

The Transfer Recreation Area

The Transfer Recreation Area, which includes a campground, picnic area, scenic overlook, and large corral for overnight stock, is also the hub for several trailheads. Included are the Big Al, West Mancos, Transfer, Rim, Chicken Creek, Morrison, and the Aspen Loop ATV trail. Access the Transfer Recreation area from the West Mancos Road (FDR 561), approximately 11 miles northeast of Mancos. The campground turnoff will be off to the right. See Map 3 for more information.



Big Al Trail (FST 630)

Starting elevation: 8,900ft Ending elevation: 8,950ft
Trail length one-way: .5 miles
Maps: See Map 3, SJNF, USGS 7 1/2' maps: Rampart Hills
Difficulty: Easy

Located just past the scenic over-look pull out, once you have made the right turn off of 561, the Big Al trail is a 1/2-mile, surfaced, barrier-free trail leading to a deck that offers dramatic views of West Mancos Canyon and the La Plata Mountains.

This trail is closed to bikes, horses, and motorized vehicles. Interpretive signs along the way point out flora and fauna; and there are benches making this an ideal hiking venue for small children and seniors, or for just taking a leisurely stroll from the adjacent campground. Don't forget your camera!



West Mancos (FST 621)

Starting elevation: 8,900ft Transfer Recreation Area
Ending elevation: 10,900ft (Sharkstooth Trailhead)
Trail length one-way: 10 miles
Maps: See Map 3, SJNF, USGS 7 1/2' maps: Rampart Hills, La Plata
Difficulty: Moderate

Located adjacent to the Big Al Trailhead is the West Mancos and Transfer Trailhead. These trails share one trail for the first 1/2 mile. The trail immediately drops down into the West Mancos River Canyon via several switchbacks. After approximately 1/2 mile the trail splits, with the West Mancos continuing up river, and the Transfer trail heading down river. Due to the steep nature of the upper portion of this trail, it can be very tricky in wet conditions and if using this trail in early spring, be aware of downed trees and the trail sloughing off in places. Be especially careful if you are on horseback.

The West Mancos Trail continues upstream on the west side of the canyon before dropping to the West Mancos River level, then climbs steeply to Horsefly Flat, an open, grassy area. The trail ends at the Sharkstooth Trailhead, which is located at the base of Hesperus Peak.



Transfer Trail

Starting elevation: 8,900ft Transfer Recreation Area
Ending elevation: 8,250ft merges with Box Canyon Trail #617
Trail Length one-way: approximately 1.5 miles
Maps: See Map 3, SJNF, USGS 7 1/2' maps: Rampart Hills
Difficulty: Moderate

The Transfer Trail winds down to the West Mancos River and heads downstream until it intersects with the Box Canyon Trail. If you want to make a loop hike you can head uphill on the Box Canyon Trail and pick up the Rim Trail, which is located above the Box Canyon Trailhead. The length of this loop is approximately 3 miles. (The Box Canyon Trailhead is located on the West Mancos Road, one-mile south of Transfer CG).



Rim Trail (FST 613)

Starting elevation: 8,900 ft, Transfer Recreation Area
Ending elevation: 8,200 ft, trail merges with the Box Canyon Trail #617, and then intersects the Chicken Creek Trail.
Trail Length one-way: 3 miles
Maps: See Map 3, SJNF, USGS 7 1/2' maps: Rampart Hills
Difficulty: Moderate

