

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determination for individual properties and districts. See instruction in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name East Inlet Trail

other names/site number Trail to Lake Verna; 5GA.3377

2. Location

street & number Rocky Mountain National Park (ROMO) [N/A] not for publication

city or town [N/A] vicinity

state Colorado code CO county Grand code 049 zip code 80517

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] nomination [ ] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property [X] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [ ] nationally [ ] statewide [X] locally. ([ ] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title: Katherine Coutyegla, State Historic Preservation Officer, 11/16/04, Date
Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society, State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [X] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. ([ ] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title: Jack Snyder Matthews, NPS Historic Preservation Officer, 1/22/05, Date
National Park Service, State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- [X] entered in the National Register
[ ] See continuation sheet.
[ ] determined eligible for the National Register
[ ] See continuation sheet.
[ ] determined not eligible for the National Register.
[ ] removed from the National Register
[ ] other, explain
[ ] See continuation sheet.

Signature of the Keeper: Edson Beall, Date of Action: 2/28/05

East Inlet Trail  
Name of Property  
Rocky Mountain National Park MPS

Grand County/ Colorado  
County/State  
Historic Park Landscapes in National &  
State Parks MPS

### 5. Classification

#### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

#### Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

#### Number of Resources within Property

(Do not count previously listed resources.)

Contributing                      Noncontributing

0	0	buildings
0	0	sites
1	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

#### Name of related multiple property listing.

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Rocky Mountain National Park Multiple Property  
Listing  
Historic Park Landscapes In National & State Parks  
Multiple Property Listing

#### Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.

0

### 6. Function or Use

#### Historic Function

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/ outdoor  
recreation  
LANDSCAPE/ park  
TRANSPORTATION/ pedestrian-related

#### Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/ outdoor  
recreation  
LANDSCAPE/ park  
TRANSPORTATION/ pedestrian-related

### 7. Description

#### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

NO STYLE

#### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation  
walls  
roof  
other EARTH  
WOOD  
STONE

#### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

### Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey  
# \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record  
# \_\_\_\_\_

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ENTERTAINMENT/ RECREATION  
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE  
POLITICS/ GOVERNMENT

### Periods of Significance

1914-1945 1954-1963

### Significant Dates

1934-1940

### Significant Person(s)

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS (CCC)  
PUBLIC WORKS ADMINISTRATION (PWA)

### Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Colorado Historical Society  
Rocky Mountain National Park

East Inlet Trail  
Name of Property  
Rocky Mountain National Park MPS

Grand County/ Colorado  
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Historic Park Landscapes in  
National & State Parks MPS

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreeage of Property** less than one

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1.  
Zone Easting Northing
2.  
Zone Easting Northing
3.  
Zone Easting Northing
4.  
Zone Easting Northing [X] See continuation sheet- page 8

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Sierra Standish, contract position (RMNP contacts- Dr. Bill Butler and Cheri Yost)

organization Rocky Mountain National Park date September 27, 2004

street & number 1000 Highway 36 telephone (970) 586-1332

city or town Estes Park state Colorado zip code 80517

## Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

### Continuation Sheets

#### Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

### Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

## Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Rocky Mountain National Park, U.S. Department of the Interior

street & number 1000 Highway 36 telephone (970) 586-1332

city or town Estes Park state Colorado zip code 80517

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**National Register of Historic Places  
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National Park Service**

East Inlet Trail, Grand County/ Colorado  
Rocky Mountain National Park MPS

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**DESCRIPTION**

Location: West side of Rocky Mountain National Park, from Grand Lake to Lake Verna

Setting: Begins next to shore of Grand Lake and the west portal of the Alva B. Adams Tunnel; skirts along the East Inlet through marshy flood plain and higher forests, gaining westward views of Grand Lake

Destination: Lake Verna

Trail length: 6.9 miles

Trail width: ranging from 2 to 4 feet

Trail elevation: begins at 8400 feet and ends at 10,300 feet

Significant built features: Dry laid rock walls, mortared rock over cinderblock walls, stockbridge/ stock ford combinations, log checks, elevated causeway/bogwalk, railings

Significant natural features: Adams Falls, Devil's Ladder, eastward views to the Continental Divide, westward views of Grand Lake, rockslide in East Inlet just before Lake Verna

