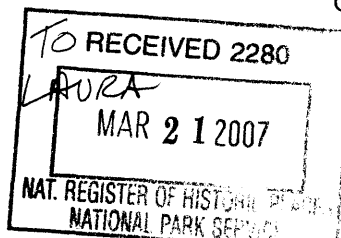


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



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 Longs Peak Trail; Longs Peak Trail; Keyhole Route; Shelf Trail

other names/site number 5LR.11413; 5BL.10344

2. Location

street & number West of State Highway 7 (ROMO) [N/A] not for publication

city or town Allenspark [X] vicinity

state Colorado code CO county Larimer; Boulder code 069; 013 zip code

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 [] 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: Joe Wallis

Date: 5-31-2007

National Park Service

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: Mark Wolfe

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

Date: 3/13/07

Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society

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

Date of Action

Signature of the Keeper: Susan McClulland
Date of Action: 7/10/07

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East Longs Peak Trail
Larimer & Boulder Counties/Colorado
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Section number 7 Page 1
Historic Park Landscapes in National & State
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DESCRIPTION

Location: East side of Rocky Mountain National Park. Trail begins in Tahosa Valley and wraps, counterclockwise, around Longs Peak and up to the summit, passing from Larimer County into Boulder County.

Setting: Begins below timberline next to Alpine Brook, climbs upward through increasingly rocky terrain, negotiates several precipitous landforms, and reaches the 14,259-foot-high summit.

Materials: Earth, local rock (mostly granite), log/wood.

Destination: Summit of Longs Peak and/or Chasm Lake.

Length of main trail: 7.5 miles

Length of spur to Chasm Lake: .7 miles.

Trail Width: ranging from 2 to 5 feet.

Significant built features: Dry laid rock walls, log stringer bridges, log and rock water bars and drains, stone steps, switchbacks, Agnes Vaille Shelter, fried eggs, elevation markers.

Significant natural features: Alpine Brook, Chasm Lake, Goblins Forest, Jim's Grove, Mt. Lady Washington, Battle Mountain, Granite Pass, the Boulder Field, the Keyhole, the Ledges, the Trough, the Narrows, the Home Stretch, the summit of Longs Peak, Mt. Meeker.

Built: Used as early as 1873.

Alterations: Lower section rerouted in 1925. Bridges over Alpine Brook repeatedly replaced. Timberline cabin abandoned in 1924; Boulder Field Shelter Cabin and Barn taken out of service in 1926 because they were built on an unstable rock glacier; Chasm Lake Shelter Cabin destroyed by a massive avalanche in 2003.

1882. Longs Peak From Timberline.
taken by William Henry Jackson.
Image courtesy of Denver Public Library
Website- Western History/Genealogy
Dept.
Image # WHJ-1277



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Among Colorado's fourteeners (mountains over 14,000 feet), Longs Peak remains one of the most challenging, even following the well-groomed 7.5 mile trail to its summit. From the trailhead below timberline, the trail wraps counterclockwise upward through increasingly rocky terrain, negotiates several precipitous landforms, and reaches the 14,259-foot-high summit. For almost 100 years, mountaineers from around the world have followed the East Longs Peak Trail to the top.

The East Longs Peak Trail starts in the Tahosa Valley, near State Highway 7, in Larimer County. The trailhead sits in Rocky Mountain National Park. Nearby, a campground hosts overnighers who wish to get the earliest possible start. Several log buildings including a comfort station and ranger stations, welcome the traveler. A small log ranger station hosts a museum about the peak and those who have climbed it. A log kiosk with wood shingle roof encourages climbers to sign in—providing both a record of visitors and information should those climbers need assistance. Listed are technical climbers wishing to conquer the 3000 foot vertical granite Diamond, the day hikers wishing to see the Colorado Columbines at Chasm Lake, and the backpackers journeying to the several campsites on the mountain.

The native tread trail begins near Alpine Brook in lodge pole pine forest. It is widest near the trailhead, at five feet, accommodating a large number of nighttime hikers. It climbs to the northwest for one-half mile to the junction of a trail spur that takes hikers to the former Eugenia Mine, Storm Pass, and Estes Cone. Here the trail turns to the southwest and hikers negotiate several switchbacks, bolstered by dry laid rock walls one and two courses high. These walls consist of stones collected on site and are not architectural in nature, but rather follow the more informal, naturalistic design standards typical of Rocky Mountain National Park. The trail meets but does not cross Alpine Brook. Hikers then pass through Goblins Forest, a distinct stand of limber pines. Several backcountry campsites offer respite to weary travelers. After crossing Larkspur Creek on rocks embedded in the stream, more switchbacks deliver the hiker to a log trail bridge over Alpine Brook. Trail crews replaced this bridge using similar design to the original: locally gathered trees with logs stripped of bark. After crossing, a sign declares the hiker is approaching the alpine tundra (it reads: "ALPINE TUNDRA/ You are entering a fragile ecosystem/ The ALPINE TUNDRA, once damaged,/ requires centuries for restoration./ STAY ON THE TRAIL"). By now the trail has narrowed to three to four feet. Grades are typically 8-12%. Native stone waterbars are prevalent above Goblins Forest and continuing up the trail to Granite Pass to prevent erosion and retain a good trail tread surface.

Above treeline, the trail heads south and offers hikers the first views of the Front Range cities. Since most day hikers depart the trailhead in the middle of the night, this first view of the cities below is twinkling lights. Here above tree line, the Twin Sisters Peaks are to the east and hikers get a good glimpse of the Diamond, Longs Peak's sheer 1,000 foot granite face. Hikers negotiate twelve to sixteen inch native stone steps to make the steep grade towards Jim's Grove Junction. Heading to the southwest, the trail follows Mills Moraine, then tops it near the west end. At this junction, the hiker may choose to continue on toward the summit or venture down the spur trail to Chasm Lake. A wood privy sits supported around the base with numerous large stones to support the building in the extreme winter winds. A wood sign mark the junction, 3.25 miles from the trailhead.

