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1919

U. S. Dept. of agriculture
Department circular 6

*A Summer Vacation in the
Sopris National Forest*

1917

Monograph

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
DEPARTMENT CIRCULAR 6

Contribution from the Forest Service

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The scene on the cover of this pamphlet is reproduced from a photograph of Mount Sopris, 12,823 feet in elevation, located on the Sopris National Forest.

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A Summer Vacation in the Sopris National Forest

TO the seekers after health, rest, and recreation the Sopris National Forest in Colorado offers extraordinary opportunities. Situated on what is known as the "western slope" of the Rocky Mountains, the Forest extends to the crest of the Continental Divide, reaching its loftiest elevation in Castle Peak—14,259 feet.

Clear, cold water, born of the mountain snows, an abundance of timber and firewood, cool nights, and days of warm sunshine all combine to make this region an ideal one for those who wish to live out of doors and explore the many wonders of a vast sky-land country unspoiled by civilization. For the sportsman there is the lure of trout fishing or grouse shooting; for the mountain climber the challenge of steep and difficult slopes and the reward of magnificent views of rugged mountain scenery. The possibilities of these and other lines of recreation are so large that after a summer's exploration and camping the tourist always desires to return and seek out new fields; and he can easily do this for several seasons and not cover the same ground twice.

Camping and Fishing Grounds

Splendid camping grounds are found in every part of the Forest; to enumerate every one would mean the listing of all the streams and lakes of the region. Visitors going into the mountains will find no difficulty in selecting excellent spots with plenty of fuel and pure water close at hand. The best camp grounds, as well

A summer cottage in the mountains.

as scenery, can be reached from Aspen. From here, Hunter, Castle, and Maroon Creeks, Roaring Fork, and their tributaries, branch out in the form of a huge fan. Each of these streams with its tributaries, lakes, and surrounding mountain peaks offers ideal camping places.

Good trout fishing may be found in practically all the streams and lakes of the Sopris. The Forest Service is cooperating with the State and Federal fish hatcheries in annually stocking these waters to keep up the supply. The yearly distribution of fry is 500,000. A local hatchery, supported by the Pitkin County Sportsmen's Association in cooperation with the State, produces from 300,000 to 500,000 fry twice each year. Forest officers have also assisted in distributing fry from this hatchery.

Excellent fishing is to be had in the Frying Pan River, and big catches are of almost daily occurrence. The Roaring Fork and Crystal River are also fine trout streams. Snowmass Lake, Snowmass Creek, and Capitol Lake probably offer as attractive daily catches as any other waters in the region. A large number of the high country lakes, some of which are above timber line, offer excellent fishing grounds, and the long journey necessary to reach them is usually rewarded by good catches and keen sport.

Big Game Areas

Grazing of domestic stock has been eliminated from an area at the head of Rocky Ford Creek, which has been set aside as a game preserve. This locality is serving as an excellent breeding ground for wild game, and elk and deer have been observed here by many visitors passing through the Forest.

In April, 1913, 16 head of elk were released on Smuggler Mountain near Aspen, and in March, 1914, 22 head were turned out at the same point. In March, 1915, 24 elk were turned out

at Meredith. In securing all these shipments the Forest Service cooperated with the local branch of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks in Aspen and with various public-spirited citizens on the Frying Pan River. A recent tally of elk on the Sopris by forest officers gave a total of 157 head, showing that these importations have been successful and that the herd is rapidly increasing.

Mule deer are plentiful in every part of the Forest, having steadily increased since the hunting season was closed by State law. Bear are often seen in the vicinity of Avalanche Creek, several being killed here each year. Mountain sheep have been frequently observed near Redstone, Conundrum Hot Springs, and along the lower Frying Pan River. Every protection is given the wild life in the Forest, as its presence adds manyfold to the attractiveness of the out-of-doors.

Mountain Climbing

The sturdiest mountain climber will find peaks to test his skill in the Continental Divide ranges, which are rough and rugged and of an average elevation of 13,000 feet. The Elk Mountain range, a spur of the main backbone of the Continent, affords unlimited opportunities for exciting climbing. The following high peaks are claimed to be superior in rugged grandeur to many of the better known and more accessible mountains in Colorado:

	Altitude, feet.
Castle Peak.....	14,259
Maroon Peak.....	14,126
Capitol Peak.....	13,997
Snowmass Peak.....	13,970
Pyramid Peak.....	13,885
Pearl Mountain.....	13,484
Mount Daly.....	13,193
Mount Sopris.....	12,823

Wood roads and rough trails traverse the valleys and much of the high country, so that it is possible to camp wherever the fancy of the individual induces him to set up his tent. Rugged scenery

Automobile campers on Tomichi Creek, Monarch Pass Road.

