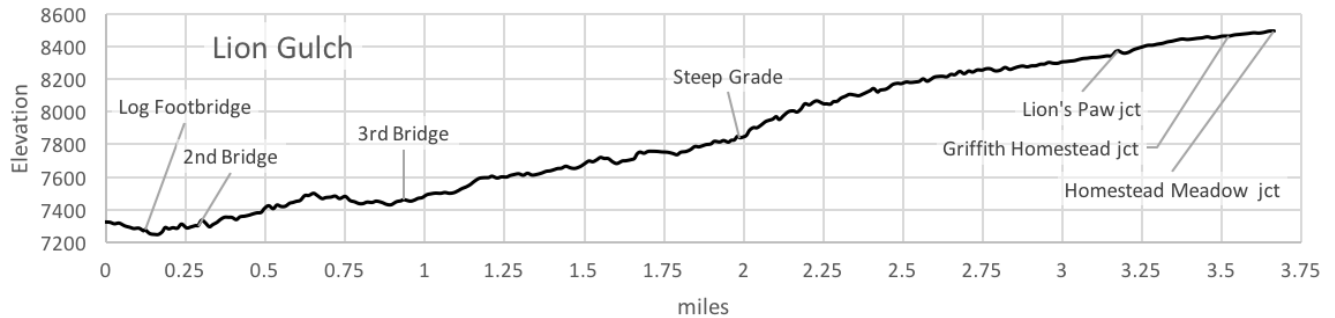


Dec. 23, 2020

Public Trail Information: Lion Gulch (& Homestead Meadows)

Trail: Lion Gulch #949	
Ratings/restrictions:	Hikers – Moderate Stock Riders – Challenging Bicycles allowed Dogs on hand-held leash with hikers See complete REGULATIONS below INFORMATION OF INTEREST
Cautions:	Bicycles on trail
Typically accessible:	Year-round (see SEASONAL below)
Wilderness:	None
One-Way Length:	3.7 miles (trailhead to end of trail just beyond Griffith Homestead)
Beginning/Peak Elevation:	7,324 / 8,496
Gain/Loss/Net Gain:	1,830/660/+1,170
Map(s) - Trails Illustrated:	#101 Cache La Poudre, Big Thompson
Map(s) - USGS 7-½' Quadrangles:	Panorama Peak



TRAILHEAD LOCATION:

Big Thompson & Estes Park Area: There are two routes to the trailhead.

If you are coming from Loveland: Drive up the Big Thompson Canyon on US-34. Before reaching Lake Estes make a left onto Mall Road, a Larimer County connector road passing over the Big Thompson River below the dam. This will take you to US-36. Turn left and head southeast on US-36 for about six miles. The trailhead is located on the west (right) side of the road immediately after mile marker 8.

If you are coming from Longmont or Boulder: Drive west from Longmont on CO-66 to the town of Lyons, and then head northwest on US-36 for about 12 miles. The trailhead is located on the west (left) side of the road, just before mile marker 8.

Toilets and ample trailer parking are available at the trailhead. Stock riders: The trail can be difficult for horses because erosion on steep sections has exposed rocks.

TRAIL: This is one of the three highest use trails in the Canyon Lakes Ranger District. At the trailhead, there is a double-sided information board about the history of Lion Gulch and Homestead Meadows. Heavy use by horses, hikers, and bikers, as well as environmental damage from rains after the Big Elk Fire (which burned more than 4,400 acres of forest and meadows over 10 days in July 2002), and the

flood of 2013 compromised the trail tread in many locations and destroyed all bridges along the trail. The trail re-opened in 2017.

WATER: **Abundant** from stream in gulch along the lower trail; **Scarce or None** in Homestead Meadows; however, there is a seasonal spring near the end of the Lion Gulch Trail that may provide water. Water might be locally available near the Hill Homestead (south Homestead Meadows) or along the trail leading to the Brown Homestead (north Homestead Meadows). Riders should note that the stock tank just to the north of the trail junction east of the Walker Homestead has rusted to the point that it no longer holds any water.