Built: Trail reportedly existed in 1914, built probably by lodge owner or guide; first NPS construction by 1924

Alterations: New route through Devil's Ladder, 1924; substantial dry rock walls added between Lone Pine Lake and Lake Verna, 1931-1934; section connecting the town of Grand Lake to the inlet cut off by Colorado-Big Thompson Project, 1940; reconstruction work, 1970

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**SIGNIFICANCE**

East Inlet Trail is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C, meeting the registration requirements set forth in the *Rocky Mountain National Park Multiple Property Listing*. Under Criterion A, the trail is eligible in the area of Entertainment/ Recreation for its association with the early resort industry and tourism in the Grand Lake region with a period of significance starting in 1914 and ending in 1954, a date in keeping with the National Register criteria. Also under Criterion A it is significant in the area of Politics/Government for the involvement of 1930s federal relief agencies, specifically the Public Works Administration (PWA) and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). In addition, the East Inlet Trail is eligible under Criterion C in the area of Landscape Architecture; the trail design reflects National Park Service (NPS) Naturalistic Design of the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s.

The East Inlet Trail also reflects national trends described in Linda Flint McClelland's *Historic Park Landscapes in National and State Parks Multiple Property Listing*. Under this second context, the trail is eligible under Criterion A in the area of Entertainment/ Recreation for its connection to the 20<sup>th</sup> century movement to develop national parks for public enjoyment, as well as in the area of Politics/ Government for the principles and practices of park landscape design used by the park in PWA and CCC projects. The trail is also eligible under Criterion C in the area of Landscape Architecture for a design that reflects NPS Naturalistic Design of the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s.

**Historical Background**

Unlike the North Inlet, the East Inlet does not offer a relatively easy route from Grand Lake over the Continental Divide. The East Inlet, therefore, did not appeal to historic travelers. However, the East Inlet's valley looms appealingly above Grand Lake; the broad mountains and promise of beautiful lakes must have beckoned to early tourists. Like many trails in the region, the East Inlet Trail evolved through use rather than through a developed plan. According to Charles Edwin Hewes, a local who wrote an account of his tramp through the area, no feasible trail existed in the valley of the East Inlet in 1913. Yet that very summer, claimed the *Estes Park Trail*, "a new trail was made from Grand Lake to a chain of lakes 6 miles east of Grand Lake." Geographically speaking, this report could only be referring to the East Inlet. The *Trail* does not name the 1913 trail builder, but contemporary trail construction was usually initiated and carried out by lodge keepers, guides or other locals with an investment in the tourist industry. Indeed, the inability of Hewes to find a trail doesn't negate the trail's presence; quite likely it testifies to a more casual, less permanent style of trail that Hewes' hiking group could easily have missed. After all, typical lodge keepers and guides were neither professional trail builders nor did they have the resources for developing sustainable trails.

In other respects, Hewes' account of his trip down the East Inlet did prove consistent with the observations of others. Upon reaching Lake Verna, he noted that "...a tremendous log jam was encountered, evidently the wreckage of a snow-slide; the huge gash on the mountain above indicated its path. At one point the stream wholly disappears in the recesses of a gigantic rock-slide."<sup>1</sup> The large boulders and dramatic "gash" can be witnessed today.

In 1919, the existence of the trail was still questionable. Roger Toll, future superintendent of Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP), recommended that mountaineers who wanted to get up the valley simply follow the East Inlet waterway, rather than find a trail. However, by 1922 Toll, now

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Edwin Hewes, *Estes Park Trail*, June 14, 1914.

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superintendent of the Park, reported that the trail was blocked by a rockslide near Lone Pine Lake; clearly, a substantial trail had to have been built by then to merit mention of its blockage. Park records do not mention any trail construction between 1919 and 1922; perhaps users simply trampled down a path.