View of Independence Pass Auto Road along the roaring Fork River. Sidehill construction around rock point.

and bleak snow-capped peaks can be found in all the high ranges, while peaceful, verdure-covered rolling hills and cool brooks attract the less venturesome.

Hot Springs

Conundrum Hot Springs, 16 miles by wagon road and trail from Aspen, has been improved by a substantial bath house and a shelter cabin constructed by the Pitkin County Sportsmen's Club in cooperation with the Forest Service. A cement pool, sufficiently large for comfortable bathing, has been built, and the shelter cabin has been provided with a cookstove. These facilities are for the use of the public. The water from the spring is just the right temperature for a hot bath. The elevation of Conundrum Hot Springs is about 10,500 feet, almost at timber line. Fuel wood and pure cold water are to be had in abundance within a few feet of the shelter cabin.

The hot springs below Redstone have also been improved with a bathhouse and are used by a large number of people each season.

Scenic Attractions

The greatest scenic attraction of the Forest is the mountains. From certain favored vantage points they present marvelous panoramas. From one of these viewpoints, the Forest Service lookout station, not far from the Aspen-Norrie Trail, a view of two-thirds of the entire Forest can be secured. Mount Massive and Mount Elbert, the two highest peaks in Colorado, and the Mount of the Holy Cross are in plain view.

The Horseshoe Falls, just below Hell Gate on Ivanhoe Creek, are the most beautiful on the Forest. Five in number, they are distributed in a narrow walled-in canyon, which is cut for a distance of about one-half mile through glistening granite. In falling over the rock, a distance of from 20 to 50 feet, the water has formed a huge

bowl at the base of each of the falls, which makes an ideal home for mountain trout in the clear, ice-cold stream.

Other falls of interest to visitors are to be found on Avalanche Creek, near the Horseshoe opposite Nast on the Frying Pan River, and on Conundrum and Capitol Creeks.

The Roaring Fork Valley above Aspen is made very attractive by the mingling of the fiery colors of the rock with the forest green, and by the precipitous topography along both sides of the river. A few miles east of Aspen, on the Independence Pass automobile road, is the "Devil's Punch Bowl," which has been formed in solid granite by the action of the water. In the near vicinity also is the "Grotto," formed in the same manner, and a short distance below are markings pronounced to be one of the best-known evidences of the effect of glacial work on geological formations.

From Redstone to Marble one passes "Chair Mountain," so named because of its similarity in shape to a mammoth chair. At Marble is the largest known deposit of white marble in the world. The Lincoln Memorial at Washington, D. C., and the Federal building at Denver were constructed from the white marble quarried and milled at this town.

Fire Protection

The fire-lookout station of the Sopsris National Forest, elevation 11,700 feet, is easily accessible by trail from Norrie and Aspen, being situated 1 mile from the Aspen-Norrie trail. There is a 40-foot tower with a glassed-in crow's nest, telephone, and shelter cabin. At this observation point a Forest officer is stationed during the summer season to watch for fires. The field of view from the lookout tower extends over two-thirds of the entire Forest and includes some marvelous mountain scenery.

The visitor is reminded that these beautiful mountain areas can be terribly damaged by fires started from a match, or burning tobacco

North Boulder Falls, on North Boulder Creek.

Loveland-Estes Park Auto Road, Larimer County, Colorado.

carelessly thrown aside, or camp fires left unextinguished. Indications of destruction by fire are apparent upon every side to those who travel the mountains. Do your part toward preventing further loss:

Be careful with fire.

Do not pollute the streams.

Leave your camp site clean.

The National Forests belong to all the people. Do not impair the value of your own property by damaging it through acts of carelessness.

