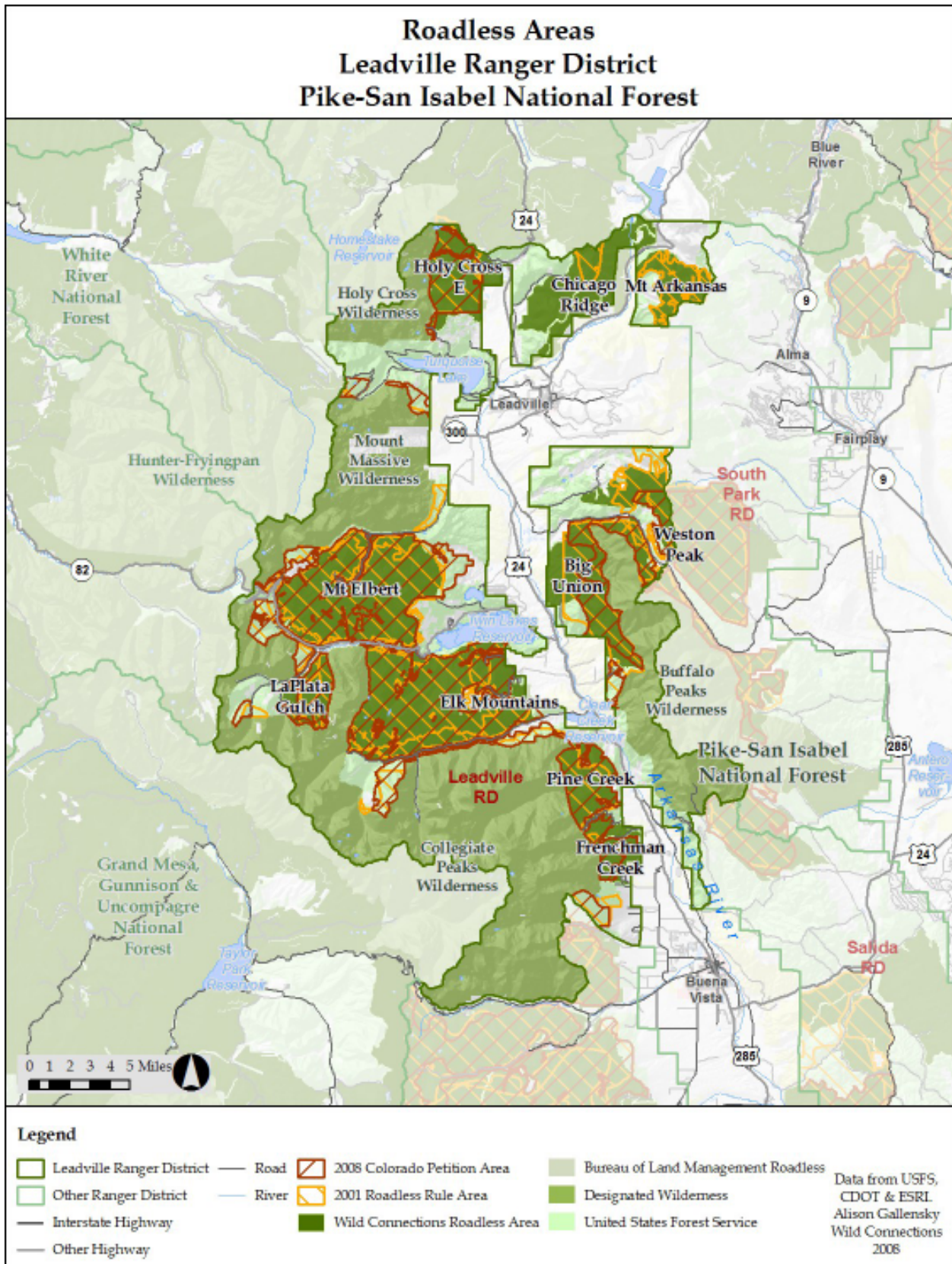


## 2. Leadville Ranger District



## USFS Roadless Areas

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Elk Mountains  
Holy Cross East  
La Plata Gulch  
Mt. Arkansas  
Mt. Elbert  
Pine Creek

## Additional areas recommended for the Roadless Inventory

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Chicago Ridge  
Frenchman Creek

Maps for each Roadless Area display these boundaries: the extent of the area that Wild Connections found in field surveys shown in dark green; the USFS Inventoried Roadless Area of 2001 shown as a yellow crosshatch; the proposed 2008 Forest Service boundary shown as a red crosshatch; and in some cases contiguous roadless BLM land shown with a black outline.

