

freeze-dried foods and some are in cans, which must be packed out. A few of my old standbys are:

Breakfast—instant eggs, instant cereal with instant milk, pancakes, granola, Tang, instant coffee, hot chocolate, tea.

Lunch—small cans of bean dip, Spam spread, deviled ham, Vienna sausage, roast beef, spreadable sandwich spread, beef jerky, hard sausage, cheese (the small, round kind), crackers, cookies, fruit rolls, Weight Watchers dried fruit snacks, space sticks, trail food, hard candy, instant drink mix.

Dinner—Tuna Helper; spaghetti; macaroni and cheese; corned beef, instant potatoes, and gravy mix (left over corned beef is great with eggs for breakfast); Top Ramen noodles, vegetable soup, bacos, cheese, seasoning; canned chicken, instant soup mix, instant rice; chipped beef; stroganoff; cheesecake; instant pudding (pistachio is great!).

Seasonings make the difference for tasty dinners. Good ones to take along are: garlic powder, vegetable flakes, basil, oregano, parsley flakes, chili powder, thyme, bouillon, pepper, caraway seed, dill weed, and onion flakes.

These weigh virtually nothing! To save time and space, several seasonings can be mixed together before leaving home. A plastic pill bottle makes a good container for seasonings.

For vegetable lovers—raw carrots, turnips, and cauliflower travel well and keep indefinitely, though they are heavy. A lightweight vegetable that will travel well for a week and tastes good is Chinese cabbage. Alfalfa sprouts are also good for a few days.

If there is snow on your trip, try an instant drink mix snow cone. This is a real hit, especially with kids. Hot jello is an old favorite "warmer upper" on cold days.

Summary

My collection of backpacking ideas is the result of hundreds of miles of wilderness travel over a ten-year period. In developing these I've tried to keep in mind: weight, usefulness, expense, and practicality. Believe it or not, all items mentioned will fit comfortably into a medium-sized pack!

Karen Hickey, a CMC'er since 1961 and a past CMC state director, teaches in Denver Group's basic mountaineering school, takes ballet lessons, and is a counselor at South Middle School.



Dr. Holyoke on Pitkin-Bighorn ridge, overlooking Bighorn Valley.

VALLEY HOPPING IN THE GORE

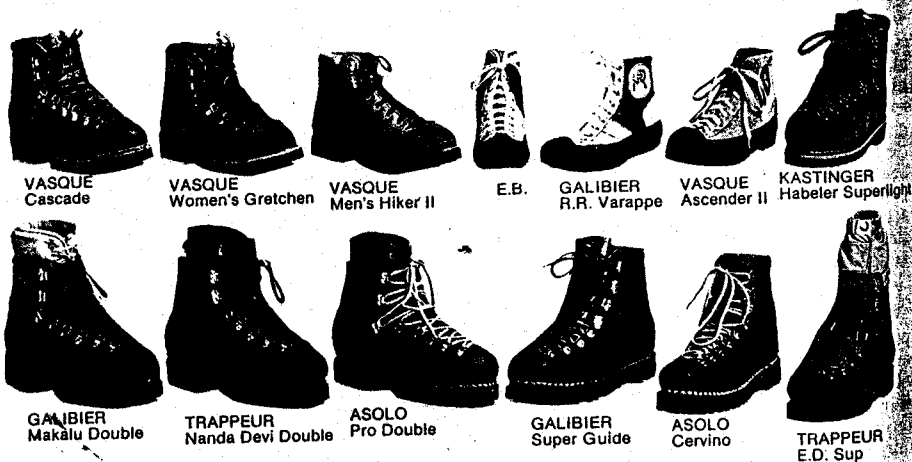
By John B. Holyoke, M.D.

The world is full of all sorts of "addicts," a fact which should be appreciated by most of the compulsives who climb mountains. One addict of sorts, before our time, was Lord Gore, whose passion was slaughtering game in America's Wild West. Which brings us to my addiction, Lord Gore's namesake, the Gore Range and in particular, its southwest side.

With its excellent trails, jagged ridges, deep, narrow, lake-studded valleys, and seasonal rash of wildflowers, the entire range is filled with varied lures for

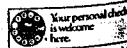
hikers, climbers, fishermen, and camera buffs. Then there are the blessings of no fourteeners to attract that large group of collectors, a closed door to trail bikes, and a near absence of roads. As a result, it is quiet and relatively unfrequented despite easy access from nearby Vail.

