

Jun. 19, 2021

Public Trail Information: Columbine complex

Trail(s): Columbine #976; Columbine Ridge #976-2; Columbine Ridge Loop #976-21; North Loop #976-1	
Ratings / restrictions:	Hikers – Easy Stock Riders – Easy Bicycles allowed See complete REGULATIONS below DESCRIPTION
Cautions:	Bicycles on trail
Typically accessible:	Year-round (see SEASONAL below)
Wilderness:	None
One-Way Length:	4.4 miles (one-way for all four trails) [Columbine only = 2.2 miles; Columbine Ridge = 0.9 miles; Columbine Ridge Loop = 0.5 miles; North Loop = 0.8 miles]
Beginning / Peak Elevations:	Columbine Trail: 7,987 / 8,085
Gain/Loss/Net Gain:	Relatively flat
Map(s) - Trails Illustrated:	#111 Red Feather Lakes Glendevy
Map(s) - USGS 7-½ ' Quadrangles:	Red Feather Lakes

TRAIL LOCATION:

Red Feather Lakes Area: There are two ways to access the Columbine Complex Trails:

Via the Mt. Margaret Trail: See the Mt. Margaret trail description for details.

Via the eastern end of the Frog Pond Trail (from the Dowdy Lake Day Use Area): See the Frog Pond and East Dowdy Lake trail description. After 1.3 miles on the Frog Pond Trail, go north 0.1 mile on Mt. Margaret Trail. Columbine Trail will be on your left (to the west).

TRAIL: Some of these trails are on old roadbeds which are wide and easy to follow. Other sections are single track and can be less obvious as they cross grassy meadows. There are also numerous “social” trails likely made during the extensive tree clearing work in the area, especially on the section of the Columbine Trail north of the junction with the road leading back toward Dowdy Lake (Point 5). The GPS table below indicates some of the more confusing trail points with directions provided in the Description section. Also watch for tree material that has been placed across some of these social trails. There are several barbed wire fences in the area with private land beyond. Stay on the trail and do not camp on this private property.

WATER: Limited There is one intermittent water crossing on the lower Columbine Trail. Otherwise these trails are DRY.

CAMPING: See the Frog Pond/East Dowdy Lake and Mt. Margaret trail descriptions for camping opportunities.

SEASONAL: Accessible in winter. With little elevation change, the terrain is good for skiing or snowshoeing. However, snow may make the trail difficult to find or follow.

DESCRIPTION: The Columbine Complex trails (Columbine, Columbine Ridge, Columbine Ridge Loop, and the North Loop) take you through open ponderosa pine forest with meadows and numerous groves of quaking aspen as well as occasional Rocky Mountain Juniper and Douglas-fir trees.

The Columbine Trail extends from where it begins at the junction with the Mt. Margaret Trail (Point 1) 2.2 miles to its “End of Trail” sign (Point 10). The trail passes junctions with the North Loop (Point 2) and West Loop (Point 3) trails and then crosses a small, unnamed stream. In a meadow, the trail reaches a signed junction with the Columbine Ridge Trail (Point 4) 0.8 mile from the start of the trail (Point 1). After another 0.3 mile the Columbine Trail reaches the junction with the old road leading to the SW toward Dowdy Lake (Point 5). At this point, the trail turns right and heads uphill to the north. About 0.3 mile beyond this point the trail approaches a barbed wire fence on the left and a rock outcrop ahead (Point 6). The trail splits in front of the rock outcrop. Take the trail to the right which proceeds between this outcrop and another outcrop on the right. The trail continues north and passes the remains of a sawmill site and an old truck (Point 7). As the trail continues north it passes through an area where significant tree clearing and burning has taken place. There is also a small pond visible to the left of the trail, with several social trails to it. Stay to the right for the main trail. Another Y in the trail occurs at Point 8 where a well worn “social” trail proceeds to

the right and the Columbine Trail is to the left and appears less worn. At another large rock outcrop at Point 9, the trail takes a sharp right and proceeds around the outcrop. The "End of Trail" sign is about 0.2 mile further and can be difficult to see. It is in an open area with many downed trees and burn piles. A fence crosses the open area to the left of the sign.