### Map Legend

Legend			
Leadville Ranger District	Road	2008 Colorado Petition Area	Bureau of Land Management Roadless
Other Ranger District	River	2001 Roadless Rule Area	Designated Wilderness
Interstate Highway	Wild Connections Roadless Area	United States Forest Service	Data from USFS, CDOT & ESRL Alison Gallensky Wild Connections 2008
Other Highway			

## Elk Mountains Roadless Area

### Leadville Ranger District Pike-San Isabel National Forest

**R**ising above Twin Lakes Reservoir, the Elk Mountains Roadless Area lies between two arms of the Collegiate Peaks Wilderness. The RA contains a spectacular and pristine basin with large peaks, lakes, and opportunity for solitude.



Looking across Twin Lakes Reservoir to the Elk Mountains. Photo Gary Sims

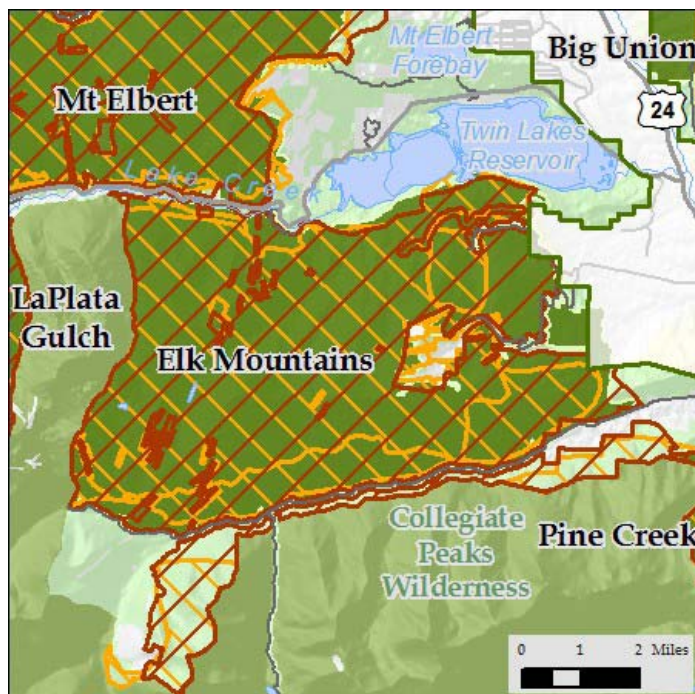
#### ***Location and Boundaries***

The Elk Mountains Roadless Area is in Chaffee and Lake Counties equidistant between Buena Vista and Leadville. The northern boundary runs along the Colorado Trail near Twin Lakes and the Independence Pass Road, until it reaches the northern spur of the Collegiate Peaks where it turns south following the Wilderness boundary. County road 390 is the southern boundary. The eastern boundary is defined by several National Forest or BLM roads and includes a large cherrystem that excludes the Columbine Mine.

Nearly all of the Elk Mountains Roadless Area is included in the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule and proposed 2008 Colorado Roadless Rule.

#### ***Elk Mountains Roadless Area***

*USFS name: Elk Mountain-Collegiate North*



#### ***Ecological Values***

Elevations within the RA range from approximately 9,500 feet near Twin Lakes to 13,933 atop Mount Hope, its chief landmark.

The west-central part of the Elk Mountains Roadless Area is alpine grasslands and shrubs and barren rock. Areas of Engelmann spruce-subalpine fir ring these higher elevations on the north, east and south, with significant stands of lodgepole pine and aspen on the northeast and east. The southern lowest elevations areas are aspen with some bristlecone/limber pine and Douglas-fir. La Plata Basin and Crystal Lake Creek area on the northwest boundary exhibits good landscape integration and a

rare plant community of bristlecone pine/Thurber's fescue, The Elk Mountains area has numerous creeks draining the central elevations that have typical riparian vegetation.

Elk and mule deer summer range is found across the RA in appropriate habitats, with some winter range in its eastern portion, and some of the winter concentrations of mule deer extend from the Arkansas Valley into the far southwest side. Two large elk production areas are found across the northeastern side and along the south side in the Clear Creek drainage. Arms of the larger Arkansas Valley elk migration corridor surround the Elk Mountains area on three sides: on the north in Lake Creek between Mount Elbert and Elk Mountains, on the east parallel to the Arkansas River at the edge of the RA, and on the south in the Clear Creek drainage between the RA and Collegiate Peaks Wilderness. Bighorn sheep summer range is located across all but the east side, with winter range on the southern third, winter concentrations on the far south and a large production area on the south above Clear Creek. There is winter and summer range for mountain goats, with two production areas. Mountain lion and black bear are found in forested areas. Lynx overall, denning, and winter habitat is found along the north, east, and south sides. Radio-collared lynx have been recorded by the Colorado Division of Wildlife in the area, and the Forest Service has identified an important linkage from the east side of the Elk Mountains, across the Arkansas Valley to the Buffalo Peaks Wilderness in the Mosquito Range Complex. SREP has identified a lower priority linkage that runs north-south between the central Elk Mountains to the east edge of the Mount Elbert Roadless Area.