By 1923, the East Inlet Trail had acquired popularity among tourists and a reputation for being dangerous among local guides. The section called "Devil's Ladder" was particularly tricky for horses. In his first year as a ranger, Fred McLaren watched his horse slide over Devil's Ladder and down the hill. Although the horse was just a little spooked, McLaren approached the superintendent with a plan to repair the trail. He was confident that if the Park could just provide food, the locals—particularly those from the stables—would volunteer to do the work. In 1924 and 1925, McLaren directed a trail crew on Devil's Ladder and other sections of the trail. The Park wanted a proper horse trail to follow the East Inlet all the way to Lake Verna; from there, a "fisherman's trail" continued up the valley. The crew built a new trail through the Devil's Ladder area and made a handrail out of pipe. This is probably the pipe removed by park crews in the 1970s, though some parts of it are still evident today.

Despite McLaren's efforts to build a sturdy trail the whole length up to Lake Verna, by 1931 the entire trail was deemed "poor." A new crew set to work under the leadership of L.S. Moore. In 1931 and 1934, trail workers re-developed the section between Lone Pine Lake and Lake Verna, a section remarkable today for its extensive dry rock walls and intricate bridge abutments. This fancy trail work demanded extra time and money. In the summer of 1934 it took two shifts a day and funding from a federal New Deal agency—the Public Works Administration (PWA)—to complete this stretch.

A 1935 survey evaluated the possibility of connecting the North and East Inlets by trail over the saddle between Mt. Alice and Andrews Peak. This route is probably the most logical link between these two popular, pretty drainages. It is not surprising, however, that the Park never developed a trail here; the saddle is several miles from the closest trailhead, and the potential trail would see minimal use.

In 1940, more New Deal assistance helped build the East Inlet Trail. The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) repaired and improved the first three miles after Adam Falls. According to the 1939 East Inlet Trail plan, the CCC focused upon small changes that would make the trail sustainable through time: building up elevated causeways through swampy areas, filling in ruts and trough in the tread, and ensuring an even grade that would stay below 15%. This work helps explain the long-term stability of the East Inlet Trail through the rest of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In the same year, the trail connecting the Town of Grand Lake to the East Inlet trailhead was blocked by debris created by the drilling for the Grand Lake Big Thompson Diversion Tunnel. A peeved superintendent reported: "It will probably be a responsibility of the Reclamation Service [Bureau of Reclamation] to replace the very old trail which has been in use for years."<sup>2</sup> The superintendent could not have foreseen that a road would eventually serve the "very old trail's" purpose. Hikers and horseback riders used to set out from town and follow the shore of Grand Lake to get to the mouth of the East Inlet; today, most drive to the parking lot located just next to the tunnel's portal.

In the decades following World War II, most trails received minimal attention from the National Park staff. Work completed was not reported as methodically as it had been in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. By 1970, however, the Park Service determined that the East Inlet Trail needed an overhaul, initiating a

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<sup>2</sup> Superintendent's Monthly Report, September 10, 1940, quoted in William Ramaley, 207.

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\$70,000 reconstruction. While this project clearly did have an impact—the pipe guardrail at the Devil’s Ladder was removed—the alignment does not appear to have shifted, many older rock walls remain, and techniques mimicking NPS Naturalistic Design dominated the reconstruction process.

Due to its popularity and the level of danger, Adams Falls was prioritized for attention in the July 2000 RMNP Trail Plan. By summer 2003, construction was complete: hand railings, stone steps, and mortared rock veneers covering cinderblock walls comprise the overlook. Today, day hikers and backpackers utilize the East Inlet Trail. Visitors can choose short hikes to Adams Falls, longer hikes up to the lakes or opt to hike over the Continental Divide via Boulder-Grand Pass. The trail is maintained up to Lake Verna.

