



# HIKING

FOREST SERVICE

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF  
AGRICULTURE

ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION

NATIONAL FOREST – San Juan  
RANGER DISTRICT - Columbine

Date: February 2003



## LITTLE ELK CREEK TRAIL #515

Length: 13.0 mi (20.8 km.)

**Use:** Medium

**Difficulty:** More difficult  
**USGS Map (s)** Elk Creek and  
Electra Lake

**Starting Elevation:** 10,400'  
Top of Purgatory (Strawberry  
Patch)

**Ending Elevation:** 7,800'  
Hermosa Trail ½ mile above  
Dutch Creek proper

**Recommended Season**  
Summer/Fall

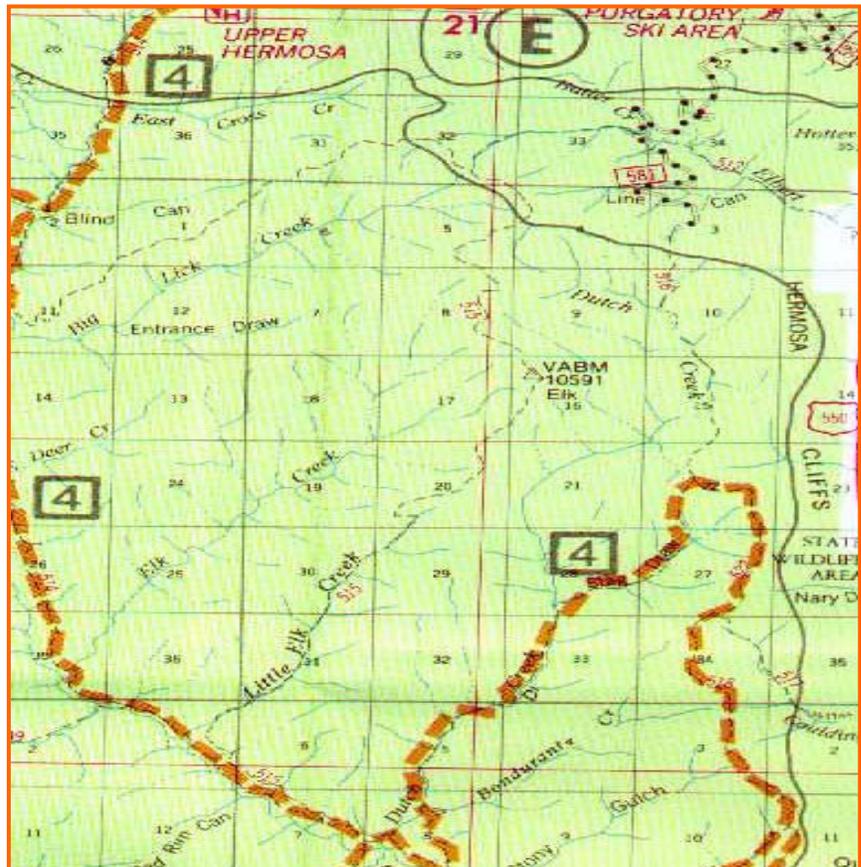
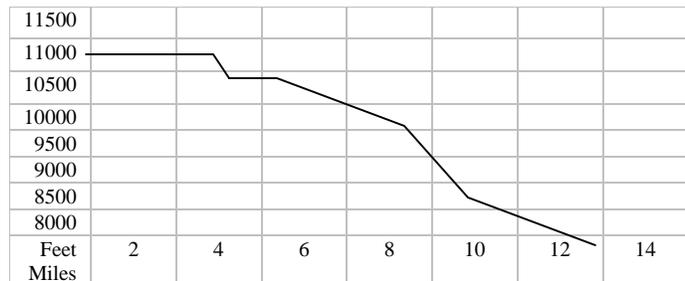
**Access # 1:** Little Elk Trail can be accessed by taking U.S. 550 from Durango, 26 miles north to Durango Mountain Resort. From the ski area take Hermosa Park Road FDR # 578 to Elbert Creek Road FDR # 581, turn left (south) and follow the main dirt road about 8 miles. The road ends in a cul-de-sac (plenty of parking) and the trailhead is in the south corner of the cul-de-sac.

### Attractions & Considerations

This is a quiet trail with beautiful views. Walking the first few miles, the La Plata Mountains and Hermosa Valley are within view. There is no water during the first few miles, but when you reach the cabin there is a creek a few yards to the east. As with most water in the forest, it should be filtered, to avoid Giardia. The trail then follows this creek for a few miles before veering toward the east, to tie in with the Hermosa Creek Trail.

### Recommended Season

Spring Summer Fall Winter



*Scan of the San Juan National Forest Map*  
Forest Service maps and other publications are available at the Public Lands Center, in the Durango Tech Center, ½ mile west of Durango off Highway 160; or by calling (970) 247-4874.  
[www.sjma.org](http://www.sjma.org)