My addiction to the southwest side of the range stems partly from having a base camp in Vail and partly from the remarkable geography of the area. Five of its six main valleys (Gore, Deluge, Bighorn, Pitkin, and Booth) fan out from an access area east of Vail only three miles long. Each valley contains



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an excellent trail penetrating deep into the range. Thus it's no problem to descend into any valley and end up close to one's starting point regardless of which of these valleys one has ascended. For example, one can hike up Booth Creek, circle through upper Piney River Valley, and return via the Pitkin Creek trail, finishing approximately one mile from one's starting point, and having hiked 15 miles over three ridges and through four valleys. This valley hopping game is a delight, and my purpose is to describe a feasible direct route from one valley to the next, close to the Gore Range crest.

Also alluded to are escape routes down each valley one crosses en route from Piney Lake to Gore Creek. Tables at the end contain helpful information for locating trailheads and summarize distances, times and altitude changes between principal points. Times, of course, are relative and would be long for some and short for others.

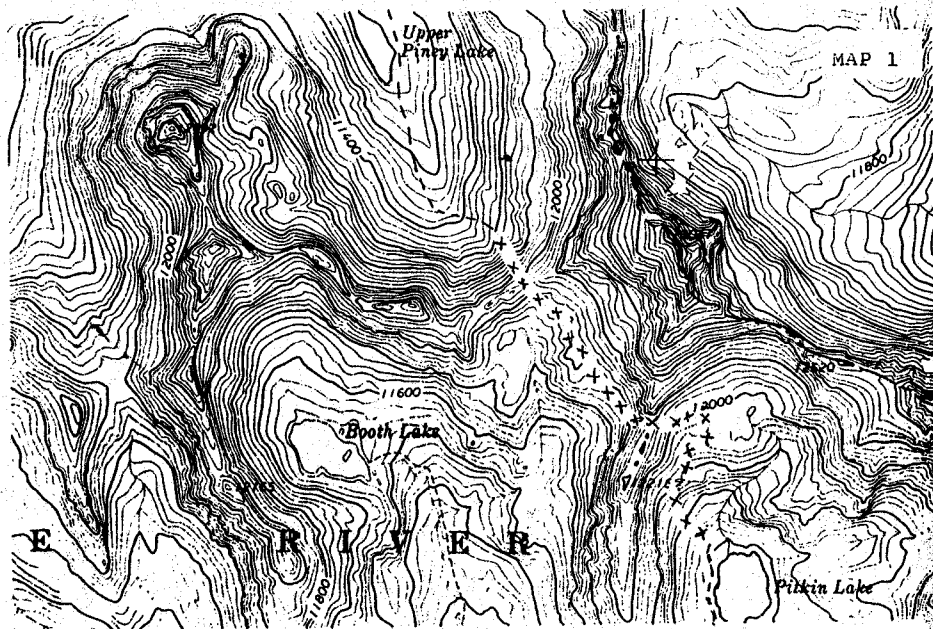
The route described here, along the major length of the southwest side of the range, is a composite derived from many explorations over a decade. To obtain a better idea of times and distances, I hiked the entire route in one day in the late summer of 1977. The trip began at Piney Lake and led to Gore Creek trailhead at the foot of Vail Pass, approximately 24 miles, 7,300 vertical feet and 13 hours away.

Piney Lake to Piney-Booth Pass (map 1)

Start from the parking lot adjacent to Piney Lake. A generally well-marked trail takes you east-northeast three miles, then makes an abrupt change to the southeast four miles through upper Piney Valley to Upper Piney Lake. The sketchy trail through upper Piney Valley follows the east side of the river. If you lose it, stay on the lower hillside, avoiding the marshes at streamside; it will miraculously reappear.

Less than a mile below Upper Piney Lake, pass to the right (west) of a small marshy lake located on the topo map at 10,550 feet. Continue a short distance through meadows neighboring the lake to the base of the prominent ridge dividing upper Piney Valley into east and west branches. From here, bear east crossing the stream draining Upper Piney Lake and stay generally on its east side to reach the lake.