### ***Conservation and Community Values***

The SREP Vision shows the whole area (excluding the Columbine Mine) as Core Wilderness. LaPlata proposed Research Natural Area is on the boundary of Elk Mountains and the Wilderness.

The Colorado Trail goes through the RA, and the Willis Gulch Trail goes into a spectacular and pristine basin with large peaks, lakes, and solitude. Additional recreation opportunities near the RA include several campgrounds, scenic driving up Independence Pass and water sports at the Twin Lakes Reservoir.



## Holy Cross East Roadless Area Leadville Ranger District Pike-San Isabel National Forest

**H**oly Cross East Roadless Area is contiguous with the Holy Cross Wilderness and extends east to the Forest boundary near Leadville. The area is almost entirely forested providing contrast with the higher peaks in the Wilderness.

### *Location and Boundaries*

The Holy Cross East Roadless Area is about 10 miles northwest of Leadville in Lake County. On the south and east it extends to the Forest boundary; on the north the RA boundary flows FT 1500 to Slide Lake, and the western boundary is contiguous with Holy Cross Wilderness. There are several cherrystems that exclude old routes including the 4WD access road to the Tenth Mountain Division Hut.

Wild Connections' RA is somewhat larger than that of the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule and proposed 2008 Colorado Roadless Rule.

### *Ecological Values*

Vegetation in the Holy Cross East Roadless Area is lodgepole pine on the east with Engelmann spruce-subalpine fir on the



*Trail sign in Holy Cross East. Photo by Naomi Yoder*

### *Holy Cross East Roadless Area* *USFS name: Holy Cross*



west, interspersed with some montane meadows, mountain shrubland and wetlands. Several streams drain the areas toward the east including West Tennessee Creek, providing habitat for riparian species.

There is elk summer range across the area, some winter range on the south east, a sizeable elk production area on the north-west edge, and an elk migration corridor runs along its eastern edge toward Tennessee Pass. Mountain lion and black bear are found in the area. Holy Cross East is crossed by a very high priority linkage for lynx, extending from the Holy Cross Wilderness in the White River National Forest eastward into the Mosquito Range complex by way of Tennessee Pass. The linkage was identified by both SREP and the Forest

Service, and SREP lists the portion north of the Continental Divide as one of the twelve highest priority linkages in Colorado. Radio-collared lynx have been recorded by the Colorado Division of Wildlife in the vicinity.

*Conservation and Community Values*

Holy Cross East is listed by the SREP Vision as a low compatible use area

There are many recreation opportunities on the Colorado Trail, at Uncle Bud's Cabin on the south and the Tenth Mountain Division Hut on the north, and on other trails into the Holy Cross Wilderness. This sign attests to the options available to hikers, skiers and other users.



## La Plata Gulch Roadless Area Leadville Ranger District Pike-San Isabel National Forest

**L**a Plata Gulch is in an old mining area surrounded by the Collegiate Peaks Wilderness southwest of Mt. Elbert with sweeping views of beautiful alpine tundra and the adjacent mining scars.

### *Location and Boundaries*

The La Plata Gulch Roadless Area is contiguous with the Collegiate Peaks Wilderness on the eastern and southern boundary, and roads 382 in Sayres Gulch and 391 define the west and north extent. It is in Chaffee County and includes the western slope of La Plata Gulch, but the eastern slope and La Plata Peak itself is within the Wilderness

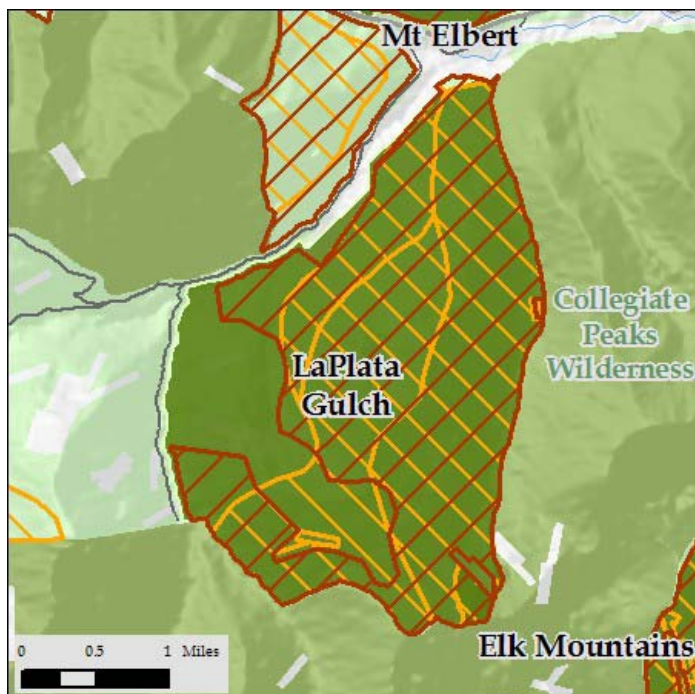


*Dramatic view of mining scars in La Plata Gulch. Routes are now closed to motor vehicles. Photo by Naomi Yoder.*