The Columbine Ridge Trail is a 0.9 mile out-and-back trail that begins at a junction with the Columbine Trail (Point 4), 0.8 mile from the start (Point 1). This attractive trail proceeds NE through ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, and a smattering of quaking aspen. There are a series of rock outcrops along the western side of this trail. Behind the outcrop at the "End of Trail" sign (Point 13) is a view of the valley below.

The Columbine Ridge Loop Trail is a 0.5 mile trail with both ends joining the east side of the Columbine Ridge Trail. As you hike up the Columbine Ridge Trail, you will see signage for the two junctions

(Points 11 and 12). The southeastern portion of this short trail is marked by small (1 - 2 feet high) rock cairns. If you are hiking the trail from north to south, about 0.3 mile down the trail, there is a Y that can be confusing as both paths appear to head back to the Columbine Ridge Trail. At this point Ridge Loop Trail proceeds to the right, uphill back to the southern junction with the Columbine Ridge Trail (Point 11). The trail is more obvious when hiking from south to north.

The North Loop Trail is a 0.8 mile extension that begins 0.2 mile (Point 2) from the start of the Columbine Trail (Point 1). It proceeds north and loops back to join the Mt. Margaret Trail (Point 14).

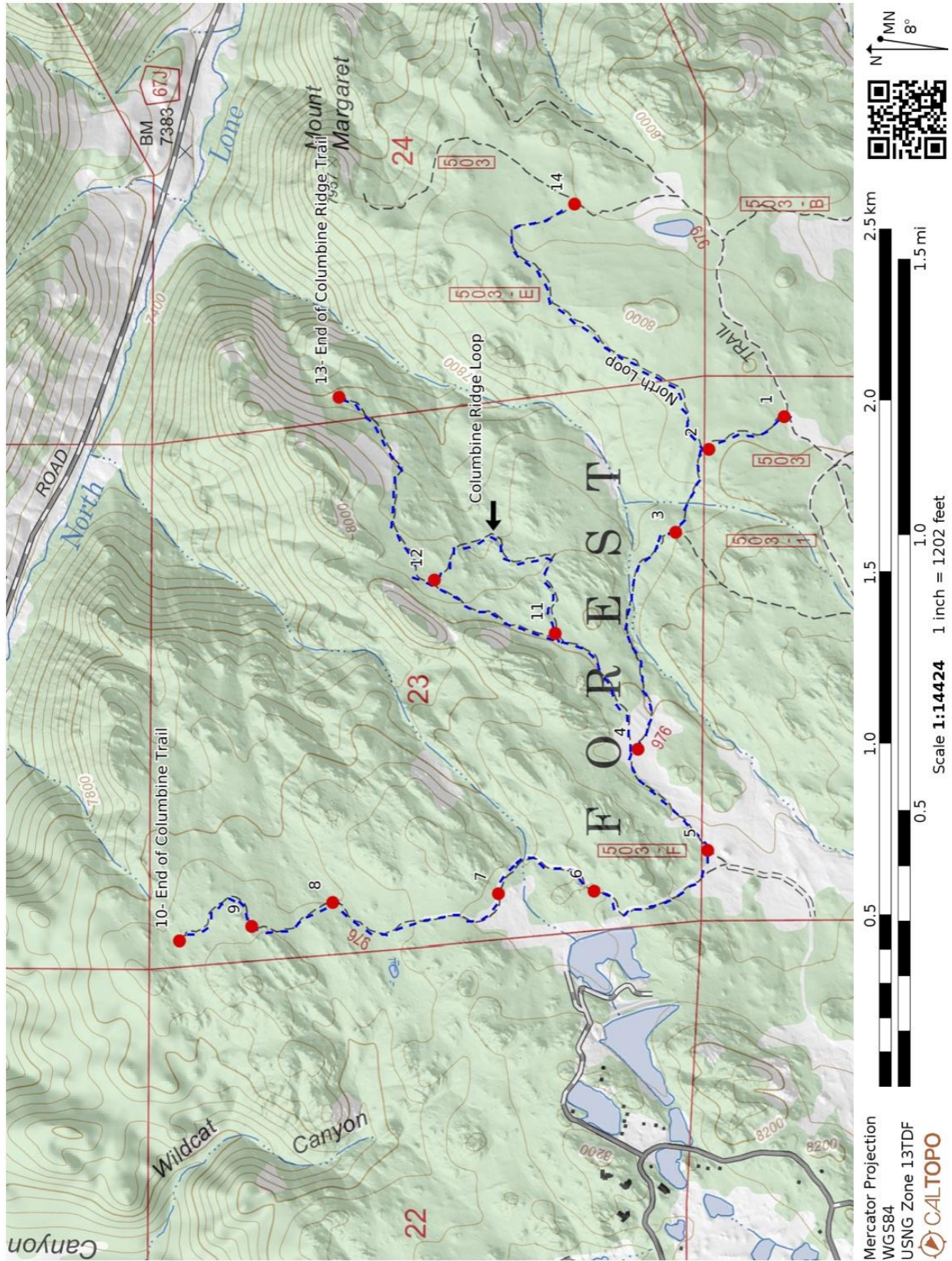
Mileages provided are approximate.