Summer Home Sites

In accordance with the liberal Government policy of making the National Forests as attractive as possible to visitors, an act of Congress was passed on March 4, 1915, authorizing the Secretary of Agriculture to issue permits for summer-home sites for periods not exceeding 30 years. Such permits may now be secured upon application to the Forest Service for a nominal fee of from \$10 to \$25 per year, depending upon the accessibility of the site and the demand for summer homes. Lots are usually one acre or less in area and are located in picturesque spots in the mountains where there is an abundance of timber, pure water, and good fishing close at hand.

Desirable localities for summer homes may be found in all parts of the Sopris National Forest. The greatest development of this feature has taken place along the Frying Pan River and its tributaries. There are summer resorts and small hotels specializing in tourist trade along the Frying Pan wagon road from Basalt to Nast and unlimited opportunities for the establishment of summer cabins. Near the Forest boundary in the vicinity of Castles the approximate elevation is 7,000 feet, while at Nast the altitude is 9,060 feet. It is not necessary, however, to be confined to the above limits in elevation, for summer homes may be located along the various tributaries of

the Frying Pan in the vicinity of Rocky Ford Creek or up the North Fork in the vicinity of Savage Lakes; elevation, 11,290 feet.

The distance from the railroad to summer-home sites will depend largely upon the desires of the locators, for along many of the Forest streams a cabin may be established at almost any point. There are exceptionally desirable locations for cottages in the vicinity of many of the lakes, which are situated for the most part at high altitudes. The Roaring Fork and Crystal River Valleys also afford sites admirably adapted to this purpose.

Hotels and Summer Resorts

For those who do not desire to travel with a camp outfit or "rough it" in the mountains, there are many excellent stopping places on the Forest where the traveler will be comfortable for a long or short period. Woods Lake resort, near the northeastern part of the Forest, and about 8 miles from Thomasville, is reached by wagon road from Basalt on the Denver & Rio Grande.

Another summer resort has been developed at Nast, where the old Colorado Midland right of way leaves the Frying Pan River to climb the Continental Divide. At Thomasville, Reudi, and Hopkins provision is made by residents for the care of tourists during the summer season. Bungalows, for the accommodation of visitors, have been built at both Norrie and Biglow.

Redstone, situated 12 miles south of Carbondale on Crystal River, is easily accessible to tourists. An auto road connects this town with Glenwood Springs, via Carbondale and the Crystal River. The Crystal River and San Juan Railroads connect the town of Redstone with Carbondale, which is a junction point on the Denver & Rio Grande. Redstone is an abandoned mining town. It was built by a large mining company to serve the purpose of a model town. The cottages are well planned and constructed and may be rented for a

MAP OF THE SOPRIS NATIONAL FOREST

Solid black lines represent Forest boundaries. Distances between solid light lines (township boundaries) represent 6 miles.

moderate sum either for the summer or for a yearlong period. The canyon of the Crystal River is an especially scenic one. Red sandstone formations rise in perpendicular cliffs several hundred feet in height from the valley, and from narrow canyons extend great spires showing large expanses of solid rock surface broken into fantastic shapes and with practically no vegetative cover of any kind.

The town of Aspen offers accommodation to all visitors to the northern portion of the Forest. This town is known as the "Crystal City of the Rockies" and is one of the richest silver-mining camps in the world. Its business blocks are of brick and stone; the resident portion boasts many expensive mansions. Hotel accommodations are excellent, and information regarding furnished cottages may be obtained by correspondence with the Aspen Associated Clubs. Aspen is reached by the Denver & Rio Grande from Glenwood Springs. The automobile roads leading to the city are noted for their exceptional scenic qualities.

Lines of Travel

The Sopris National Forest may be reached over the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad branch line from Glenwood Springs to Aspen, where the supervisor's headquarters is located. The auto enthusiast may visit portions of the Forest via the "Midland Trail" or "Pikes Peak Ocean to Ocean Highway" to Glenwood Springs, thence by a good road to Redstone or Aspen via Carbondale. Within the next few years the Independence Pass Highway will also be completed, and the motorist will then be enabled to cross the Continental Divide at an altitude of 12,226 feet, passing eastward from Aspen up the Roaring Fork Valley, thence over the Pass, and down to Twin Lakes on the Leadville National Forest.

For further information concerning camping and fishing grounds, scenic attractions, summer-home sites, transportation facilities, and lakes and resorts, write or call on the Forest Supervisor, Aspen, Colo.

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