The RA as inventoried by Wild Connections is larger than that of the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule and proposed 2008 Colorado Roadless Rule.

### *LaPlata Gulch Roadless Area*

*USFS name: Elk Mountain-Collegiate West*



### *Ecological Values*

Alpine grasslands and shrubs and barren rock dominate most of the La Plata Gulch Roadless Area with Engelmann spruce-subalpine fir in the lower drainages on the north, northeast and west. Lake Creek, Sayres Gulch and La Plata Gulch have riparian species.

There is summer range for mule deer, elk, bighorn sheep and mountain goats in the La Plata Gulch Roadless Area. There is a small elk calving area on the far north side in the Lake Creek drainage. Mountain lion and black bear are found in forested areas, and lynx habitat is very sparse around the north and west edges of the area in the Sayres and La Plata Gulches, although radio-collared lynx have been recorded by the Colorado Division of Wildlife in the vicinity.

Some of the headwaters areas east of Sayres Gulch are part of the larger watershed for greenback cutthroat trout identified by SREP.

***Conservation and Community Values***

The SREP Vision shows the RA as core wilderness. The proposed La Plata Gulch Research Natural Area is on the east side.

There are mountaineering opportunities in this area, with a rough trail to La Plata Peak and another trailhead into the Wilderness in Sayres Gulch. The larger area is known for its silver and gold mining, and while all of the mines are now defunct, the scars remain. One should not drink the highly toxic water in the La Plata, Sayres and the South Fork of Lake Creeks!



# Mt. Arkansas Roadless Area

## Leadville Ranger District Pike-San Isabel National Forest

**M**t. Arkansas is south of the Climax Mine, the large open pit mine that for many years shipped out tons of molybdenum. In this area, and in the surrounding high country, one can get a sense of the massiveness of the mountains and what a major mining area this was at one time.



Exposed rock in Mt. Arkansas. Photo by Adam Wright

### *Location and Boundaries*

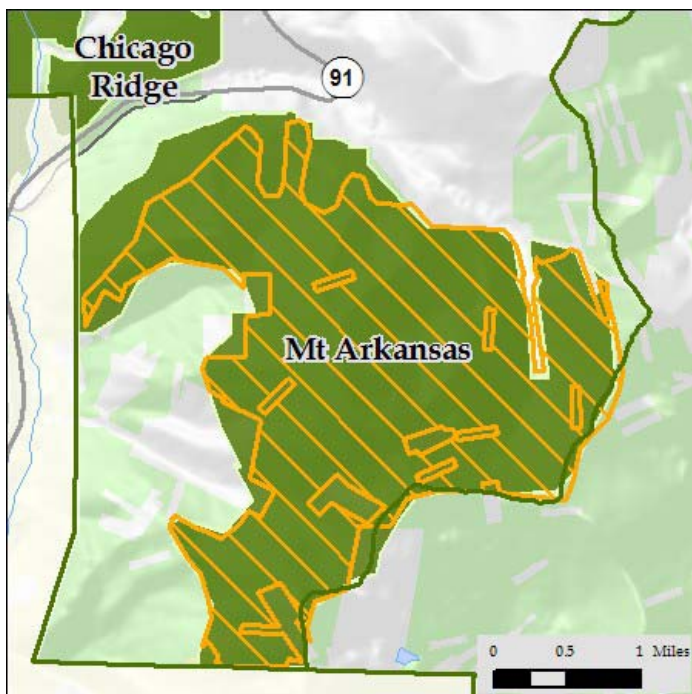
The Mount Arkansas Roadless Area is located in Lake County south of Fremont Pass and the Climax Mine.

The RA boundary follows the old Colorado and Southern Railroad tracks on the northwest and the Forest boundary on the north, south and east across the steep rugged terrain just below the summit of Mount Tweto, Mount Buckskin, Mount Democrat and Traver Peak.

Mt. Arkansas Roadless Area was included in the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule and eliminated from the proposed 2008 Colorado Roadless Rule.