The .7 mile long spur trail to Chasm Lake heads southwest along Mount Lady Washington. Just off the trail, a sheer 150' drop brings snow melt to Peacock Pool and Columbine Falls below. Though this section of trail descends gradually there is often snow here, making even summer crossing dangerous. Eventually, snow melt makes conditions right for hundreds of Colorado Columbines to bloom. Hikers use stepping-stones to cross the Roaring Fork and enter lush, green, and flowering Chasm Meadows.

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A stone patrol cabin stood guard here until March 2003 when a 2-day storm of up to 8' of snow released an avalanche wiping it out, leaving the nearby privy standing. A new wood patrol cabin sits on the concrete footprint of the old cabin, along with a modern privy. Hikers must follow rock cairns up a granite wall to the lake below the imposing 500' tall Ships Prow rock formation. The East Face of Longs Peak is reflected in the water.

The trail to the summit heads northwest along Mount Lady Washington and climbs toward Granite Pass, where the North Longs Peak Trail joins the East Longs Peak Trail. Views to the north from here include the 13,000+ foot peaks of the Mummy Range in the north part of the park and views to the west of the Continental Divide west of the popular Bear Lake area. Long switchbacks up the 4' wide trail allow the hiker to "rest" his legs on less steep terrain before arriving at the Boulderfield. Approaching the flat Boulderfield campsites, the trail becomes rockier and negotiates the intermittent water flows that converge into Boulder Brook.

In the 1925, the National Park Service rerouted the East Longs Peak Trail from the trailhead to the Boulderfield. The former route took hikers on a much steeper grade to tree line, past the Timberline Cabin (abandoned in 1924, not extant) through Jim's Grove, and followed various elevation markers along the way.

In the Boulderfield, 5.9 miles from the trailhead, the trail loses its distinction as an earthen path and becomes a Grade II, Class 3+ climbing route. A hitching post marks a point of departure for horseback riders. This Keyhole Route is the most popular means of ascent to the summit. Climbers clamor over pink granite boulders toward the Keyhole, a distinctive rock formation marking the passage out of the 1.2 mile long Boulderfield. At 13,000 feet, hikers typically reach this landmark by sunrise, where the Diamond glows in the morning light. A savvy climber may find the remains of the Boulderfield Shelter Cabin and Stable, two rock buildings constructed in 1925. Because the Boulderfield is geologically unstable, the buildings were eventually pulled apart by the slow movement of the rocks upon which they were built; they discontinued service to climbers in 1936. Now, backcountry campsites sheltered by dry laid rock walls, offer the only overnight accommodation in the area. Sited adjacent to the Keyhole, perched above the Boulderfield, sits the Agnes Vaille Shelter, a round stone building with a conical stone roof constructed in 1925. Two modern self-composting privies, consisting of three foot walls surrounding a toilet on a little platform, are located within the Boulderfield.

Once through the Keyhole, the climber arrives at a series of natural features that distinguish the route. The first is the Ledges, a series of horizontal rock shelves. Here for the first time, climbers encounter the "fried egg" route markers, or painted circles of red and yellow dye that resemble targets. A "V" shaped slot marks the passage to the Trough. The steep, loose couloir, or rock rubble-filled gully, gets narrower as it curves to the north. Hikers often struggle up the loose terrain and try to not knock rocks on those below. A small gap at the top, marked by a fried egg, leads climbers into the Narrows, a 3-foot wide ledge across the south face of Longs Peak. A sheer drop into Wild Basin encourages many climbers to lean into the mountain itself. Finally the climber reaches the Homestretch, a series of cracks on a 35 degree slab of rock that leads to the summit.

The summit of Longs Peak is a field of pink boulders, roughly the size of a football field. The highest point of this relatively flat surface is marked with a cairn of rocks and a steel elevation marker placed by the U.S. Geological Survey, which has been changed as the elevation of the peak is revised. A summit register is available for climbers to record their feat.

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Non Contributing Resources

The Chasm Lake Patrol Cabin and four privies (two in the Boulderfield, one at Chasm Lake Junction and one at Chasm Meadows) are considered non-contributing due to their recent construction. All resources are within the nominated boundary and are accounted for in the resource count.

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.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ENTERTAINMENT/ RECREATION
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
CONSERVATION

Periods of Significance

1873-1943

Significant Dates

1925

1926

Significant Person(s)

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above).

MILLS, ENOS

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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
- # _____

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

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SIGNIFICANCE

The East Longs Peak 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 Estes Park region and has two periods of significance. The period of significance for the upper portion of the trail, from the Boulder Field to the Summit, starts in 1873, with the beginning of active use by tourists. It ends in 1943, when there is a drop off in visitation to the park due to World War II, tourist lodges began closing down, the era of guides taking tourists up the trail came to an end, and trail building by the park also ends for a period of time. The lower portion of the trail has a period of significance starting in 1925, with major rerouting of this section due to the Agnes Vaille tragedy, and ends in 1943, for the same reasons listed above. Under Criterion C, the trail is eligible in the area of Landscape Architecture. The trail's seemingly primitive but sustainable design reflects National Park Service (NPS) Naturalistic Design of the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s with a period of significance of 1925-1927.

The East Longs Peak Trail also demonstrates the national trends described in Linda Flint McClelland's *Historic Park Landscapes in National and State Parks Multiple Property Listing*. In this second context, the trail is eligible under Criterion A in the area of Entertainment/Recreation for its connection to the twentieth century movement to develop national parks for public enjoyment. The trail is also eligible under Criterion C in the area of Landscape Architecture for a design that reflects the principles of NPS Naturalistic Design of the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s.