CAMPING: One good location is south of the trail near the old livestock loading chute in Homestead Meadows near trees at GPS N40°18.50' W105°26.85' – you will have to walk back to the creek for water. There are numerous other potential camping sites throughout the northern and southern reaches of Homestead Meadows but most will require a significant walk to get water (or bring your own).

SEASONAL: Normally accessible in winter; snowshoes usually required.

DESCRIPTION: This trail was significantly damaged in the 2013 floods and was subsequently re-routed. The elevation profile, description, GPS coordinates table, and map reflect the new trail.

For the first 2.5 miles or so, the trail essentially follows the creek, with occasional downhill segments interspersed in the (mostly) gradual rise through mixed evergreen and aspen. At about 2 miles from the trailhead, the trail becomes steeper and rockier for a distance of approximately 0.2 miles. There are numerous creek crossings - the first three by bridges (indicated in the GPS table below), and then six more, between 1.4 and 2.3 miles from the trailhead, that require rock hopping or wading,. Waterproof boots and hiking poles may be helpful.

At approximately 2.6 miles, the trail enters a wider, meadow-like valley with abundant grass, and continues rising more gradually. Soon after reaching this open area, evidence of the old homesteads can be seen, such as a rusted farm vehicle near the creek at about 2.8 miles. There are interpretive signs regarding some of the homesteads, beginning with a sign about the 1862 Homestead Act at about 2.9 miles. Other remnants from the homesteads include several old stoves, a bedframe, log cabin ruins, and a stock pen / loading ramp. A sign at about 3.1 miles indicates the individual trails to the six homesteads

which are not adjacent to the Lion Gulch Trail. The Lion Gulch Trail continues past the Griffith and Walker homesteads and ends at a T-junction with an old road.

INFORMATION OF INTEREST: There are eight homesteads in this area, which were built between 1889 and 1923. The Walker and Griffith Homesteads are just to the north of the Lion Gulch Trail (949). The Irvin and Brown homesteads are about 1.5 miles north of the 949 and 949.1 (Lion's Paw) trail intersection. To reach the other four homesteads, Engert, Hill, Laycook and Boren, turn south at the trail junction and take the respective trails that will lead you to these homesteads.

A guide booklet, "Homestead Meadows: A Hike into History" was produced by the Arapahoe and Roosevelt National Forests, Estes-Poudre Ranger District, and Rocky Mountain Nature Association. Copies may be available at the Canyon Lakes Ranger District Visitor Center at 2150 Centre Ave, Fort Collins.

All mileages provided are approximate.