### *Mt. Arkansas Roadless Area*

*USFS name: n/a*



### *Ecological Values*

Mount Arkansas at 13,795 feet and nearby 13,672 foot Mount Tweto are the headwaters for the East Fork of the Arkansas River. Evidence of past mining activities includes tailings and mine shafts.

The Mount Arkansas Roadless Area is almost entirely alpine tundra including large areas of bare tundra. Drainages to the west feed into the East Fork of the Arkansas River located east of the railroad tracks. Rare and sensitive plant species include Mingan, common, lance leafed, reflected, Western, and least moonworts, and Penland alpine fen mustard. Water sedge montane wet meadows, strapleaf willow montane willow carr, and Wolf's willow/water sedge subalpine riparian willow carr are sensitive natural communities found in this area.

The entire RA is summer range for elk and mule deer. Bighorn sheep are found in the eastern half of the RA during the summer. A large elk calving area between the Arkansas River and Mount Arkansas overlaps the northwestern corner of the RA. Although the tundra environment is not typical lynx habitat, the Southern Rockies Ecosystem Project identified a high priority lynx linkage west across Chicago Ridge and Tennessee Pass to Holy Cross Wilderness, which corresponds with the large linkage identified by the Forest Service

### ***Conservation and Community Values***

Most of the Mount Arkansas Roadless Area is in the Mosquito Range PCA with outstanding biodiversity significance, and the southern half is in The Nature Conservancy's Mosquito Range portfolio area of moderately high conservation value. Top of the World Area of Critical Environmental Concern lies less than two miles south of the RA and includes Mosquito Pass. The Southern Rockies Wildlands Network Vision proposes that the Mt. Arkansas Roadless Area be managed for low use.

Recreational opportunities include hiking and wildlife viewing.



## Mt. Elbert Roadless Area

### Leadville Ranger District Pike-San Isabel National Forest

The Mt. Elbert Roadless Area is most famous for its namesake, the highest peak in Colorado. At 14,433 feet, it is one of several 14ers on the Sawatch Range southwest of Leadville.

#### *Location and Boundaries*

The Mount Elbert Roadless Area is in Lake County and lies roughly between the Mount Massive and Collegiate Peaks Wildernesses, with FR 110 along Halfmoon Creek on the north and Independence Pass Road on the south separating Mt. Elbert RA from the Wildernesses. The eastern boundary is defined by the Colorado Trail, forest routes and old mining claims, while the western boundary is the Independence Pass Road and the south edge of the Champion Mine private parcel.

All of the Mt. Elbert RA is included in the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule and proposed 2008 Colorado Roadless Rule.

#### *Ecological Values*

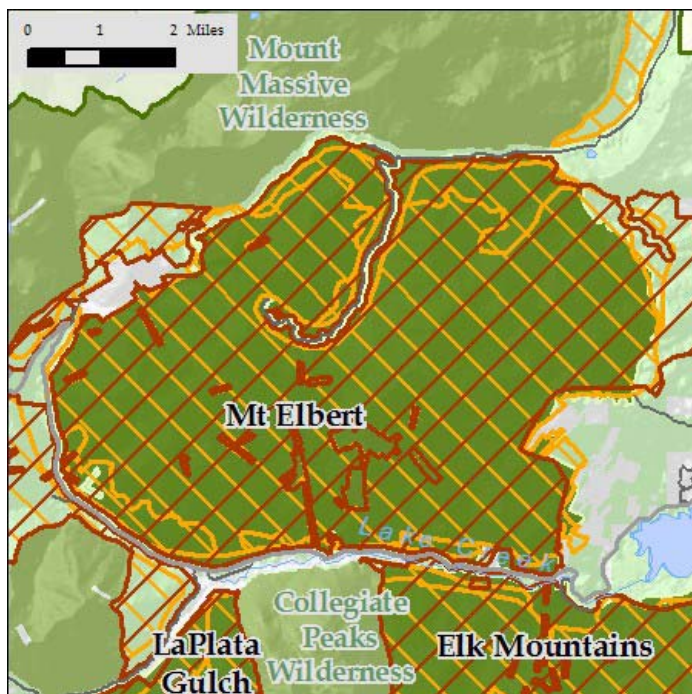
As Colorado's highest peak at 14,433 feet, it is not surprising that most of the Mount Elbert Roadless Area is alpine,



*Alpine flowers contrast with the bare rocks of Mt. Elbert. Photo by Rob Koran*

#### *Mt. Elbert Roadless Area*

*USFS name: Mt. Elbert*



including alpine grasslands and shrubs, wetlands and barren rock. A number of streams drain the area, including Halfmoon and South Halfmoon Creeks on the north and Lake Creek on the south.