The upper portion of the East Longs Peak Trail is eligible under Criterion B in the areas of Conservation and Entertainment/Recreation. Between 1900 and 1906, Enos Mills was most active in building his skills as a public speaker and naturalist while guiding visitors up the East Longs Peak Trail. Mills used his guided tours of the trail to educate visitors about the value of conserving and preserving the natural environment around them. The experience firmly established his reputation as a local mountain expert and he eventually served as the figurehead in the effort to create Rocky Mountain National Park. The final section of trail—from the Boulder Field to the Summit—has not significantly changed since Mills led tourists up the steep granite slopes.

Historical Background

"Longs Peak is the King of Rocky Mountain National Park" declared Roger Toll, one of the park's most ambitious and passionate superintendents.¹ Toll was enthralled by the "grim helmed captain" that reigned over the park. At 14,259 feet, the mountain stands apart from any other summit in the region—the figurative and literal centerpiece of Rocky Mountain National Park.

People who ventured up this steep granite peak did not quickly forget the experience. Hundreds of personal accounts from the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries express exhilaration over the scenery and exhaustion from the high-altitude effort. The intense public curiosity about the peak ensured that the tourist industry and, later, the national park would dedicate resources to maintaining a good route.

Ethnographic evidence indicates that humans have been drawn to the mountain for centuries. Arapaho elders told stories about eagle-catching endeavors upon Longs Peak. Explorers following the South

¹ Roger Toll, *Mountaineering in Rocky Mountain National Park* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1919), 46.

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Platte River remarked upon the mountain's emergence upon the western horizon. Prairie farmers gazed up at that high, flat-topped crest from the Front Range. However, these people did not use trails to experience the mountain. It was not until a surge of would-be mountain climbers tackled the ascent that the East Longs Peak Trail developed.

On August 23, 1868, John Wesley Powell and his party of novice mountaineers clambered onto the top of Longs Peak. Newspapers announced their accomplishment as the first successful summit—a feat that climbers had been attempting for years. Word traveled. Although the Powell party followed a circuitous route that started in Grand Lake, the much easier “Keyhole Route” was popularized by adventurous tourists like Isabella Bird in the early 1870s. This course typically began on the eastern flank of the mountain and spiraled counter-clockwise around the peak—a relatively easy path that maximized the scenic views.

Prospective climbers hired locals to guide them up the mountain. The arrangement between Jim Nugent and Isabella Bird, though often painted as a subdued romance, reflects a characteristic relationship between a seasoned “mountain man” guide and a greenhorn. Their trip was a typical late nineteenth-century/early twentieth-century Longs Peak experience: they traveled partially up the mountain on horseback, camped at Jim’s Grove, and used the “Keyhole Route” to reach the summit.

Although Nugent assisted Bird’s ascent in 1873, he did not take up guiding as a long-term career. But other people did dedicate themselves to a life of catering to Longs Peak’s visitors. These locals opened lodges, led trips to the summit, engaged in local politics, and otherwise established themselves as fixtures upon the mountain.

The first of these figures, Reverend Elkanah H. Lamb—a tall “fire and brimstone” preacher—seemed to embrace God the way he climbed the mountain. Elkanah and his son, Carlyle, initiated construction of their lodge in 1876. Situated to the east of the mountain in Tahosa Valley, the Longs Peak House commanded relatively easy access to the “Keyhole Route.” In 1878, the Lambs first blazed a “pony trail” through the forest, and continued to build and maintain a trail for decades to come.

In 1884, a distant relative joined the Lambs. A sick teenager from Kansas named Enos Mills traveled to Colorado to improve his health. Although he first lived and worked at the Elkhorn Hotel in Estes Park, he gravitated toward Longs Peak. The next year, the ambitious lad improved a homestead claim next to the Lambs and climbed to the summit of Longs Peak. He eventually purchased the Longs Peak House, called it the Longs Peak Inn, and guided his own guests up the mountain. According to one of his hired hands, Shep Husted, Mills also took responsibility for the trail’s maintenance. He made a name for himself as a naturalist, speaker, and writer, and successfully campaigned for the creation of Rocky Mountain National Park.

Mills’ activism won him important friends but also determined enemies—some of whom were his own neighbors. As Longs Peak gained popularity, tourist accommodations bloomed at the eastern base of the mountain. Charles Hewes opened the Hewes-Kirkwood Inn in 1907 (5LR.1794, National Register listed 10/28/1994). Other local inns included the Columbines and Copeland Lodge. The managers of all three establishments feared that the creation of a national park would encroach upon their operations and resented the efforts of Enos Mills. They even planned out a new way to access the East Longs Peak Trail, avoiding Mills’ Longs Peak Inn.

As a verbose and opinionated man, Enos Mills published plenty of commentary about his career. He

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took guiding seriously, limited the size of his parties, and prided himself on a zero mortality record.

...I had made dozens of trips to the summit before offering my services as guide. I had made climbs in every kind of weather to familiarize myself thoroughly with the way to the top. These trips— always alone—were first made on clear days, then on stormy ones, and finally at night. When I was satisfied that I could find the trail under the worst conditions, endurance tests were made. One of these consisted in making a quick round trip, then, after only a few minutes' rest, shouldering thirty or forty pounds of supplies and hastening to the rescue of an imaginary climber ill on the summit.²

Mills considered both his clients' safety and their edification. "Besides two seasons of this preliminary experience, the rocks, glacial records, birds, trees and flowers along the trail were studied, other peaks climbed, and books concerning mountain climbing diligently read."³ Guiding also provided another area of study: human nature. Mills noticed that climbing brings out everyone's true character and—not surprisingly—could kindle romance: "the trail...is probably without a rival as a place for making 'matches.'"⁴

In 1908, Mills opened the Timberline Cabin, also known as the Timberline House, situated east of Jim's Grove at 11,050 feet. The modest one-story building offered meals and overnight accommodations, and Mills estimated that the cabin served 430 people in 1915. The cabin stopped operating as a traveler's rest in 1924, two years after Mills' death. At some point late in the 1910s or early 1920s, Mills even built a phone line to the cabin, thus establishing the "phone line trail"—an unofficial use trail that makes a relatively direct, though steep, connection between the ranger station and timberline. Today, park staff takes advantage of this short route, and a few remaining telephone pole stumps mark the way.

