

Carson National Forest

Williams Lake Trail 62

Location: Questa Ranger District: Wheeler Peak Wilderness Area

Trail Beginning: 10,300 feet

Trail Ending: 11,100 feet

Access:

Travel approximately four (4) miles north on U.S. Hwy. 64 from Taos to the junction of State Highway 150, then east on 150 to Taos Ski Valley. Continue through the ski area parking lot to the Twining Campground. Parking is available adjacent to the campground. There is another parking area near the Kachina chair lift, Phoenix Restaurant. Follow the roads that climbs through and above the village to the designated hiker parking lot, before the Kachina/Phoenix area.

Attractions and Considerations:

From the Twining Campground parking lot walk across the bridge, over the Rio Hondo, toward the Taos Ski Valley Ticket Office. Stay on the trail above the main office and under the two main chairlifts heading southeast. Please be courteous - You are on private land! This trail follows the main return trail used by downhill skiers and, therefore, is not open for travel to Williams Lake when the ski area is open. Follow the ski trail next to the river for approximately 1.5 miles until you come to the Phoenix Restaurant at the bottom of the Kachina Chairlift, Lift No. 4. After you pass the Phoenix Restaurant, remain on the trail on the east side of Lake Fork Creek for approximately 1/4 mile. The main road crosses the creek and heads up the mountain to the right; do not follow the main road. An old road bears left and does not cross the creek. Follow the old road along the east side of the creek. You are still on private land for approximately another 1/4 mile - The Wilderness boundary is within half a mile. The elevation at this point is 10,600 feet. The trail is now located in Englemann spruce stands and near the upper end opens up into meadowland and scattered rock fields. It is about two miles from the hiker parking lot near the Phoenix Restaurant to Williams Lake which is at an elevation of 11,000 feet. Williams Lake is a natural lake which does not have fish because it's often too shallow to maintain a fish population. Camping and campfires are not permitted along the lake shore to prevent damage to soil and water quality. Please select a campsite at least 300 feet from streams, springs, or lakes. Wheeler Peak is on the ridge line east of the lake and can be reached by climbing this slope. Technical rock climbing gear is not needed, but the slope is very steep and very rocky. Several avalanche chutes are apparent along the trail. Winter travelers should be alert to avalanche hazards.

Length: 4 miles from Twining Campground.
2 miles from Kachina Chairlift, Phoenix Restaurant.

Use: heavy

Recommended Season: June - October

Difficulty: Novice to Intermediate **Elevation:** 1,800 feet **USGS QUADS:** Wheeler Peak

