

Carson National Forest

Horseshoe Lake/East Fork Trail 56

Location: **Questa Ranger District:** Wheeler Peak Wilderness

Trail Beginning: 9,600 feet

Trail Ending: 11,950 feet

Access:

Travel south approximately six miles on State Highway 578 (old Hwy 150) to the Middle Fork and East Fork junction. The pavement ends here. Take the road to the left across the bridge, Forest Road 58A, and travel approximately 1-1/4 miles to the wilderness users parking area. From this parking area, it is approximately 3/4 mile to the trailhead at Ditch Cabin Site. You will cross private land - Please be courteous. The road from the end of the pavement to the parking area is not maintained. During wet, rainy seasons, sections of road are soft and muddy. No vehicles are permitted beyond the parking area.

Attractions and Considerations:

The trail starts at the parking area, 3/4 of a mile before Ditch Cabin Site and is easy hiking because of its gradual ascent. It follows the East Fork of the Red River for approximately three miles before it takes a westerly direction. The wilderness boundary is within one-half mile of this point. During the next mile, portions of the trail will be wet and the ground soft before arriving at a rock slide and a spectacular vista point. Continue up through several scenic openings until you reach the junction of Lost Lake Trail (91). There are many camping areas along the trail. The campsite at the trail junction is the most popular because of its close proximity to both Lost Lake (approximately one mile) and Horseshoe Lake. The trail becomes steeper and somewhat rockier.

When you reach Horseshoe Lake, elevation 11,950 feet, you experience the beauty of the lake and the views from another spectacular vista point. You have now traveled through six miles of beautiful country. Horseshoe Lake is at timberline; it is often windswept. Please do not damage the ancient bristle cone pine shrubs around the shoreline. Camping and campfires are not permitted along the lake shore to prevent soil and water damage. Please pick a campsite at least 300 feet from the lake. Horseshoe Lake is stocked by helicopter with native cutthroat fry. A fishing license and trout stamp are required in New Mexico.

Length: 6 miles

Use: Moderate-Heavy

Recommended Season: July - October

Difficulty: Intermediate to Expert

Elevation: 2,350 feet

USGS QUADS: Wheeler Peak, Eagle Nest