The Timberline Cabin marked a strategic junction in the main trail. At this point, visitors faced a decision: they could turn south, to Chasm Lake, or continue westward, toward the summit. The summit-bound trail passed Jim's Grove on the way to Granite Pass. In the summer of 1921, the park upgraded this section of trail:

The old trail mostly followed the ravines and in many places had a grade of 30 to 40 percent. Because of its location it suffered terribly from the large amount of water from the watershed above, while the new trail is laid out with an easy 15 percent grade all the way. It follows the ridge most of the way, reaching the top of the moraine east of the peak, which opens up entirely new territory, and thence over the Chasm Lake ridge. The new trail is scientifically built to suffer the minimum damage from the rains and melting snows and is so located that there is seldom much of a watershed above it.

While the new trail is a trifle longer than the old one, the easier grade enables the tourists to make quicker time and with much less fatigue and there is no doubt but that the peak, which is said to be the most scenic in the United States, will become more

² Enos Mills, quoted in James H. Pickering, *Enos Mills' Colorado*, (Boulder, CO: Johnson Books, 2006), 99.

³ *Ibid.*, 101.

⁴ Alexander Drummond, *Enos Mills: Citizen of Nature* (Niwot, CO: University Press of Colorado, 1995), 109.

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popular than ever with tourists.⁵

From this description, it appears that the park trail crew deliberately held to high trail-building standards. The article describes one of the first examples of “scientific” or professionalized trail construction in the 1920s. Although it is unclear just how much the alignment changed, the new trail used an adjusted route in order to lower the grade and better resist weathering.

Some visitors did not seek out a groomed trail to the top. Experienced mountain climbers wanted to push themselves to achieve new feats on the peak. Professor J.W. Alexander is credited for making the first ascent of the East Face in 1922. Climbers customarily approached the mountain via the spur to Chasm Lake. From the small meadow at the end of the spur trail, visitors could access both the sheer northeast face of the peak and the rubble-filled gully between Longs Peak and Mt. Meeker.

As a growing number of people tackled the mountain without the assistance of guides, Superintendent Roger Toll asked Ranger Dings “to paint yellow disks with red centers to mark the route from the Keyhole to the Summit.”⁶ He felt this was a necessary precaution to help hikers find their way along the trail. These markers, known as “fried eggs” were first painted in late August 1922 and continue to guide visitors today.

Daring ascents on Longs Peak sometimes resulted in tragedy. The January 1925 death of the well-known mountaineer Agnes Vaile—a relative of Superintendent Roger Toll—impelled Toll to improve the facilities upon Longs Peak. That summer, the park strung phone lines along the way to the Boulder Field, initiated construction of the Agnes Vaile Shelter and the Boulder Field Shelter Cabin, and placed cables along the north face of the peak (where Vaile had slipped). The park also rerouted the main trail up Mills Moraine rather than through Jim’s Grove. Now, visitors had to climb Mills Moraine to Chasm Junction before choosing to take either the spur trail to Chasm Lake or continue on toward the summit. Although modern hikers can still avail themselves of the old route through Jim’s Grove, the vast majority of twenty-first century visitors travel the 1925 route. In 1926, Miss Frances Evans, a park visitor staying at the Longs Peak Inn, described the rerouted section: “From timberline the trail winds westward over Mills Moraine. In the backward glance one gets a wonderful panoramic view of the Twin Sisters and the valley towns of Lyons and Longmont. One can almost distinguish Denver in the distance.”⁷

Toll ordered further improvements to the East Longs Peak Trail. Switchbacks were built between Granite Pass and the Boulder Field, making that section a rather dull but safe trek. Also, the trail crew of the 1925 summer season—directed by Ranger Jack C. Moomaw and Curtis S. Skinner—rerouted the trail 1/3 mile further north into the Boulder Field. This reflected no casual trail building. From the Boulder Field to the Summit, no form of true dirt existed; visitors were forced to abandon their horses and other stock animals at the Boulder Field and scramble over bare rock for the rest of the journey. But now, thanks to dynamite blasting and the efforts of Moomaw and Skinner, a visitor could walk or ride on an even surface for an extra 1/3 mile. Despite the blasting, the crew attempted to make the extension look like it blended in with nearby scenery.

⁵ *Estes Park Trail*, August 19, 1921, 1.

⁶ William C. Ramaley, *Trails and Trailbuilders of the Rocky Mountain National Park*, (unpublished manuscript, 1970s), 94.

⁷ *Estes Park Trail*, July 9, 1926, 7.

