

Hiking Tips

- Set easy-to-achieve objectives. Unless backpacking, plan to return well before dark. Enjoy your hike.
- Stay on the trail. Short-cutting causes erosion and is hazardous to your safety as well as those hikers below you.
- Think safety. Take wet weather gear, map, water, and snacks. Always travel with a friend and let someone know where you are going.
- Pack out your trash. Help keep the forest clean and pack out trash someone else left!
- A Pagosa Country area map is available to direct you to the various trail heads. However, it is a good idea to pick up a National Forest map; it more clearly shows all access roads and trails. Both maps may be purchased at the Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center.
- All of the hikes described herein begin at altitudes above 8000 feet. Several reach to 12,000 feet at their summit.
- Each hike is labeled “easy” to “difficult”. Only persons in good physical condition should attempt the difficult hikes. Remember, that when you go downhill, you will have to climb back up when you return.

Easy - means the hike will not be hard for hikers of all ages. An easy hike may become difficult if you go too far.

Moderate - will also fit most hikers, but could be difficult for the very young and older hikers. There are usually some steep parts to a moderate hike.

Difficult - are steeper, go to higher altitudes, and are usually longer. It is recommended that you hike easy to moderate trails before trying a difficult one.

Take A Hike In Pagosa Country

Most of the visitors to the Pagosa Springs area are drawn by the awesome natural beauty. Unfortunately, many do not take the opportunity to hike “back-in” and enjoy the beauty in a more intimate way. Experience the unique sights, sounds and smells of the San Juan National Forest by leaving your car behind and walking up a trail that winds beneath the towering pines and along a clear mountain stream. The following hikes cover a variety of terrain and are geared to differing ability levels. We hope you will stay awhile in Pagosa and return home with some unforgettable memories that any of these hikes will provide.

Remember:

Take wet weather gear.

Take a map and water.

Travel with a buddy(s).

**Let someone know
where you are going.**

**Take only pictures,
leave only footprints.**

This brochure produced through the cooperation of the Pagosa Springs Area Chamber of Commerce, the Pagosa Chapter of the San Juan National Forest Association and the Pagosa District of the San Juan National Forest.

WHERE YA
WIKIN'



Pagosa Springs Area Hiking Guide



PAGOSA SPRINGS
AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
The Best Of Colorado

970-264-2360 • 1-800-252-2204

Fax (970) 264-4625 • www.pagosaspringschamber.com
P.O. Box 787 • Pagosa Springs, CO 81147

#1 Fourmile Falls From Hwy 160, turn north onto Lewis St. and an immediate left onto 5th St. Stay right onto Four Mile Road (CR400 - this becomes FS #645) driving north seven miles from Pagosa Springs. Turn right at the junction for four more miles to the trailhead. The trail follows Fourmile Creek with Eagle Mountain to the east. The trail is bordered by dense stands of aspen and spruce-fir. At mile three you will reach the waterfall which drops 300' from the cliff above.



Moderate

#2 Opal Lake Drive south on Highway 84 from Pagosa Springs approximately eight miles to Blanco Basin Road (#657). After driving 10 miles, turn right across the Blanco River Bridge. Follow the Castle Creek Road (#660) to the signed junction for the Opal Lake Trailhead. Turn right here and drive a short distance to the trailhead on the right. The trail to Opal Lake is 1.2 miles and takes about 45 minutes to hike. A portion of the trail is steep before it traverses an open meadow to the lake. Groves of large aspen line the trail and several beaver dams can be seen in the area. The lake is bordered by wooded hillsides and a sheer mountain face. Minerals deposited at the inlet of the lake give it its milky color.

Easy To Moderate

East Toner Road (#637), and follow it to the end. Do not attempt to travel this road in wet weather. Walk up the river to a headgate where the trail begins. The falls are impressive, thundering off a cliff into a V-shaped canyon of huge boulders. The hike takes about 15 to 30 minutes each way.