Engelmann spruce-subalpine fir can be found in the lower areas around the edges and in the river valleys. There are lodgepole pine and aspen on the east and south sides with bristlecone/limber pine on the south boundary. There is a notable natural community of bristlecone pine/Thurber's fescue lower montane woodlands along the south central boundary. Rare plants found here are northern twayblade and rockcress draba.

Elk and mule deer have summer range across the area, but winter range and production areas are located east of the RA in the Arkansas Valley. A large migration corridor for elk runs between the Mount Elbert and Elk Mountains Roadless Areas. Bighorn sheep summer range is located across the RA, with winter range on the south half, winter concentrations on the far south, and a large production area on the south above Lake Creek. There is summer range for mountain goats on the north side. Mountain lion and black bear are found in forested areas. White-tailed ptarmigan habitat exists over a large portion of the RA. Lynx habitat is very sparse around the lower edges of the area in the stream drainages and on the eastern side, but radio-collared lynx have been recorded by the Colorado Division of Wildlife in the vicinity. SREP has identified a lower priority linkage that runs north-south between the east edge of the Mount Elbert Roadless Area to the central Elk Mountains Roadless Area.

### ***Conservation and Community Values***

A portion of the southern part of Mount Elbert between Echo Creek and Monitor Gulch is rated as a PCA of high significance. The SREP Vision shows the whole RA as core wilderness.

Mt. Elbert is managed for nonmotorized recreation, although there is one cherrystemmed jeep route which follows South Half Moon Creek up to the Iron Mike mine high on the northwest side. There are other historical mines in the area, notably the Champion Mine which is excluded from the RA. There are several trailheads on the south and east, with two leading to the summit. Campgrounds on three sides and at Twin Lakes Reservoir serve the many hikers and climbers who hope to bag a peak - the ultimate peak. The trails are heavily used, but most of the RA is inaccessible to anyone except the most dedicated bushwhacker.



## Pine Creek Roadless Area

### Leadville Ranger District Pike-San Isabel National Forest

**P**ine Creek Roadless Area lies between the eastern front of the Collegiate Peaks Wilderness and the Arkansas Valley providing lower elevation habitats to complement the higher parts of the Wilderness.

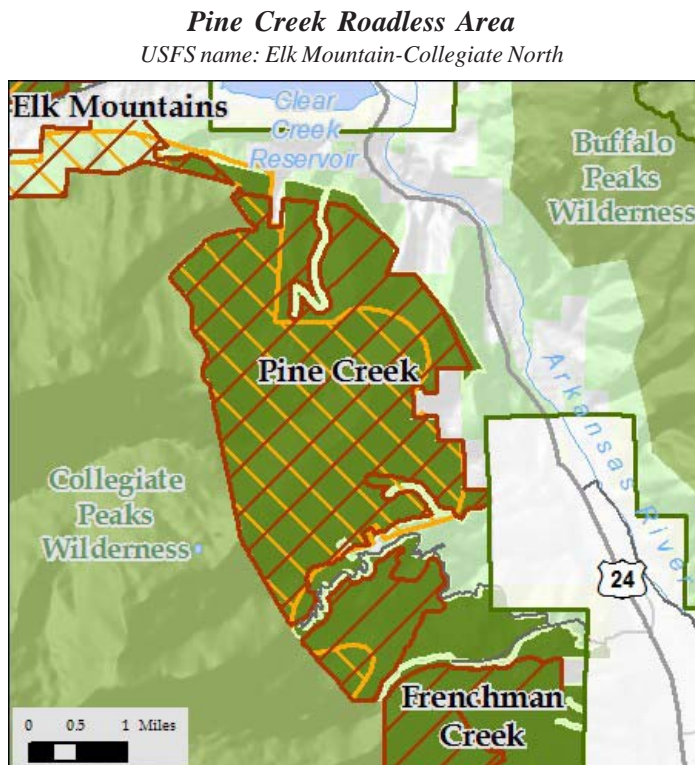
#### *Location and Boundaries*

The Pine Creek Roadless Area, located in Chaffee County about 15 miles northwest of Buena Vista, is contiguous to the Wilderness on the west. The northern and eastern boundary roughly follows the forest boundary, and FR 386 is the southern boundary. FR 387 is a large cherrystem in to the RA leading to the Wilderness boundary.



Trail crossing Pine Creek at the Collegiate Peaks Wilderness boundary.  
Photo by James Blampied

The Pine Creek Roadless Area as inventoried by Wild Connections is larger than that of the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule and proposed 2008 Colorado Roadless Rule.



#### *Ecological Values*

The Pine Creek Roadless Area is primarily lodgepole pine with scattered aspen and Engelmann spruce-subalpine fir, and there are riparian species in the creek corridors.