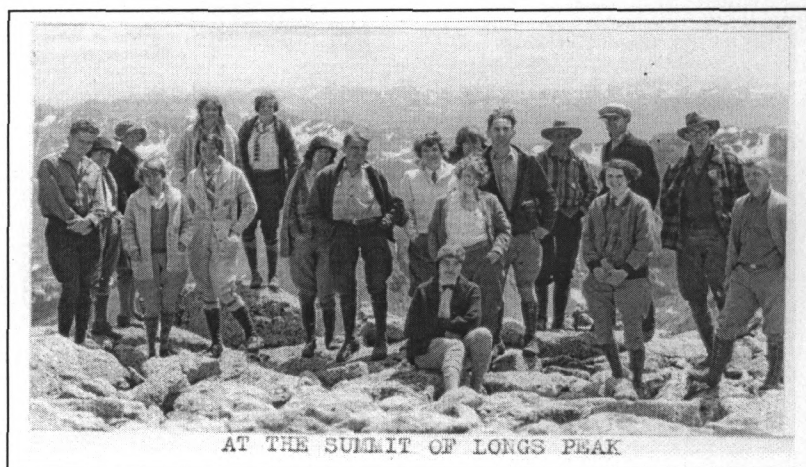
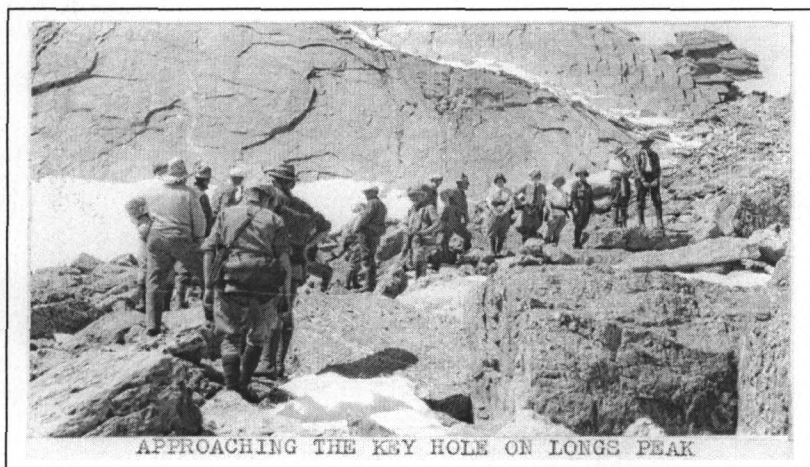
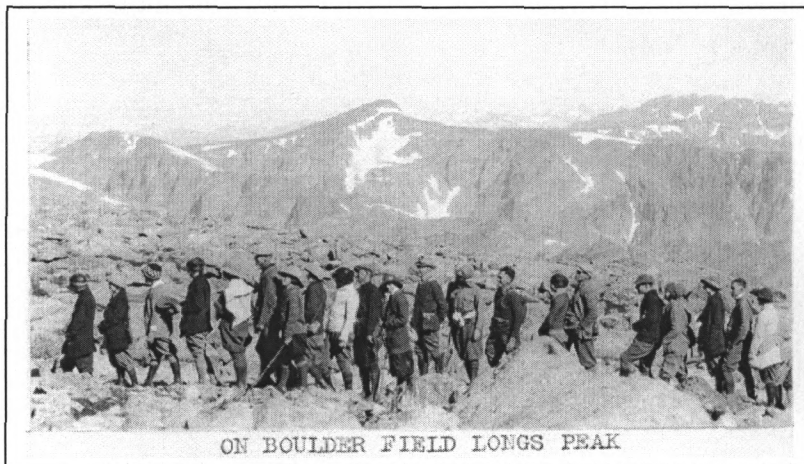
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Historic Images- circa 1920s



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By 1927, two shelter cabins were complete. The Agnes Vaile Shelter (5LR.1499, National Register listed 12/24/1992), situated on the east side of the Keyhole at 13,214 feet, reflected the design of architects William E. and Arthur A. Fisher. The shelter was built by L. Laursen and was funded by F.O. Vaile, Agnes' father. The *Estes Park Trail* described the design in its August 6, 1926, issue:

The storm shelter is to be eight feet, six inches in width and depth, inside measurements. The walls will be two feet in thickness. The roof is to be constructed entirely of stone, so that it will be permanent and will not require maintenance, which is difficult at that location. The type of construction follows that used at Alberobello in the Province of Apulia, Italy. At that place the natives construct their homes entirely of stone without the use of mortar, using a conical shaped roof. In constructing the storm shelter at the Keyhole, some mortar will be used, but on account of the difficulty of getting sand and cement to the building site, the amount of mortar required will be cut to a minimum.⁸

Accounts differ on whether the Boulder Field Shelter Cabin was designed by Roger Toll himself or by the National Park Service's Landscape Engineering Division. Either way, the plan called for double walls with rubble fill, one and a half stories, and 18 feet by 18 feet dimensions. A good friend of Toll, Robert Collier, operated the Boulder Field Shelter Cabin as an inn during the summers. A stable accompanied the cabin, although winter winds routinely ripped off the roof. In 1931, hikers could secure a night of lodging for \$2.00; a sandwich, pie, or cake for 25 cents; and a guide up the mountain for \$2.50. Eventually, the Boulder Field proved to be too geologically unstable for the cabin and the stable, and the buildings were taken out of service in 1936.

In 1926, the park built a trail spur from Chasm Junction to Chasm Lake. As Superintendent Toll stated at the beginning of the summer season, "This is one of the most spectacular regions of the park and it would be very desirable if it could be made more easily accessible to visitors."⁹ Although earlier maps demonstrate that a route existed here as early as 1911, the 1926 trail was considered the first planned construction on the trail.

For about a month the Rocky Mountain National Park Service has had a crew of seven men at work on the trail, which is the first and only regular route to the lake. Horses may now be ridden to a point very near Chasm Lake, leaving but a small portion of the trip to be made on foot.... At an elevation of 11,950 feet high above timberline, Chasm Lake lies at the foot of the high perpendicular east face of Longs Peak. Up above the lake extending to the exact face of this sheer rock wall is the perpetual snow field. For only about one month of the year is the surface of the lake entirely free from ice.¹⁰

Judging from its timing, the spur to Chasm Lake probably reflects another Longs Peak building developed under the momentum generated by the Vaile tragedy. Superintendent reports indicate that a stone patrol cabin (5BL.7117; HS-162) was constructed near Chasm Lake five years later. The shelter lasted for 72 years, eventually swept away in an avalanche in March 2003.

It is not clear whether the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) contributed to trail construction on Longs Peak. Typically, CCC crews worked below timberline, and much of the East Longs Peak Trail stands

⁸ *Estes Park Trail*, August 6, 1926, 1, 4.