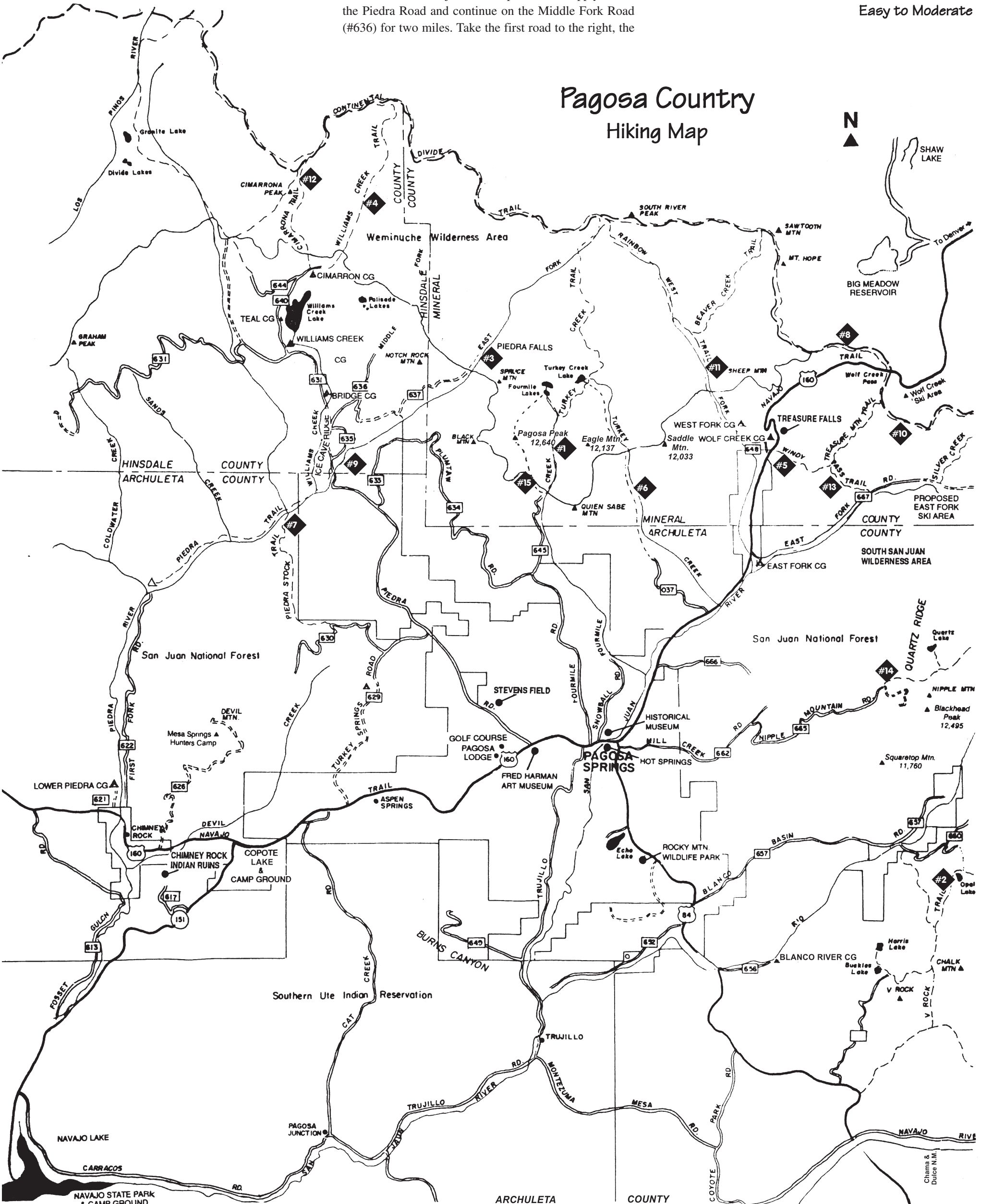
Easy

#4 Williams Creek Drive north on Piedra Road (#631) about 22 miles. Turn right on Williams Creek Road (#640) past Williams Creek Reservoir and Cimarrona Campground, continuing on to the trailhead at the end of the road. The trail follows Williams Creek northward into the Weminuche Wilderness. The old Spanish name for Williams Creek was Huerto: garden-like. The first few miles of Williams Creek do give the impression of a gigantic, walled garden. Across the creek to the right is a group of peaks eroded from volcanic rock. Set your own destination - it continues on 14 miles to the Continental Divide.

Easy to Moderate

#3 Piedra Falls Drive north on Piedra Road (#631) about 17 miles to the junction at Sportsman's Supply. Leave the Piedra Road and continue on the Middle Fork Road (#636) for two miles. Take the first road to the right, the

Pagosa Country Hiking Map



#5 Treasure Falls Travel 14 miles northeast on Highway 160 to the base of Wolf Creek Pass. You will see a parking lot on your right. From the parking lot follow a quarter mile interpretive trail to the bridge at the base of the falls. Standing in the refreshing spray on the bridge, the falls rush hundreds of feet down the cliff toward you. In winter these falls create an ice-blue frozen sculpture.

Easy

#6 Turkey Creek Trail Drive 7.3 miles northeast of Pagosa Springs on Highway 160 to Jackson Mountain access road on the left. Follow it for 4 miles to the end of the road. This trail is the longest in this section of the Weminuche Wilderness. It is 20 miles from the trailhead through breathtaking scenery to the Continental Divide. Choose your own destination here. A 5 mile hike will take you to the first creek crossing.