REGULATIONS:

- Camping and Fires - Recommend at least 100 feet from water and trail.
- Dogs - Must be under voice control at all times.
- Stock - To avoid spreading noxious weeds, recommend beginning 72 hours prior to the ride, stock should be fed only pellets or certified weed-free hay. Required: throughout the trip, stock *must* be fed only pellets or certified weed-free hay.
- Bicycles and Other Wheeled Conveyances - Allowed.
- Motorized Transport - Prohibited.
- Group Size - Any single group of more than 74 people must have a USFS permit.

Point	Mileage	GPS Coordinates: datum = WGS84	Lat/Long	UTM
		Columbine Trail		
1	0	jct of Columbine Trail with Mt. Margaret Trail	N40°48.35' W105°32.20'	454730mE 4517340mN
2	0.2	jct of Columbine Trail with North Loop Trail	N40°48.47' W105°32.27'	454640mE 4517560mN
3	0.4	jct of Columbine Trail with West Loop Trail	N40°48.52' W105°32.44'	454400mE 4517660mN
4	0.8	jct of Columbine Trail with Columbine Ridge Trail	N40°48.58' W105°32.89'	453770mE 4517770mN
5	1.1	jct of Columbine Trail with road leading back toward Dowdy Lake	N40°48.47' W105°33.10'	453470mE 4517570mN
6	1.4	rock outcrop – trail to the right	N40°48.65' W105°33.19'	453351mE 4517903mN
7	1.6	remains of sawmill and old truck	N40°48.80' W105°33.19'	453345mE 4518181mN
8	1.9	Y – take trail to the left, not well-worn social trail to the right	N40°49.06' W105°33.21'	453323mE 4518664mN
9	2.1	rock outcrop – trail to the right around outcrop	N40°49.19' W105°33.26'	453254mE 4518899mN
10	2.2	“end of trail” sign for Columbine Trail	N40°49.30' W105°33.29'	453210mE 4519110mN
		Columbine Ridge /Columbine Ridge Loop / North Loop Trails		
11		jct of Columbine Ridge Trail with south end of Columbine Ridge Loop Trail	N40°48.71' W105°32.65'	454100mE 4518010mN
12		jct of Columbine Ridge Trail with north end of Columbine Ridge Loop Trail	N40°48.90' W105°32.54'	454260mE 4518360mN
13		“end of trail” for Columbine Ridge Trail	N40°49.05' W105°32.16'	454800mE 4518640mN
14		jct. of North Loop Trail with Mt. Margaret Trail	N40°48.68' W105°31.76'	455356mE 4517948mN
	Segments			
	0.9	Columbine Ridge Trail (Point 4 to Point 5)		
	0.5	Columbine Ridge Loop Trail (Point 11 to Point 12)		
	0.8	North Loop Trail (Point 2 to Point 14)		

(See next page for trail map.)



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