⁹ *Estes Park Trail*, June 4, 1926, 3.

¹⁰ *Estes Park Trail*, August 13, 1926, 1.

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well above the trees. However, in 1934—a likely year for utilizing CCC labor—the park reported widening and resurfacing the stretch between Granite Pass and the Boulder Field. The superintendent reported: “A thorough overhauling was given the upper end of the East Longs Peak trail because of its heavy use and the small chance of its being reconstructed in the near future.”¹¹ A trail plan drawn in 1937 reflects a vague but ambitious plan to reconstruct much of the upper trail with CCC labor. At the end of the year, the superintendent reported that 2.5 miles of trail had been improved.¹² But, no evidence confirms that the CCC completed the work.

Enos Mills died in 1922, and his Longs Peak Inn burned on June 9, 1949. The Hewes-Kirkwood Inn was sold in 1950 to Beth Miller Harrod, who converted it into the Rocky Ridge Music Center. By this time, the number of annual hikers and climbers had reached the thousands. However, the use of professional guides had fallen out of fashion. As early as 1922, only 1/3 of visitors hired a guide; by the 1940s, guiding services were considered archaic. In the mid- and late-twentieth century, the East Longs Peak Trail hosted countless personal adventures and continued to host historic events. Through the second half of the century, the park’s trail crew continued to maintain the East Longs Peak Trail, but did not significantly alter its alignment.

Enos Mills

The East Longs Peak Trail played a significant role in the career of Enos Mills, commonly referred to as the “Father of Rocky Mountain National Park.” Certainly, no individual could claim all of the credit for the establishment of the park. However, Mills—a lodge owner, passionate advocate for land protection, and nationally renowned naturalist—operated as a figurehead for the effort to create a national park in the Estes Park area. A less frequently used but nonetheless regularly employed title conferred to Enos Mills is “John Muir of the Rockies.” In the pattern of John Muir, Mills’ public life was rooted in the soul of the mountains—specifically, in Longs Peak.

Born in eastern Kansas in 1870, Enos Mills first came to Estes Park as a sickly 14 year old. He apparently responded well to the “mountain cure” and soon embraced hardy mountain recreation. The East Longs Peak Trail provided a starting place for Mills to first explore natural history and test his mountaineering skills. He wanted to know the mountain in all its moods and colors. His biographer reports,

The youngster loved to be stirred, battered by fierce winds, and stung by winter cold. Several times in his youth he hauled an elkskin sleeping bag up to timberline during violent Rocky Mountain Chinooks, which often gust over 100 mph. Staring wide-eyed in the dark, he imagined he was lying in a diver’s suit on a beach during an ocean storm. ‘At times I was struck almost breathless by an airy breaker, or tumbled and kicked indifferently about by the unbelievable violence of the wind,’ he wrote.¹³

Although Mills traveled and worked around the West, the young man’s first experiences with Longs Peak made a profound impression. He returned to the area before he was 30 and began guiding tourists up Longs Peak. In 1902 he bought the Longs Peak House, eventually renaming it the Longs Peak Inn. Enos Mills called the mountain his home for the rest of his life.

¹¹ Superintendent’s Monthly Report, September 1935.

¹² Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1937.

¹³ Drummond, 45-46.

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As an innkeeper and guide, Mills could externalize his deep relationship with nature on a regular basis. Even though there were many other trails in the area, it was upon the Longs Peak Trail that he established his livelihood. He led guests up the peak every day—sometimes twice a day, if the moon was good—during the summer. Mills climbed the peak 304 times in his life, 257 of them as a guide. His own accounts attest that he followed the same path from the Boulder Field to the Summit that one climbs today. On the trail, Mills could practice his budding flair for interpretation, inspiring others to investigate the natural world. He loved to introduce others to the playfulness of butterflies and the wonder of glacially-carved slabs of mountain. Back at the Inn, Mills told fireside stories and wrote essays about his past adventures on and off the trail. As his biographer notes,

Mills succeeded as a nature writer because he created in his persona a figure both appealing and accessible to the popular mind.... Mills' narrative presence as a nature guide has an authenticity not fully realized in his heroic persona. Much of his writing—clearly influenced by his speaking style—has the charm of a trailside conversation.¹⁴

These years of guiding sharpened his sense of professionalism. Mills wanted his guests to be safe, yet be inspired and invigorated. Chastened by the mortalities that occurred on the mountain under other guides, he never put his own visitors in undue danger, successfully resisting macho impulses to push hikers past their limits. At the same time, he prided himself in providing his visitors with a high-quality trail experience. He even trained two sisters, Esther and Elizabeth Burnell, in nature lore and they later became the National Park Service's first licensed guides. Esther married Enos in 1918, and would continue to operate the Longs Peak Inn's guiding business after his death in 1922.

1906 marked Mills' last season of full-time guiding on Longs Peak. Countless hours of time on the trail had cultivated his desire and confidence to speak to even more people about safeguarding the natural world, and he wanted to travel the nation on a lecture tour. In these efforts he met and received financial support from leading conservation figures President Theodore Roosevelt and Gifford Pinchot. Although he later felt betrayed by conservationist leaders' emphasis on economic use of public land—rather than on nature's non-material attractions—Mills had established his legitimacy as a wilderness expert.

Around 1909 or 1910, Mills allied himself with F.O. Stanley and other tourism interests in Estes Park to push for the creation of a national park. It was the concern of everyone involved—many, like Mills, being lodge owners—that the region retain the forests, wildflowers, and wild game that were so attractive to tourists. A park would potentially protect these natural features. Mills dreamed big, and wanted a park that stretched south as far as Pikes Peak. Although the Rocky Mountain National Park that came into being in 1915 was only one third of the size he had campaigned for, the park's founding was widely deemed Enos Mills' success.

