



Elevation Outdoors

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Trail Gear

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TRAIL GEAR

OSPREY SYNCRO HYDRATION PACK

This lightweight, smartly built day pack holds all your gear for a big hike or long mountain bike ride. A ventilated backpanel keeps things cool and comfy, a rain cover pulls out for emergencies and a magnetized bite valve makes hands-free sipping simple. Comes in three sizes. **\$80 (3 liter), \$110 (10L); \$120 (15L); ospreypacks.com**



FEATURES ELITE MERINO SOCKS

Who knew that socks could make such a difference? We didn't until we tried these super soft socks with the perfect amount of cushioning in all the right places. The merino-wool-and-bamboo combo wicks moisture and kept our feet dry when they got soggy. **\$16-\$25; featuresrunning.com**

THE TRAIL 06.15



LOOKING VIEW: THE TYPICAL MONARCH CREST CHANGES AND DOWNHILL TO BE SEEN ON THIS QUICK CLIMB-UP.

FOOSES CREEK

DOWNLOAD THE FREE GPS APP AND COORDINATES AND ESCAPE THE CROWDS BY TAKING THIS QUICK, LITTLE-USED CUT-UP ON THE MONARCH CREST TRAIL.

By CHRIS KASSAR

The Monarch Crest Trail deserves all the hype it gets. And mountain bikers (as well as hikers) have options: Multiple side routes like Silver Creek, Marshall Pass, Agate Creek or Green Creek mean the trail can be different each time you ride it. Want a quick ride? Try the peaceful, scenic and off-the-beaten-path Foose Creek. This point-to-point 12-mile ride begins just below 9,000 feet and climbs to almost 12,000 feet. If you're hiking, you can shuttle to the top—Subaltine Cycleshops (subaltinecycleshops.com) and High Valley Shuttle (monarchcrest.com) offer rides—and bomb down, but, for those in good shape, the fairly mellow grades make it a tough, but doable ride up, too.

GET STARTED

1 From Paucha Springs drive west on US 50 toward Monarch Pass for just under 10 miles. Turn left at the moment for CR 225 and follow this paved road—which eventually turns to dirt—for just under two miles. Begin riding or hiking this gradual dirt road.

THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED

2 After less than a mile, you'll reach an intersection with another 4WD road. Head left to stay on CR 225.

HIT THE TRAIL

3 After about two miles, leave CR 225 and turn left onto 225 C which quickly morphs into the Colorado Trail (CT) and your first taste of ascent awaits. Note the South Foose Creek Trailhead sign. Cruise over a tiny wooden bridge to cross over North Foose Creek which comes in from the left.

ENCHANTED FOREST

4 Breathe deep and inhale the solitude of this

forest. Note the lovely ponds on your right and keep an eye out for industrious beavers. At this point, your legs and lungs might be screaming. Distract yourself from the pain by looking up and enjoying the breathtaking views all around.

INTO THE GREAT WIDE OPEN

5 This sometimes narrow, but navigable, shady trail climbs and cruises through the trees, over a rough log bridge and eventually hits a rocky technical section that will add to the fun factor and challenge your bike-handling (or trail-running). Enjoy all the oxygen here: In less than 25 miles you'll break 11,000 feet and won't dip below that altitude again for the duration of your escape. Shortly after the technical boulder garden, the trail pops out of the trees and climbs steeply upward.

BACK IN THE SADDLE

6 Push up a loose and rough bit of trail to reach a tiny saddle and the Monarch Crest Trail proper. Grab a snack and reward yourself with an amazing view of the Collegiate Peaks. When you're ready, head right on the Crest Trail.

CRUISING ON THE CREST

7 You've just passed the highest elevation of this journey (11,946 feet) and Peak Point rises to your right. All the major climbing is behind you so relax and enjoy the rolling and rugged terrain ahead, or turn around and head back down from here.

ALMOST THERE

8 You've been working for over 10 challenging miles, but the end is in sight. Only two more miles at this point so be sure to enjoy the sweeping vistas provided by this wide open corner.

BREATHE EASY

9 Enjoy the last downhill cruise to reach the very busy Monarch Pass parking lot. After you find the friend who is supposed to pick you up—or the car you've stashed here—take a peak in the gift shop. Grab a souvenir or a drink and ice cream to speed your recovery. Better yet, turn cyclists can turn around and ride the whole thing back down. 🏔️

PHOTO BY CHRIS KASSAR

POWERED BY



DOWNLOAD APP

viewranger.com/gpsadventure
ROUTE CODE: ELEV0037

Scan for this route's GPS Hike!



Scan for all Elevation Outdoors published routes!

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