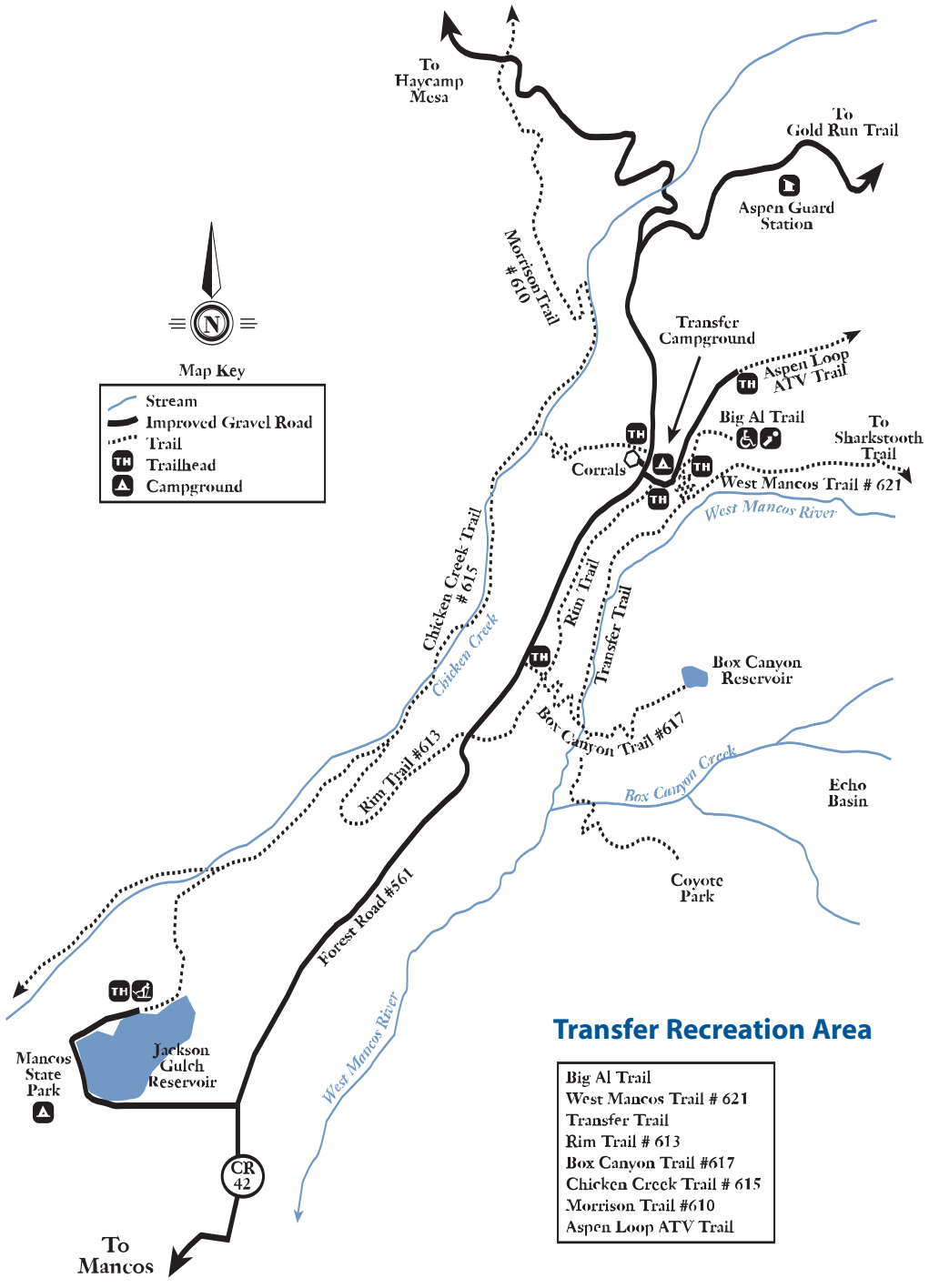
The trailhead is at the West Mancos Overlook, which is located on the right side of the road as you take the Transfer Campground turnoff from FDR 561. The trail begins by dropping slightly below the rim of the canyon and traverses the rim until it joins up with the Box Canyon Trail access road. From there you must continue down the Box Canyon Trail access road towards the canyon rim until you pick up the trail again, which traverses along the top of the rim to Doc Lowell Flats. Follow the two-track road out and across the West Mancos Road, and pick up the trail again on the other side. The trail will wind down into Chicken Creek and intersect with the Chicken Creek Trail #615.



Aspen Loop ATV Trail

The Aspen Loop Trail is a multipurpose trail constructed by the San Juan National Forest and the Four Corners Trail Club. The trail is open to ATV's, motorized trail bikes, horseback riders, hikers, and mountain bikes. This 39-mile loop trail was designated as an ATV trail to accommodate motorized recreation enthusiasts. The parking lot is designed as a turn-around to accommodate trailer parking. For more information and a brochure on the trail, contact the Dolores Public Lands Office at (970) 882-7296 or drop by at 100 North Sixth Street, in Dolores.