Mills is also credited with creating the profession of interpretation, which differed from traditional trail guiding by adding nature education to the experience. A trail guide gets his client safely there and back; a nature guide inspires. According to historian Alexander Drummond, Mills' nature guiding was the "direct antecedent of the ranger-naturalist in today's national parks and [gives] his name a secure place in the history of outdoor interpretation."¹⁵ Today, Mills still presents an inspirational model to interpreters within the National Park Service.

¹⁴ Drummond, 351.

¹⁵ Ibid., 112.

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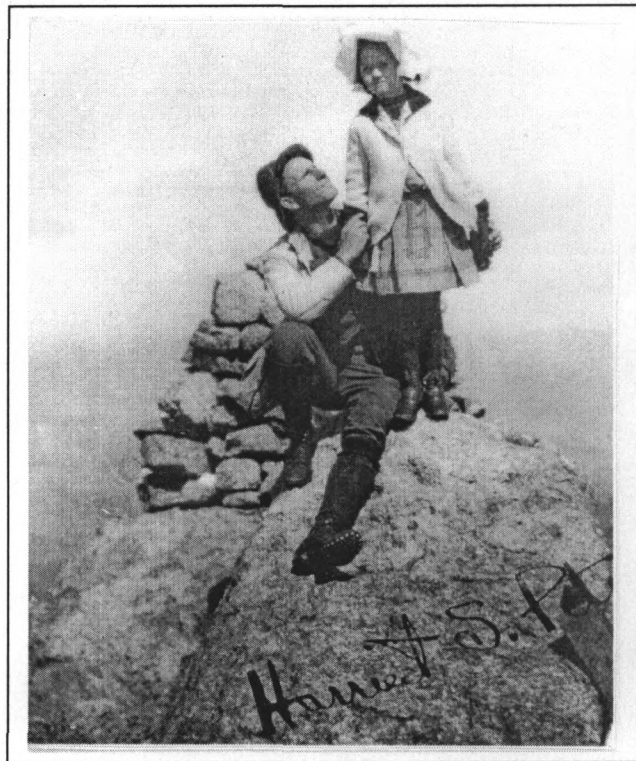
United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

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By 1915, Mills developed standards for nature guiding and codified it in his 1920 book *Adventures of a Nature Guide and Essays in Interpretation*. In it, he notes "While a guide on Longs Peak I developed what may be called the poetic interpretation of the facts of nature."¹⁶ Interpretation (as the profession became known as in the 1950s) aims to take universal concepts that anyone can understand--such as miracle and mystery, death and life, happiness and sadness--and relate it to a resource. The goal is for the visitor to make an intellectual and emotional connection to the resource. Thus interpretation fosters appreciation, which inspires one to preserve/conservate nature. Interpretation or nature guiding is not formal in its teaching--no exams or curriculum, no "dull, dry facts rules and manuals."¹⁷ It has to be done outdoors. Mills described it as "Helping people to become happily acquainted with the life and wonders of wild nature."¹⁸ By pointing out birds and flowers and talking about geology and wildlife, Mills would direct a guest's experience toward something bigger than conquering a high peak, focusing on the journey and not the destination. According to Edna Mills Kiley, Mills determined that "The essence [of nature guiding] is to travel gracefully rather than to arrive."¹⁹ To be sure, naturalists are subtle in their education of visitors. Naturalists illuminate, reveal, and inspire.

To illustrate this, Mills often recalled the hike with his most memorable client, Harriet Peters, age eight. He admired her instinctive curiosity and her ability to observe the natural world around them. She asked Mills countless questions. "How do beavers sharpen their teeth?" Referring to hiking Longs Peak, she asked: "Is it uphill all the way?" And upon arriving at the top: "Where do all the rocks come from?" Mills' experience and development of nature guiding on Longs Peak helped foster his role as park champion and respected naturalist. His essays, books, and speaking engagements reveal his talent for inspiration gained while guiding. He spoke to children, Presidents, and Congressmen and in 1915 served on the committee that drafted the National Park Service Organic Act, passed in 1916.



1904. Enos Mills with 8 year old Harriet Peters.

Image courtesy of Rocky Mountain National Park, NPS Photo, digital image collection, ROMO-10-E-3 (neg523).

¹⁶ Enos Mills, *Adventures of a Nature Guide and Essays in Interpretation*. (Originally published 1920, Revised version- Friendship, WI: The New Past Press, Inc., 1990), 111.

¹⁷ Ibid., 126.

¹⁸ Ibid., 16.

¹⁹ Mills, *Adventures*, 6.

