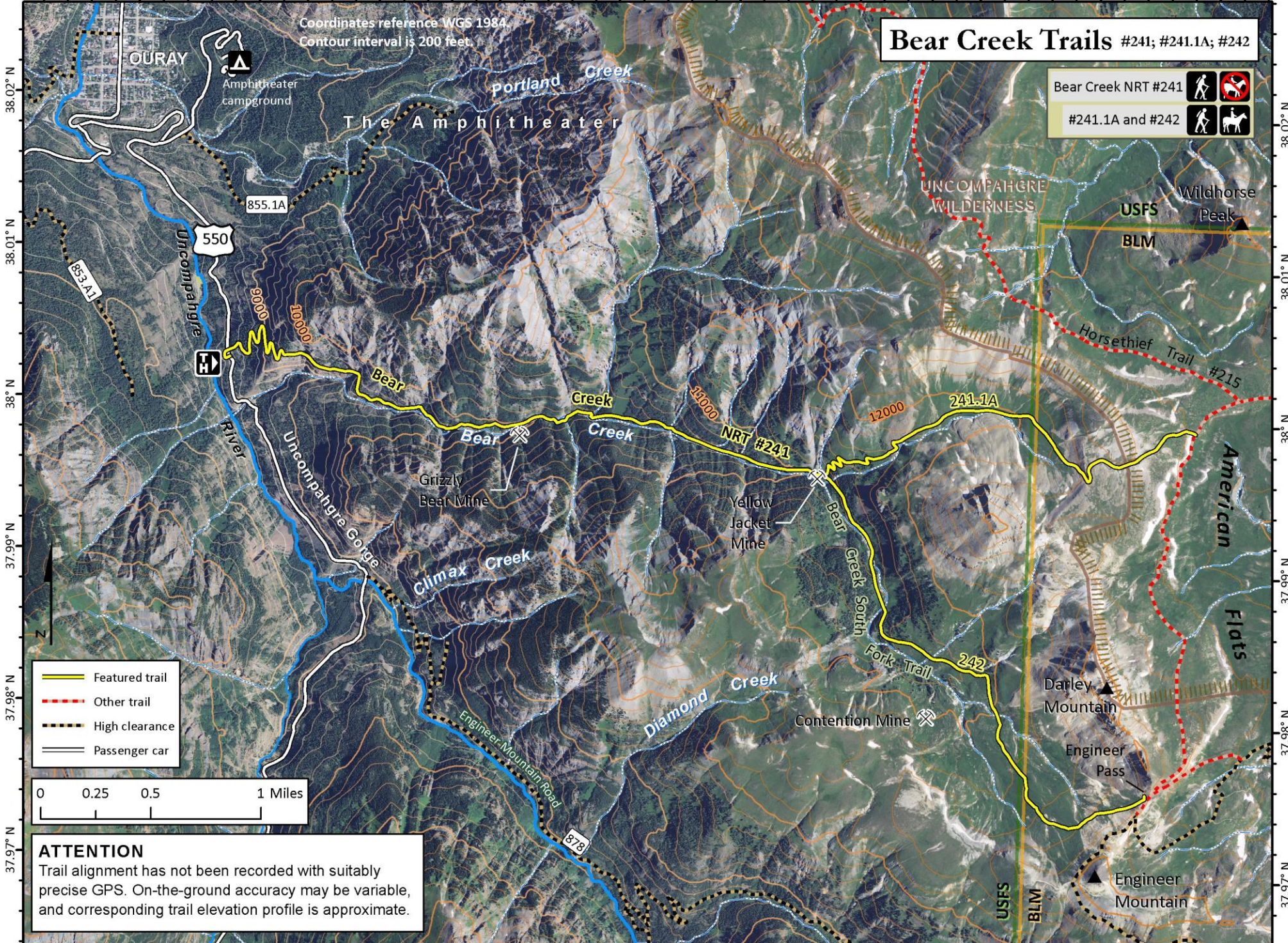
107.67° W 107.66° W 107.65° W 107.64° W 107.63° W 107.62° W 107.61° W 107.6° W 107.59° W 107.58° W

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Bear Creek NRT #241  

#241.1A and #242  



OURAY

Amphitheater
campground

Portland Creek

The Amphitheater

UNCOMPANGRE
WILDERNESS

USFS
BLM

Wildhorse
Peak

550

855.1A

853-A1

H

6000

10000

Bear

Creek

11000

NRT #241

12000

241.1A

Horsethief Trail #215

American
Flats

Bear

Creek

Climax Creek

Grizzly
Bear Mine

Yellow
Jacket
Mine

Bear
Creek
South

Fork Trail 242





Diamond Creek

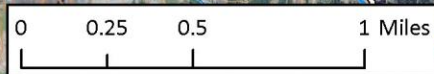
Contention Mine

Darley
Mountain

Engineer
Pass

Engineer
Mountain

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