

Aspen Ranger District  
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United States Department of Agriculture



**HIKING**

## **DIFFICULT CREEK TRAIL #2196**

**Length:** 3.0 miles one-way (4.8 km one-way)

**Trail Use:** Moderate

**Beginning Elevation:** 8,160 feet (2487 m)

**USGS Map(s):** Hayden Peak, Aspen

**Difficulty:** Moderate

**Ending Elevation:** 9,500 feet (2896 m)

**DAY/BACKPACKING OVERVIEW:** An enjoyable day hike through a variety of forest environments. A convenient hike for campers at Difficult Campground.

**ACCESS:** Drive 5 miles southeast of the Aspen Ranger District Office on Highway 82 and turn right into Difficult Campground. Travel 1/2 mile and park in the picnic area on the right. The trailhead is in the left corner of the lot.

**NARRATIVE:** From the parking lot follow the trail to a gravel road which turns right toward the Roaring Fork River. At the river the trail turns left. After crossing a wooden bridge over the river the trail turns right and climbs the bank. The trail then crosses a broad sagebrush area and reaches Difficult Creek about 1/2 of a mile from the trailhead. It continues through a pine and fir forest crossing a side stream at about 2 miles. It then enters a rocky area and begins a steep ascent. Good views of Aspen and Independence Pass can be seen from here. At 2-1/2 miles the trail levels, enters a forest, and follows Difficult Creek for the rest of the hike. Soon the remains of four old cabins can be seen. The maintained trail ends here. The unmaintained trail is covered with boulders and fallen trees. Beyond this point, the wilderness is classified as pristine. Users are expected to use orienteering and map reading skills.

**ETHICS/REGULATIONS:** Difficult Creek is within the Collegiate Peaks Wilderness, please educate yourself about Wilderness Ethics and the following rules:

- \* **DOGS MUST BE LEASHED** out of consideration for both other people and wildlife.
- \* Limit group sizes to 15 people and a maximum combination of 25 people and stock/pack animals.
- \* **SANITATION** - bury human waste 100 feet from water and 6 inches in the soil.
- \* Lightweight campstoves are recommended and required above the timberline.

**PACK IT IN—PACK IT OUT!! LEAVE NO TRACE!!**

This map is intended for use as a general guide only, not for actual land navigation. The White River National Forest suggests purchasing a topographical trail map prior to your hiking trip.

ASPEN-SOPRIS RANGER DISTRICT WHITE RIVER NATIONAL FOREST

DIFFICULT CREEK TRAIL #2196

106°47.000' W WGS84 106°46.000' W