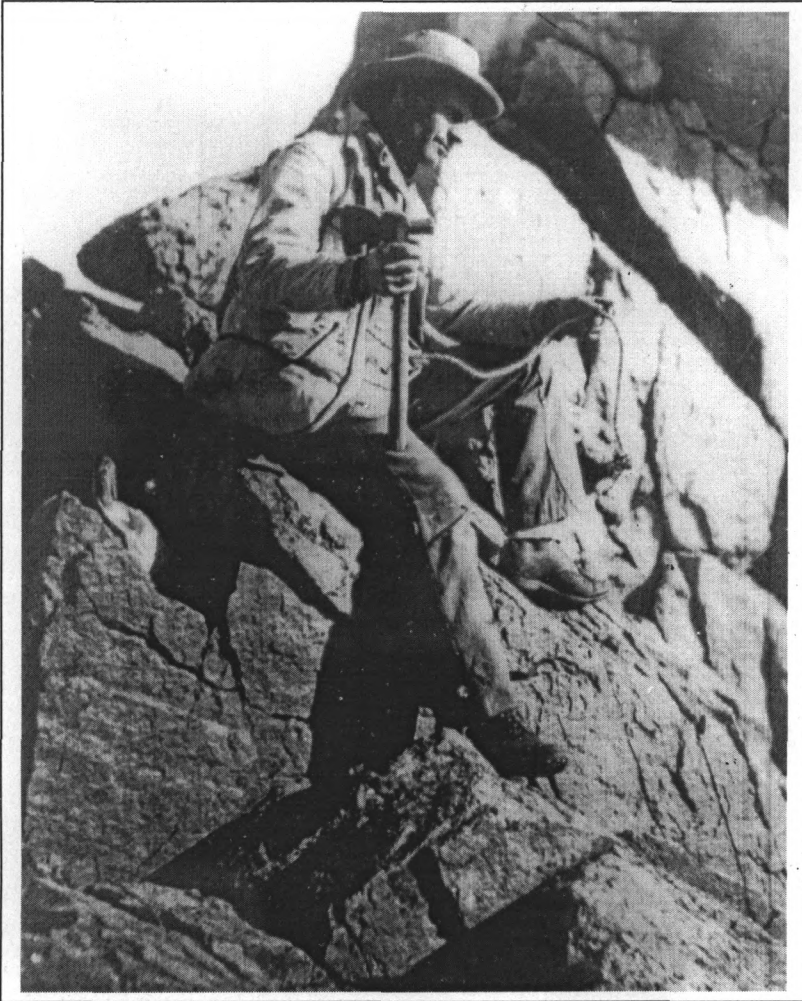
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Mills' homestead cabin, listed on the National Register for its association with the man, reminds us of his early ambitions and teenage attachment to the area. The Longs Peak Inn burned down in 1949, destroying the place where he wrote and told stories to his guests. However, the location that inspired his books, poetry, and stories, where he honed his skills with people and nature, remains for visitors to experience today. The mountain trail continues to lead upwards toward the sky.



Unknown Date. Enos Mills on Longs Peak, probably The Keyhole.
Image courtesy of Rocky Mountain National Park, NPS photo, digital
image library, ROMO-10-E-3 (neg. 4677).

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August 19, 1921

June 4, 1926

July 9, 1926

August 6, 1926

August 13, 1926

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East Longs Peak Trail
Name of Property

Larimer & Boulder Counties/ Colorado
County/State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 35.4

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.) (NAD 27)

1.
Zone Easting Northing
2.
Zone Easting Northing
3.
Zone Easting Northing
4.
Zone Easting Northing

[X] See continuation sheet- Page 19

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 contact- Cheri Yost)
organization Rocky Mountain National Park date 24 October 2006
street & number 1000 Highway 36 telephone 970/586-1394
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 (Vaughn Baker, Superintendent)
street & number 1000 Highway 36 telephone 970/586-1206
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.

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Parks MPS**GEOGRAPHICAL DATA****VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The trail is located entirely within Rocky Mountain National Park. Beginning at the Longs Peak Trailhead in Tahosa Valley, the trail travels upward and in a counterclockwise spiral, moving west, south, east and, finally, north to reach the summit. The trail is 7.5 miles long. The spur to Chasm Lake stretches .7 miles from Mills Moraine to Chasm Lake. The boundary of this nomination extends a distance of 20 feet from either side of 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, stone steps, switchbacks, and shelters. Although natural landscape features, such as Jim's Grove, 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.

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PHOTOGRAPH LOG

The following information pertains to photograph numbers 1-10 except as noted:

Name of Property: East Longs Peak Trail
 Location: Larimer & Boulder Counties/ Colorado
 Photographer: Sierra Standish
 Date of Photographs: July 2005
 Negatives: CD with tif images, on file with National Park Service, Washington, D.C.

<u>Photo No.</u>	<u>Photographic Information</u>
1	Two hikers ascending stone steps. Looking west, in Goblins' Forest area, about 1.5 miles from trailhead.
2	Log stringer bridge crossing Alpine Brook. Looking south, about 2 miles from trailhead, near timberline. Dry laid rock wall abutments support the bridge.
3	Stone steps marking pathway in tundra. Looking northwest, about 2.5 miles from trailhead.
4	Boulder Field, "the Keyhole" in background. Looking west, about 5.5 miles from trailhead.
5	Closer perspective of "the Keyhole." Note the conical-roofed Agnes Vaille Shelter on the left.
6	"The Ledges." Looking south. A "fried egg" marking in the foreground.
7	"The Trough." Looking southeast.
8	Elevation marker placed by Colorado A & M College students. Located on rock at top of trough.
9	Summit marker placed by U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey in 1939.
10	Cairn marking where the "Home Stretch" emerges onto the summit. Looking south.

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UTMs

Larimer County
6th PM, T4N, R73W, Section 0- unsectioned

A. 13	452633 mE	4457866 mN
B. 13	452000 mE	4458239 mN
C. 13	451814 mE	4457840 mN
D. 13	451745 mE	4458009 mN
E. 13	450804 mE	4458215 mN
F. 13	450717 mE	4458030 mN
G. 13	450856 mE	4457678 mN
H. 13	450349 mE	4457759 mN
I. 13	449656 mE	4457248 mN
J. 13	449039 mE	4456688 mN
K. 13	449583 mE	4457258 mN
L. 13	449070 mE	4457414 mN
M. 13	448779 mE	4457769 mN
N. 13	448620 mE	4458171 mN
O. 13	448281 mE	4458095 mN
P. 13	448097 mE	4457829 mN
Q. 13	448147 mE	4457526 mN
R. 13	447232 mE	4456711 mN

Boulder County
6th PM, T4N, R73W, Section 0- unsectioned

S. 13	447254 mE	4456551 mN
T. 13	447317 mE	4456124 mN
U. 13	447440 mE	4455940 mN
V. 13	447692 mE	4455910 mN
W. 13	447737 mE	4456030 mN
X. 13	448982 mE	4456461 mN (Chasm Lake spur)
Y. 13	449035 mE	4456660 mN (Chasm Lake spur)

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USGS TOPOGRAPHIC MAP Longs Peak Quadrangle, Colorado 7.5 Minute Series