From the east side of Upper Piney Lake, to reach the 12,050-foot pass into Booth Creek, follow a more-or-less trail for three-fourths of a mile along the east side of the valley towards a clearly defined, usually snow-filled gully. It intersects the low point of the ridge which leads west from West Partner, a peak common to Piney, Booth and Pitkin valleys. Cross the ridge via the gully.



Piney-Booth to Booth-Pitkin Pass (map 1)

Visible from the ridge on the Booth Creek side is a small lake at 11,800 feet. (It is an easy trip down past this lake to the upper Booth Creek trail, about a half mile away and then four and one-half miles down to the Booth Creek trailhead.) To reach Pitkin Valley from the Piney-Booth pass (approximately a half mile away), drop 30-40 feet to a set of ledges and terraces which skirt the base of West Partner Peak. Continue to a gully with approximately 200 feet of scrambling to the first relatively level spot on the ridge which runs north-south between Pitkin and Booth Creek valleys (at 12,200 feet).

Booth-Pitkin to Pitkin-Bighorn Pass (maps 1 and 2)

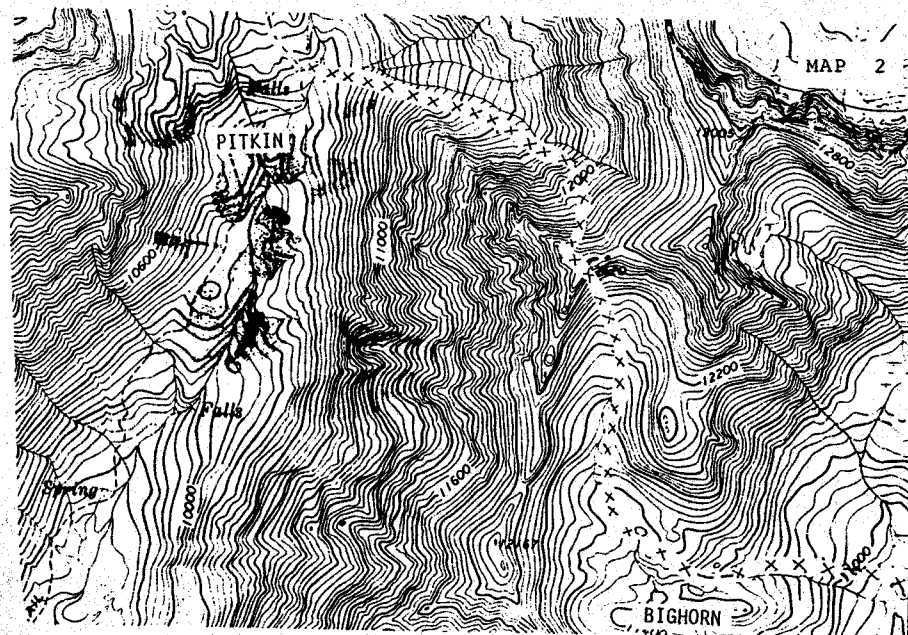
From this ridge there is a fine view west across to Booth Lake and down to Pitkin Lake. Also look southeast across Pitkin Lake and Pitkin Valley to a ridge about two miles away. You will pass its northeast base into Pitkin Valley's east basin and then climb over a ridge into Bighorn Valley's northwest basin.