The whole area is elk summer range with winter range found in its northern and eastern portions. Several elk calving areas are scattered across the RA, and the large Arkansas Valley migration corridor runs along its eastern edge. Mule deer find summer range across the whole area, with winter range on the extreme eastern side and out into the Arkansas Valley. American peregrine falcon has been recorded on the east side. Bighorn sheep production area and winter ranges are located in the Pine Creek drainage, with summer range across the north part of the part area. Mountain lion and black bear are found here.

The whole area is lynx habitat, including winter and denning habitat in the western half, and radio-collared lynx have been recorded by the Colorado Division of Wildlife in the vicinity. A linkage for lynx goes from the Collegiate Peak Wilderness across the Pine Creek Roadless Area to the Buffalo Peaks Wilderness in the Mosquito Range complex.

***Conservation and Community Values***

The SREP Vision shows the area as core wilderness.

Recreation includes hiking on FT 1467 which crosses the central part of the RA and connects to the Colorado Trail inside the Wilderness.



## Chicago Ridge Roadless Area

### Leadville Ranger District Pike-San Isabel National Forest

The Chicago Ridge Roadless Area forms a rough triangle located just north of Leadville along the Continental Divide between Fremont Pass and Tennessee Pass.

#### *Location and Boundaries*

Chicago Ridge, at about 12,600 feet in elevation, spans the Continental Divide along the boundary of the San Isabel and White River National Forests. The National Forest boundary along the Continental Divide forms the northern boundary of the area, with Ski Cooper and Forest Roads 102, 189 and 109, which is cherrystemmed into the area, making up the western boundary. Colorado Highway 91 runs along the east and southeast boundary, allowing the RA to include some roadless state and BLM lands. On the south, FR102/102A delimits the area.

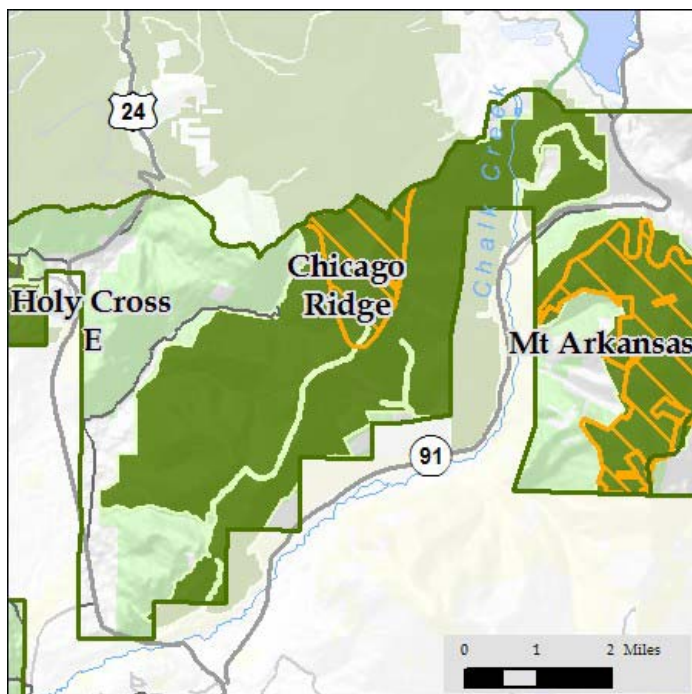


Looking south along Chicago Ridge from Fremont Pass. Photo by Paul

The Chicago Ridge Roadless Area as inventoried by Wild Connections is much larger than that of the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule and proposed 2008 Colorado Roadless Rule.

#### *Chicago Ridge Roadless Area*

*USFS name: Chicago Ridge*



#### *Ecological Values*

The Chicago Ridge Roadless Area is contiguous with the nearly 8,000-acre Chicago Ridge Roadless Area north of the Continental Divide on the White River Forest, which in turn is adjacent to nearly 15,000 acres of the Ptarmigan Hills Roadless Area, thus providing a huge swath of connected habitat for wildlife.

Lying between the headwaters of the Arkansas River and the East Fork of the Arkansas River, it includes 12,867 foot Buckeye Peak and 12,126 foot Mount Zion.

The eastern half of Chicago Ridge is primarily alpine tundra, but Engelmann spruce-subalpine fir lodgepole pine, and some aspen stands are found in lower elevations on the far east, south, and western portion.

The Colorado Natural Heritage Program located the rare dwarf hawksbeard along with sensitive Drummond's willow/mesic forb alpine meadows and Rocky Mountain fir-Engelmann spruce/Drummond's willow montane riparian forest communities in this RA.

The entire area is summer range for elk and mule deer. Elk calve in the western half of the RA and along with mule deer find some winter habitat in the southwest portion of the area. Most of the forested area is potential habitat for lynx, and the Colorado Department of Wildlife has recorded radio signals from reintroduced lynx in the area. Both the SREP and the Forest Service consider the Tennessee Pass area to be a high priority lynx linkage connecting Chicago Ridge to Holy Cross Wilderness and to the north into the White River National Forest.