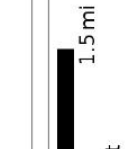
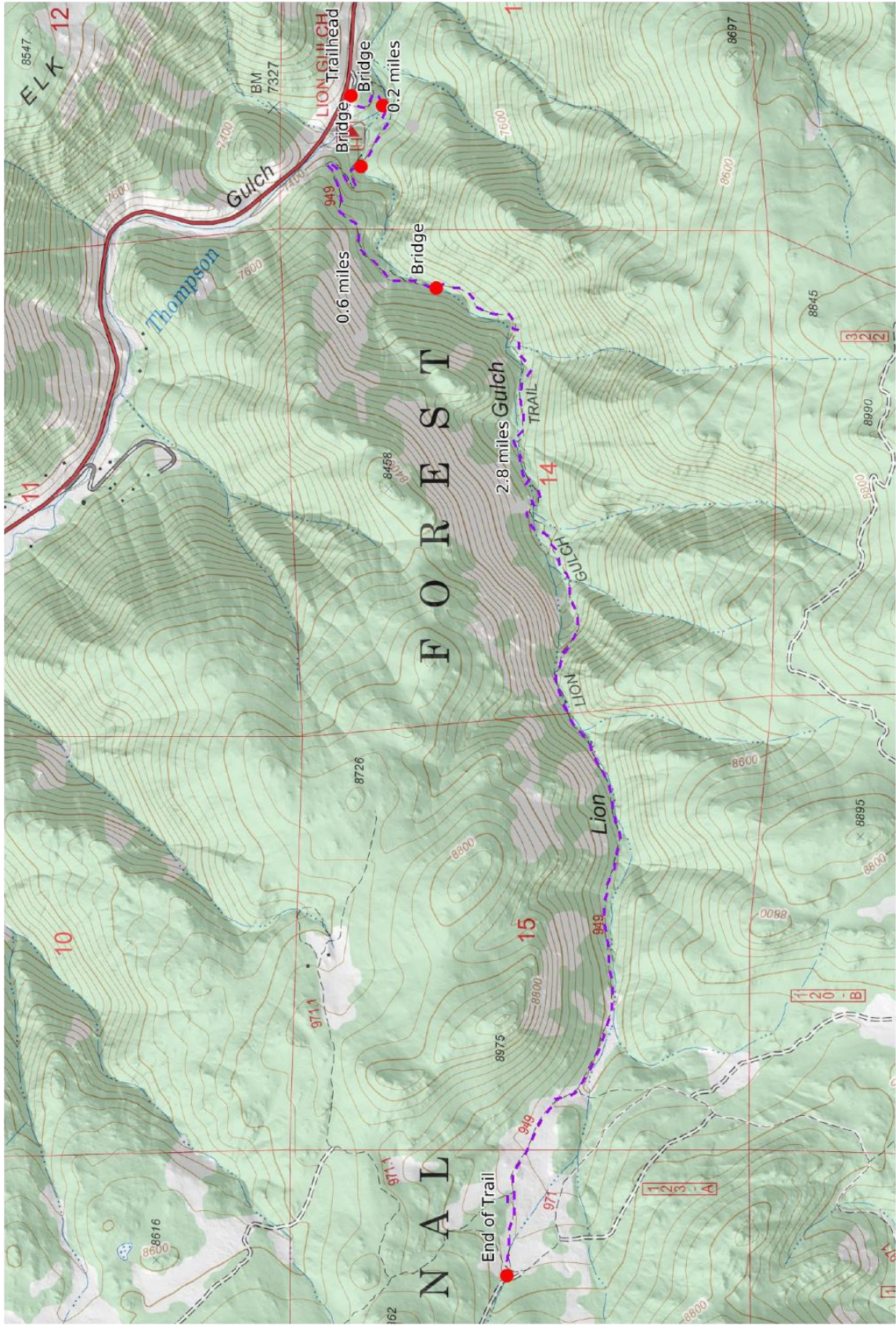
REGULATIONS:

- Camping and Fires - Prohibited within 200 feet of trailhead, toilets and parking area; recommend at least 100 feet from water and trail.
- Dogs - Must be on hand-held leash with hikers; voice control with stock.
- 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 - A single group of more than 74 people must have a USFS permit.

Trail adopted by the Larimer County Horsemen's Association

Mileage	GPS Coordinates: datum = WGS84	Lat/Long	UTM	
0	Lion Gulch Trailhead	N40°18.91' W105°24.32'	465553mE	4462810mN
0.1	Log footbridge	N40°18.84' W105°24.33'	465541mE	4462690mN
0.3	2nd Bridge	N40°18.88' W105°24.48'	465338mE	4462769mN
0.9	3rd Bridge	N40°18.74' W105°24.78'	464909mE	4462506mN
2.0	Steep Grade	N40°18.48' W105°25.57'	463788mE	4462032mN
3.2	Lion's Paw (949.1) junction	N40°18.49' W105°26.74'	462137mE	4462052mN
3.5	Griffith Homestead junction	N40°18.60' W105°27.02'	461733mE	4462257mN
3.7	End of patrol at Homestead Meadow junction	N40°18.61' W105°27.18'	461514mE	4462286mN
	Brown Homestead cabin	N40°19.18' W105°27.48'	461088mE	4463339mN
	Irvin Homestead cabin	N40°18.95' W105°26.37'	462658mE	4462905mN
	Laycook Homestead cabin	N40°17.65' W105°27.25'	461399mE	4460507mN
	Hill Homestead cabin	N40°18.10' W105°27.91'	460468mE	4461344mN
	Boren Homestead cabin	N40°17.37' W105°27.60'	460901mE	4459991mN

(See next page for trail map.)



Scale 1:18035 1 inch = 1503 feet

Mercator Projection
 WGS84
 USNG Zone 13TDE
 CalTopo

Lion Gulch & Homestead Meadows: 4