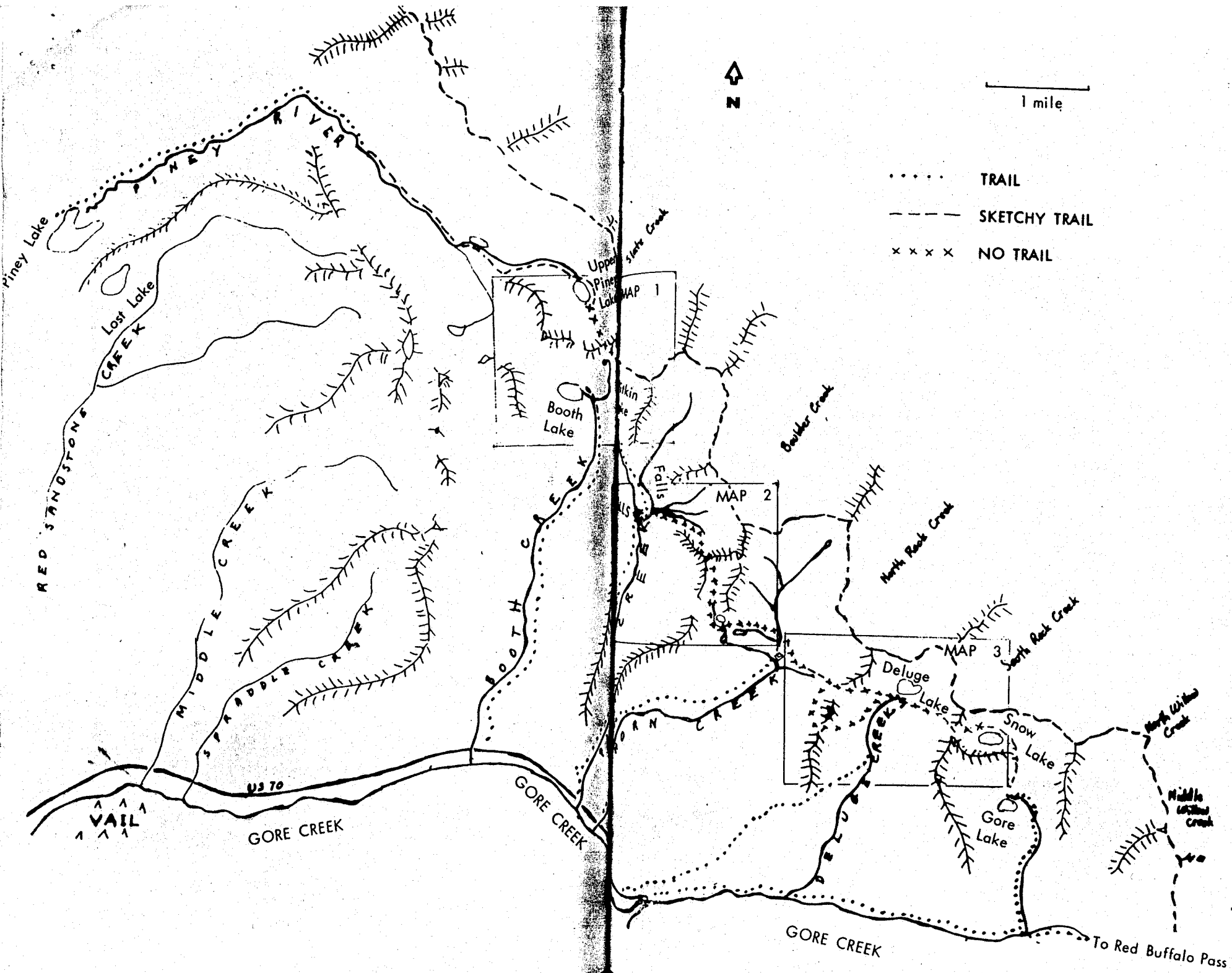
The descent to Pitkin Lake is a delightful drop down grassy slopes or a long glissade down snowfields which usually last well into August. About a quarter mile above Pitkin Lake are a bench and a cliff. Circle right to avoid the cliff.

A bit above the lake, a trail (at first sketchy, then clearly defined) leads around the lake's west side, a mile and a half down to the main Pitkin Valley at a point about a quarter mile above the Upper Pitkin Falls. (From here it is four miles to the Pitkin Creek trailhead.) The trail here runs south-south-east. Leave the trail, turn east across the valley floor at about 10,500 feet and then continue a bit southeast toward Pitkin's east bowl, which is marked by a small waterfall, the product of usually prominent snowfields in the upper bowl.

The 2,100-foot climb from here into Bighorn Valley's northwest bowl is arduous but rewarding, with soul-satisfying views of West Partner and Pitkin Lake. The lower part of this ascent crosses grassy, flowering meadows and continues either up the waterfall itself or up the grassy slopes on the right, then through timberline scrub. Continue well above timberline to about 12,100 feet, turn southwest across a 10-degree snowfield and climb up a 250-foot rock rib and angle right to the 12,600-foot crest of the ridge still lying within Pitkin Valley. **WARNING:** This is climbing with moderate exposure.