Easy to Moderate

#7 Piedra River The upper terminus of the trail begins on the Piedra Road about 16 miles north of Pagosa Springs. After crossing the Piedra River you will notice the trailhead parking lot ahead of you on the left. The trail starts on the canyon rim and then descends to the river. Sheer cliffs rise on both sides for over several hundred yards. This is an easy trail for young and old alike if you only go the 3.5 miles to the foot bridge across the Piedra. For a longer hike, follow the river for another 8.5 miles. The trail passes several cool box canyons to end at the bridge on the First Fork of the Piedra Road. Shuttle a vehicle to the First Fork Bridge for the longer hike.

Easy

#8 Continental Divide Trail North Turn left on the dirt road just past the Continental Divide summit on Wolf Creek Pass. Drive 1.5 miles to the Lobo Overlook parking area and microwave tower site. The trail begins behind the microwave tower. Choose your own destination here. You will feel as though you are truly on top of the world. You are standing on the “backbone” of the country - the dividing line for the eastern and western watersheds.

Easy to Moderate

#9 Ice Cave Ridge Trail Follow the directions to the Piedra River Trail to access this trail. From the parking area start on the Piedra River Trail for several hundred yards, then follow the old road bed to the right. This is an easy, short trail up Ice Cave Ridge. The fissures on the side of the ridge contain snow deposited through the winter, protected from the sun. After melting and compressing, the ice remains in the fissures as late as the end of June. From the ridge at the top you have a good view of the Piedra Valley and other ridges. Use caution when viewing the ice fissures.

Easy

#10 Continental Divide Trail To Alberta Peak

Begin this trail at the summit of Wolf Creek Pass. A well marked trail travels south and climbs to the west of Wolf Creek Ski Area. It then leads to rocky ridges on the west side of Alberta Peak. No marked trail leads to the top of the peak (11,870'). There are many beautiful vistas along the ridge above timberline.

Easy to Moderate

#11 West Fork Or Rainbow Trail

Travel to this trailhead from Pagosa Springs on Highway 160. Drive 15 miles, then turn left on the West Fork Road (#648). Travel 3 miles to the trailhead, after passing West Fork Campground and crossing the West Fork of the San Juan River. The first portion of this trail passes through private property. The trail crosses both the West Fork of the San Juan River and Beaver Creek. Hiking three miles will take you to the West Fork, and ¼ mile further to Beaver Creek. Either are pleasant day hikes. The trail continues on to the Continental Divide.

Moderate

#12 Cimarrona Creek Trail Drive north on Piedra Road to Williams Lake Road. The trail begins on the left side of Williams Lake Road just beyond the entrance of Cimarrona Campground. The first two miles of trail are moderately easy, wandering through conifers and aspen groves. From here many switchbacks start a steep ascent. Choose your destination - the trail continues on to the Continental Divide Trail at Squaw Pass.

Moderate to Difficult

#13 Windy Pass Trail The more spectacular trail to Windy Pass is the one starting from the East Fork Road (#667). Drive eight miles northeast on Highway 160, turn right on the East Fork Road, and travel approximately seven miles to the trailhead. The trailhead is marked by a small sign on the left side of the road. After approximately three miles the Treasure Mountain Trail from the north-east intersects this trail in a large scenic park. Windy Pass is about ¾ miles to the west from this junction. You can return the way you came up, or go on down to Highway 160 (if you left a car there). Obviously you could go to the top of Windy Pass from Highway 160 but it just isn't as scenic. The trailhead is located just past the West Fork Road.

Moderate to More Difficult

#14 Quartz Lake Travel south on Highway 84 for approximately ¼ mile and turn left on Mill Creek Road (#662). Drive for approximately 15 miles and bear left on the Nipple Mountain Road (#665). Follow it nearly to the end. You will see a trailhead sign on the left. The first two miles of the Little Blanco Trail are steep and winding. You will travel through aspen groves and pine forest to a narrow ridge with a sweeping view to the west. Follow the trail to the junction of the Quartz Lake Trail. The trail continues to the left for another mile to Quartz Lake. The lake itself is relatively small, but pristine. Expect winds at the top and in the lake area. It is another four miles to the lake.

Difficult

#15 Anderson Trail See Fourmile Falls Trail for directions. This trail begins at the Fourmile Trailhead, to the left of the Fourmile Trail. This trail climbs steadily for about 4 miles to skirt the east side of Pagosa Peak (11,200'). The summit of the peak is 12,460'. The trail continues on to Fourmile Lake another four miles. Here the Anderson Trail junctions with the old Fourmile Trail. The Fourmile Trail is six miles back to the trailhead, very steep in some areas.

Difficult