



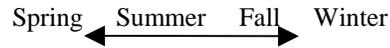
**HIKING - FOREST SERVICE - ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

NATIONAL FOREST – San Juan RANGER DISTRICT - Columbine

Updated: May, 2003

Vallecito Creek Trail from Johnson Creek to Hunchback Pass #529 Length: 9.4 mi / 15.1 km

Recommended Season



Use: Moderate to Heavy
Difficulty: Easy, Moderate

USGS Map (s):
Columbine Pass, Storm King Peak

Starting Elevation: 9500'
Bridge from Johnson Creek

Ending Elevation: 12,500'
Hunchback Pass

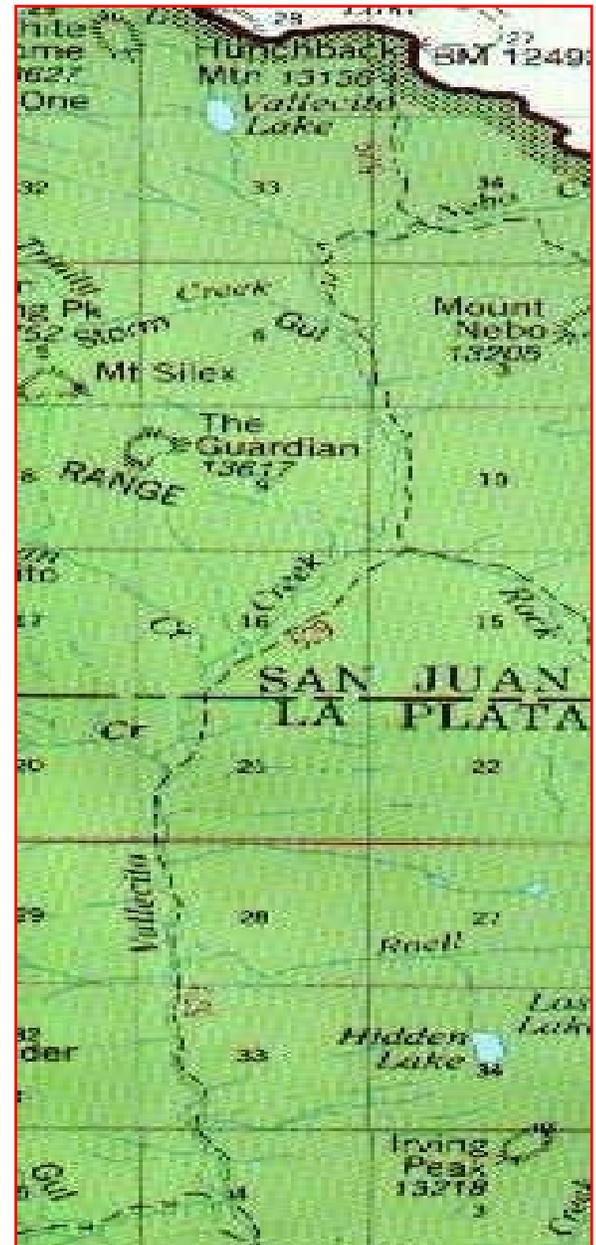
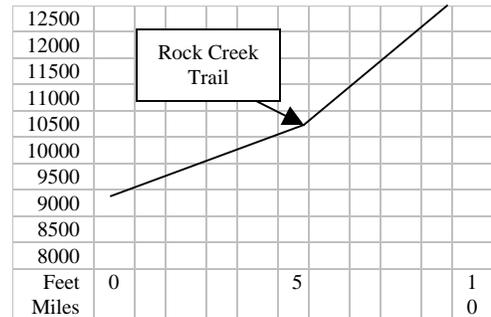
Access # 1:
Junction of Johnson Creek Trail and Vallecito Creek Trail. Access is from Needle Creek/Chicago Basin Trail over Columbine Pass to Johnson Creek. Please see the trail sheet for Needle Creek to Johnson Creek.

Attractions & Considerations:
The trail climbs gradually as you follow Vallecito Creek north. You will cross Vallecito Creek and continue on through meadows and aspen groves. After 1½ miles you will cross Roell Creek. Look for waterfalls, cascades, and pools; the trail steepens as you reach the Continental Divide Trail. The steepest part of the hike is the ascent to Hunchback Pass at 9.4 miles. The alpine meadows are full of blooming wildflowers in late July and in August. This area has excellent views and photographic possibilities. Water can be found off the trail in most of the tributaries, but due to Giardia it should be filtered. As with all high-altitude areas, storms can move in rapidly, bringing severe wind, lightning, rain, snow, or hail—at any time of the year. Plan accordingly.

Fishing Considerations:
Wild rainbow, cutthroat, and brook trout are found in Vallecito Creek. The fish are appropriate for the size of the stream, generally 8-to-12-inch range. Deeper water may have trout of 16 inches, but they are not found often. The river offers some of the finest fly-fishing found anywhere. The entire Vallecito within the Weminuche Wilderness is managed as fly-and-lure-only water, with a bag and possession limit of 2. Please check the fishing regulations regarding limits, allowable lures, and restrictions on certain lakes, rivers, etc.

Weminuche Wilderness Regulations:

- Group size is limited to 15 people.
- Camping is not allowed within 100 feet of any water source.
- Outfitter-guides who receive any form of compensation must obtain a special-use permit to operate on public land.
- Possession of motorized equipment and mechanized means of transport are not permitted.
- Recreational livestock are prohibited from being restrained within 100 feet of lakeshores and streams or within riparian areas.



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