A short walk east 100 feet over this very narrow ridge, or on the less exposed slopes on the ridge's south side, brings you to the intersection of the north-south ridge between Bighorn and Pitkin and the generally east-west





1 mile

- TRAIL
- - - - SKETCHY TRAIL
- x x x x NO TRAIL

MAP 1
Upper Piney Lake
Booth Lake

MAP 2
Falls

MAP 3
Deluge Lake
Snow Lake
Gore Lake

GORE CREEK
To Red Buffalo Pass

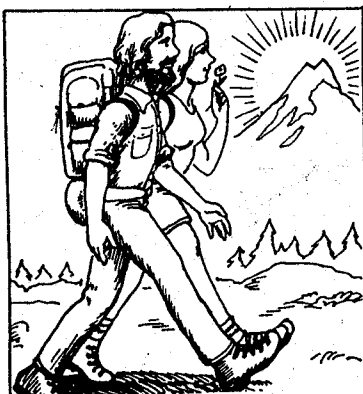


West Booth Fork. Photo by John Holyoke.

oriented ridge you have been following out of Pitkin's east bowl.

Pitkin-Bighorn to Bighorn-Deluge Pass
(maps 2 and 3)

At the crossing point you can look



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southeast a mile and three-fourths across Bighorn Valley to the west end of the "Grand Traverse," a pinnacled ridge, along the southwest base of which you will pass to leave the Bighorn Valley and reach the Deluge Creek drainage. From Pitkin-Bighorn Pass, a steep, often snow-filled gully and big snowfields will take you three-fourths mile south to a beautiful tarn nestled at 11,600 feet at timberline.

Hike southeast from here around a shoulder separating Bighorn's northwest and north bowls and drop down to another small lake at 11,400 feet. From the lake's north side, partly by trail and partly by compass, hike east about one-half mile to Bighorn Creek, crossing about one-fourth mile above a cabin visible below you. (From here it is four miles down Bighorn Creek to the trailhead.)

Cross a boulderfield at the base of the northwest end of the "Grand Traverse," past an old mine which serves as a good landmark. Contour across grassy slopes into the woods to a branch of the Bighorn Creek leading from its east basin.

A good route climbs steep slopes across the stream and up into an open timberline meadow. From here, you can go south, partly by trail, over easy grassy slopes to a 12,160-foot pass into Deluge Valley. But once in Deluge requires a fair descent before you can turn back northeast to reach Deluge Lake.

A shorter but steeper escape route into Deluge goes southeast along the base of the "Grand Traverse" and climbs

via an unlikely-appearing but easy gully to a notch furthest to the right (southwest) on the ridge which runs off the southeast end of the "Grand Traverse," just before this ridge ascends again to the 12,300-foot crest separating this pass from the pass further south (as described above).

WARNING: Don't go up the gullies further to the northeast. They will lead you to exposed and time-consuming climbing.

Bighorn-Deluge to Deluge-Gore Pass
(map 3)

From this pass, it's a short, steep scree descent of about 500 feet to stable scree and talus which can be contoured a half mile east to a point 40-50 feet below Deluge Lake. (From here you can descend Deluge Creek by the old steep trail about two miles to Gore Creek, at a point two miles above Gore Creek trailhead. You could take the more level trail that leads southwest to I-70 ending near the Gore Creek trailhead.)

From Deluge Lake, the pass into Gore Creek is obvious. A peak due east of the south side of Deluge Lake is passed by an obvious valley to its south (right). Stay on the valley floor for one-fourth of a mile, then climb left (north) to intersect with an old but very welcome trail that leads through loose scree to a 12,650-foot pass on the north-south