### ***Conservation and Community Values***

The eastern edge of the Chicago Ridge Roadless Area is adjacent to both the East Fork of the Arkansas River at Delmonica Gulch PCA, of very high biodiversity significance and The Nature Conservancy's Mosquito Range conservation area, of moderately high value. The southwestern portion of the RA is overlapped by TNC's Elk Ridge portfolio area of moderately low conservation value. The Southern Rockies Wildlands Network Vision proposes that the Chicago Ridge Roadless Area be managed for low use.

The area provides a wealth of scenic and recreational opportunities as well as privacy and solitude. Much of the area is dotted with old exploratory mine sites and in some places, past logging activity has left fields of nothing but stumps. Ski Cooper is on the northwest corner and Chicago Ridge is a popular area for snowcat skiing; however, most of the skiing occurs in the White River National Forest portion.



## Frenchman Creek Roadless Area

### Leadville Ranger District Pike-San Isabel National Forest

**F**renchmen Creek is another of the roadless areas that lie along the eastern edge of the Collegiate Peaks Wilderness that provide mid-elevation habitats and access to the Wilderness.

#### *Location and Boundaries*

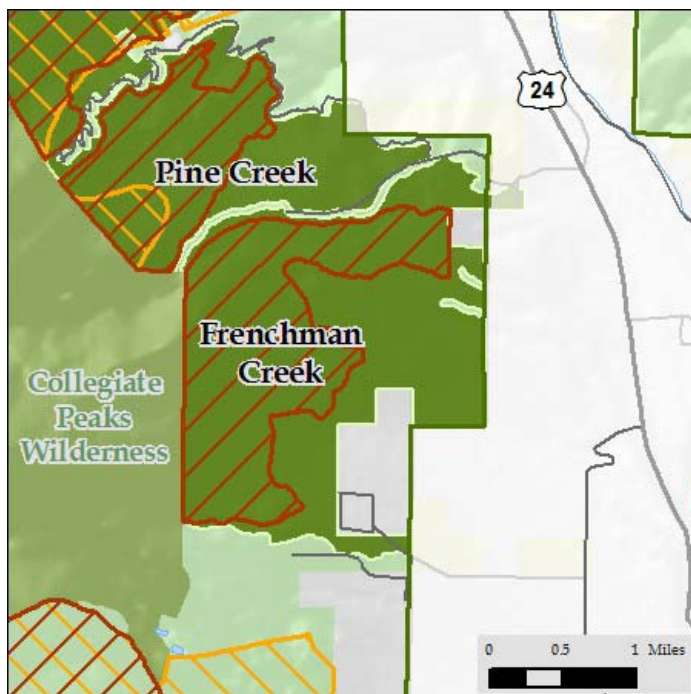
The Frenchman Creek roadless area is contiguous on the west to the Collegiate Peaks Wilderness between forest road 386 to the north and forest road 368 to the south. The eastern boundary follows the Forest Service boundary. Both of these roads provide access to trailheads leading into the Collegiate Peaks Wilderness and to the Colorado Trail, which is inside the Wilderness here.



*Old cabin ruins just inside the Collegiate Peaks Wilderness west of Frenchman Gulch provide historical interest. Photo by Patty Steinholtz*

The Frenchman Creek Roadless Area was not included in the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule, but more than half of it is in the proposed 2008 Colorado Roadless Rule.

#### *Frenchmen Creek Roadless Area* *USFS name: Elk Mountain-Collegiate South*



#### *Ecological Values*

The Frenchman Creek roadless area is primarily lodgepole pine with some aspen and significant amounts of ponderosa pine and piñon-juniper on the east central part of the area, as well as riparian species in the creek corridors.

The area is summer and winter range for bighorn sheep, with a lambing area in the south central part that runs into the Wilderness to the northwest. The whole area is elk summer range with winter range found in its eastern half. The eastern half is also an elk calving area, and the large migration corridor in the Arkansas Valley runs along its eastern edge. Mule deer find summer range

across the whole area, with winter range on the east side and out into the Arkansas Valley where there are significant winter concentrations. Mountain lion and black bear are found here, and the western portion is lynx overall and denning habitat. It's effectiveness as wildlife habitat is enhanced by the Heckendorf State Wildlife Area which is partially contiguous on the east side.

***Conservation and Community Values***

Frenchman Creek provides significant wildlife values, as well as recreation in the contiguous Wilderness and on the Colorado Trail. The SREP Vision shows the area as core wilderness

Recreation opportunities include hiking on the Colorado Trail and wildlife viewing.