Map 3





Box Canyon Trail (FST 617)

Starting elevation: 8720 ft, West Mancos Road (FDR #561)
Ending elevation: 9185 ft, Golconda and West Mancos Trail

Trail Length one-way: 5.8 miles

Maps: See Map 3, SJNF, USGS 7 1/2' maps: Rampart Hills
Difficulty: Moderate

The Box Canyon Trailhead is located on the West Mancos Rd (#561), approximately 1 mile south of Transfer. There is parking available at the trailhead. The trail drops immediately down into the West Mancos River Canyon via several switchbacks. After about 3/4 mile the trail crosses the West Mancos River then starts climbing the opposite canyon wall, heading downstream to Box Canyon Creek. The trail makes a turn up the Box Canyon Creek and tops out on the Echo Basin Side. The trail continues to Gray Beal Springs, then turns into an old (now closed) jeep trail which crosses the mesa, passing the Box Canyon and Slate Reservoirs before dropping into Deer Lick Creek Follow the trail (also an old closed jeep trail) down to the West Mancos River. Cross the river and head upstream (to your right) paralleling an allotment fence until you reach a gate. As soon as you go through the gate you will see the West Mancos trail and you will be at Golconda (the location of an old post office and supply store that serviced miners in the late 1800's/early 1900's).



Coyote Park Trail

Starting elevation: 8720 ft, Box Canyon Trailhead

Ending elevation: 8700 ft, FDR 329 in Echo Basin

Trail Length one-way: 3 miles

Maps: See Map 3, SJNF, USGS 7 1/2' maps: Rampart Hills
Difficulty: Moderate to Difficult

For an alternative hike using the Box Canyon Trail, cross Box Canyon Creek, and climb up the south side of Box Canyon. It will take you up to Coyote Park. Come through the meadow and there will be a closure gate to your left. Forest road 329 is behind the gate. Head up the 329 road and turn right on FDR # 331, which will take you to T-Down corrals and the Echo Basin Road (FDR #566).



The Chicken Creek Trail (FST 615)

Starting Elevation: - 7,900 ft, (Mancos State Park)

Ending Elevation: 8,900 ft (Transfer)

Trail Length one-way: 7.8 miles

Maps: Map 3, SJNF, USGS 7 .5' maps: Rampart Hills & Wallace Ranch

Difficulty: Moderate

The actual trailhead for Chicken Creek is located at Mancos State Park, seven miles south of Transfer Recreation area. Keep in mind there is a fee if you park your vehicle at the Mancos State Park. Beginning on the north shore of Jackson Gulch Reservoir, the trail crosses over the top of a small mesa and drops into Chicken Creek. From there, the trail faithfully follows the creek bed for 7.5 miles before merging with the Morrison trail. If you want to loop back to your vehicle you can turn right when you meet the Morrison trail and climb out of Chicken Creek towards Transfer Recreation area. Cross the West Mancos Road (FDR 561) and pick up the Rim Trail at the West Mancos Overlook. The Rim Trail eventually merges with the lower end of the Chicken Creek Trail; hang a left (south) and follow the trail back to Mancos State Park. This is approximately a sixteen-mile loop.



Morrison Trail (FST 610)

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Starting Elevation: 7,960 (Highway 145, Bear Creek)

Ending Elevation: 8,900 - Transfer

Trail Length one-way: 9.25 miles

Maps: See Map 3, SJNF, USGS 7 .5' maps: Rampart Hills & Wallace Ranch

Difficulty: Moderate

The Morrison Trail is now accessed via the new Bear Creek Trailhead. From Dolores on Highway 145, travel east for 22 miles. The trailhead is clearly marked on the highway, and begins approximately 1/4 mile east (upstream) from the confluence of Bear Creek and the Dolores River. Beginning on the Bear Creek trail, the Morrison Trail junction is 1/2 mile from the trailhead. The trail climbs out of the Dolores River valley and tops the Haycamp Mesa in 2.25 miles at 9785 ft. The trail crosses Rock Springs Road (FDR #556), and then descends into Lost Canyon where it also crosses the Lost Canyon Road (FDR #560). The trail climbs out of Lost Canyon then gradually drops down in the Chicken Creek drainage and meets up with the Chicken Creek Trail. You can either turn left (east) and climb out of Chicken Creek to Transfer, or continue on down the Chicken Creek Trail.