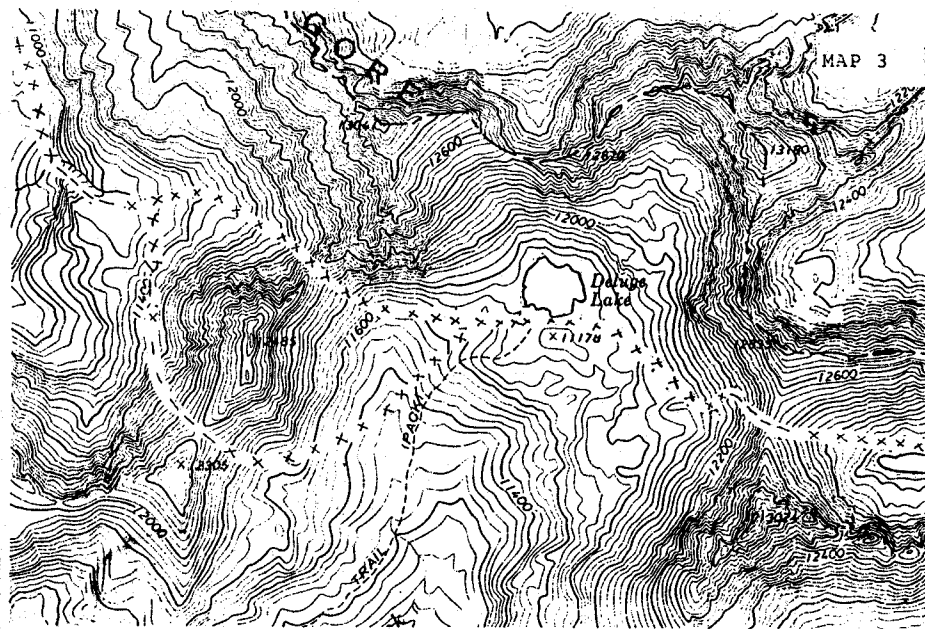
ridge between Deluge and Gore Creek above Snow Lake.

Deluge-Gore Pass to Gore Creek
Trailhead (map 3)

From this pass, look back west across Deluge Lake and east where you can see only the extreme east end of Snow Lake. Good sliding takes you down 600 feet to the lake. Hike around its north side across the outlet and continue east gaining 30-40 feet in about 300 yards, then around an abrupt corner of the ridge which guards the south side of Snow Lake.

From here, a fairly clear trail runs south three-fourths of a mile to Gore Lake. This is as beautiful a spot as you'll find in the entire Gore Range. Skirt Gore Lake on its north side. Don't cross the outlet; go over a little ridge to the left and you'll be on an excellent trail one and three-fourths miles north of the main Gore Creek Valley, which you'll reach at the site of the Recen brothers' graves.

From the graves, it's approximately four and one-half miles of easy hiking west to the Gore Creek trailhead. About halfway, a large thicket of beautiful old Douglas fir marks the confluence of Deluge and Gore creeks and makes a welcome resting spot before the descent through the open and often hot lower Gore Creek to trail's end.



JUNE 1979

LOCATION OF TRAILHEADS

	I-70 Exit	Frontage Road	Direction on Frontage Road	Distance	Details
Gore Creek	180	South	East	2.3	At sharp bend in road north side of creek
Deluge	180	South	East	2.3	*
Bighorn	180	South	East	0.8	North on Columbine road under I-70
Pitkin	180	North	East	0.2	
Booth	180	North	West	0.9	North on Booth Falls road 0.2 miles
Piney Lake	176	North	West	1.0	**

* At Gore Creek trailhead, climb northwest 200 vertical feet to intersect High Trail, or go two miles up Gore Creek trail to confluence of Deluge and Gore Creek to old steep trail on west side of stream.

** Follow Red Sandstone road 10 miles to Piney River crossing; then take jeep road 1.7 miles east to parking lot (0.2 miles from Piney Lake).

SUMMARY—DISTANCE, ELEVATION AND TIME

	Miles	Climb (feet)	Descent (feet)	Time
Piney Lake to Piney-Booth Pass -----	8.0	2700		3.5 hrs.
Piney-Booth to Booth-Pitkin -----	0.5	200	40	0.5 hrs.
Booth-Pitkin to Pitkin-Bighorn -----	3.5	2100	1700	2.75 hrs.
Pitkin-Bighorn to Bighorn-Deluge -----	2.5	1150	1600	2.5 hrs.
Bighorn-Deluge to Deluge-Gore -----	1.5	1050	550	1.25 hrs.
Deluge-Gore to Gore Trailhead -----	8.0	100	3950	2.5 hrs.
	24.0	7300		13.0 hrs.

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Lake in west upper Piney Valley. Photo by John Holyoke.