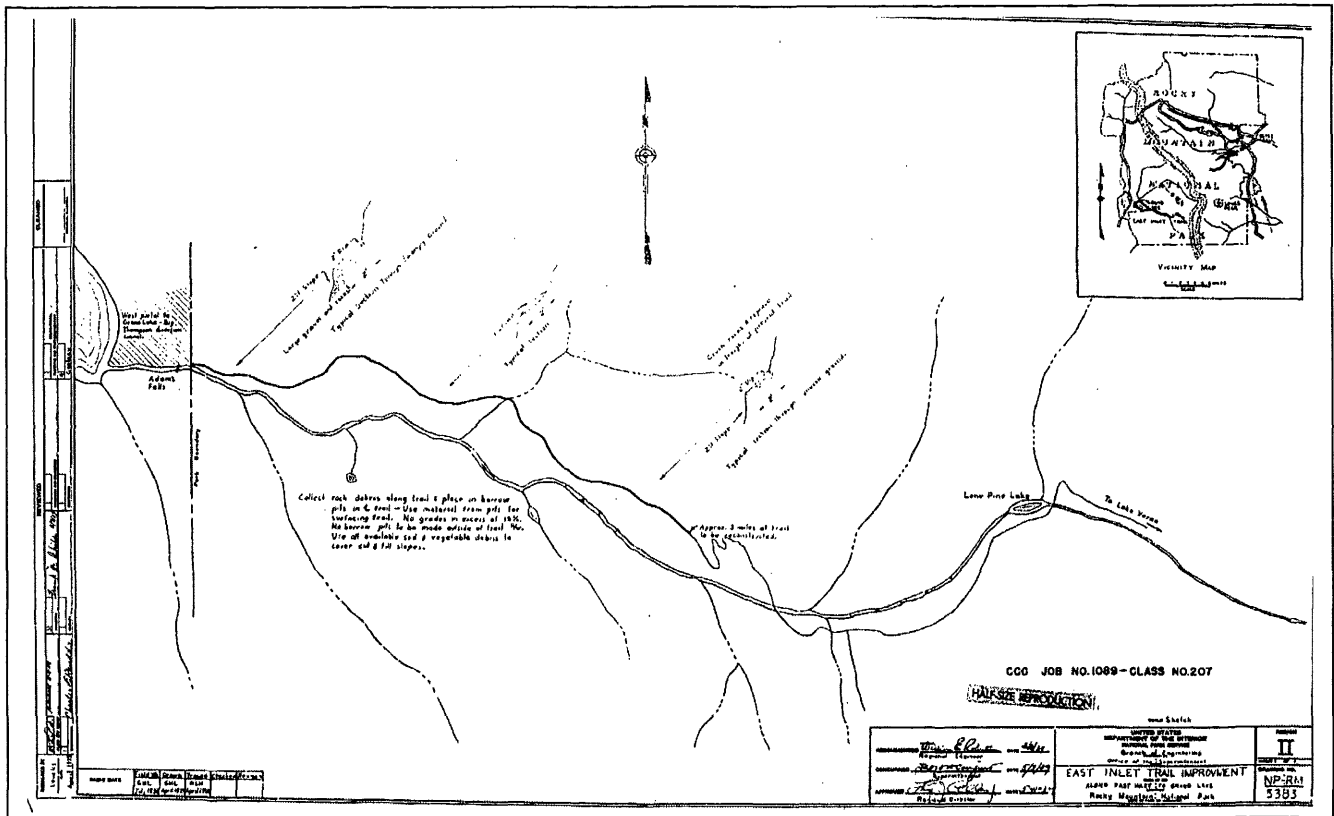


Image courtesy of Rocky Mountain National Park  
East Inlet Trail map  
Civilian Conservation Corps project, April 1939



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**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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*Estes Park, Colorado, and Surrounding Region*. Burlington Route, 1910.

Estes Park Trail Gazette

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Superintendent's Annual Reports. RMNP library.

Superintendent's Monthly Reports. RMNP library.

*Topographic Map of Rocky Mountain National Park, Colorado*. USGS, 1947

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**GEOGRAPHICAL DATA****VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The trail is located entirely within Rocky Mountain National Park. Beginning 250 feet east of the trailhead at approximately Adams Falls, the trail continues eastward along the East Inlet to Lake Verna. The trail is 6.9 miles long. The boundary of this nomination extends a distance of 10 feet on either side from the centerline of the trail.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The boundary includes the resource and associated features such as (but not limited to) footbridges, signs, rock walls, and bogwalks. Though landscape features are important to the experience of the visitor traversing the trail and may contribute to the overall integrity of the trail, they are not included in this nomination. The initial 250 feet is excluded as it is National Forest land and not within the Park boundaries.

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**PHOTOGRAPH LOG**

The following information pertains to photograph numbers 1-8 except as noted:

Name of Property: East Inlet Trail  
Location: Grand County/ Colorado  
Photographer: Sierra Standish  
Date of Photographs: October 2003  
Negatives: Rocky Mountain National Park

<u>Photo No.</u>	<u>Photographic Information</u>
1	Railing and stone wall next to Adams Falls
2	View to east along East Inlet
3	Bogwalk
4	View to east along East Inlet
5	View to northeast- footbridge/ stock ford combination
6	View to west- near Devil's Ladder, looking towards Grand Lake
7	View to southeast- Devil's Ladder
8	View to southeast- rock wall approaching Lone Pine Lake

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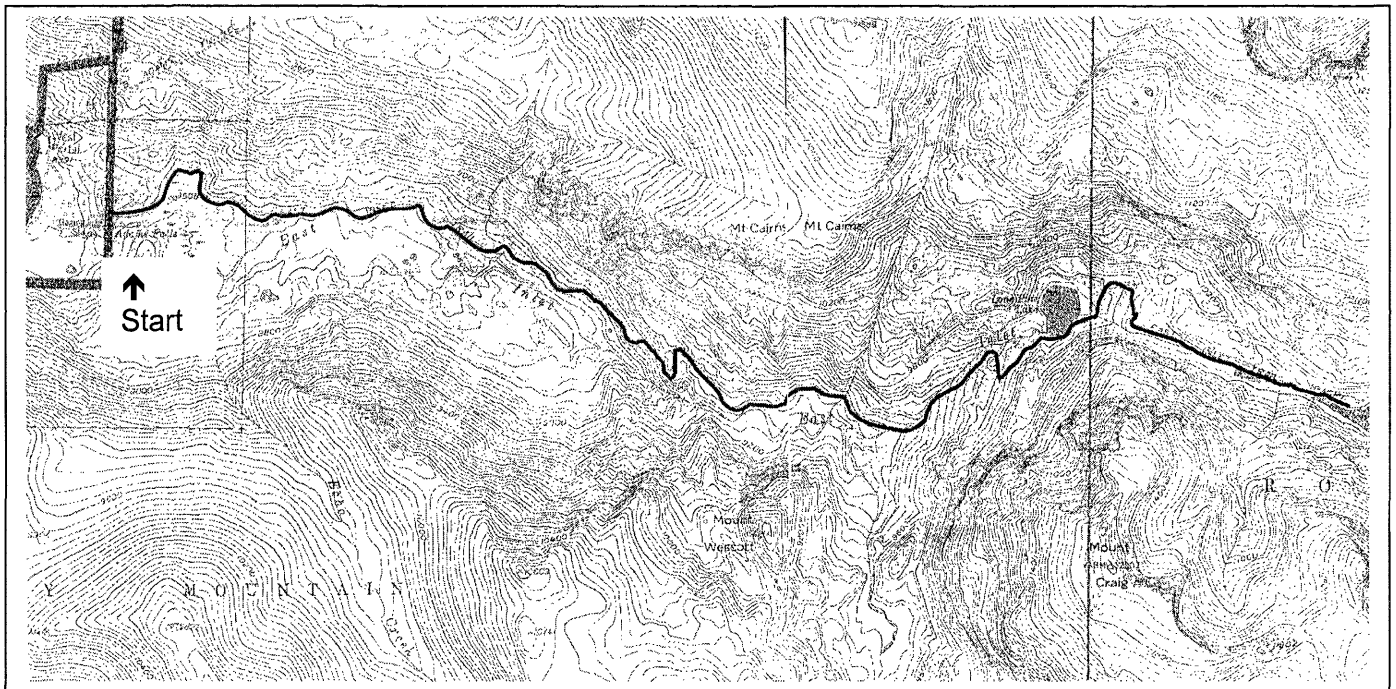
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### USGS TOPOGRAPHIC MAP

Shadow Mountain Quadrangle, Colorado  
Isolation Peak Quadrangle, Colorado  
7.5 Minute Series

UTM: SEE BELOW

PLSS: 6<sup>th</sup> PM, T3N, R74W, Sec. unsectioned  
6<sup>th</sup> PM, T3N, R75W, Sec. unsectioned  
Elevation: 10200 feet



UTMs: Zone 13	432260 mE	4454219 mN
	433432 mE	4454178 mN
	434050 mE	4454229 mN
	436349 mE	4453159 mN
	438101 mE	4453744 mN
	439449 mE	4453036 mN