Rocky Mountain

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Rocky Mountain National Park

Kawuneeche Valley Trail Guide

Colorado River

NPS PHOTO / ANN SCHONLAU

Hiking Trails

Adams Falls (East Inlet Trailhead) This easy one-third mile hike leads to a small, pleasant waterfall. If you go past the falls, you'll soon come to a large, glaciated valley with a river and great views where moose are sometimes seen. You can find many types of wildflowers in this area. (79 ft gain)

Cascade Falls (North Inlet Trailhead) Photogenic Cascade Falls is 3.4 miles into the North Inlet Trail. This easy hike passes through an open meadow where marmots are often found and by a river that winds through a lodgepole pine forest. Fishing is good for small brook trout and an occasional brown trout. Allow 3–4 hours. (300 ft gain)

Continental Divide Trail The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail was established by Congress in 1978 and stretches 3,100 miles from Canada to Mexico. Part of this trail crosses through some remote areas of Rocky. For an easy, short hike, traverse the section that crosses Onahu Creek and parallels a beautiful meadow in mixed forest.

Coyote Valley Trail (Coyote Valley Trailhead) This 1 mile round trip, level trail is wheelchair and stroller accessible and has many benches for resting. Follow along the Colorado River in Kawuneeche Valley. Elk can often be seen grazing on various sedges and grasses. Picnic at the tables at one end of the trail, or fish along the trail. Allow 45 minutes to 1 hour for an enjoyable stroll. (level trail)

Green Mountain Loop (Green Mountain or Onahu Trailhead) This trail passes along the lush, marshy Big Meadow, and through forests of lodgepole pine, quaking aspen, subalpine fir, and Engelmann spruce. Watch for moose and elk foraging in the meadow and explore the cabin ruins of early settlers. This hike is 7.6 miles long and should take 3.5–4 hours. (1100 ft gain)

Holzwarth Historic Site This is a one-half mile flat walk across the Kawuneeche Valley to the Holzwarth Trout Lodge and Historic Site, a rustic guest ranch created in the 1920s. (level trail, strollers okay)

Lake Irene Along Trail Ridge Road just south of the Continental Divide at Milner Pass, this lovely subalpine lake is surrounded by tall pines, firs, and summer wildflowers, and is easily accessed from the picnic area. Strollers are welcome.

Lulu City (Colorado River Trailhead) A flowered field is all that remains of this once booming mining town. Pass by the remains of log cabins and look for tailings from the Shipler Mine about 2 miles into the trail. The trail parallels the Colorado River and passes meadows on this easy to moderate 7.4-mile round trip hike. (350 ft gain)

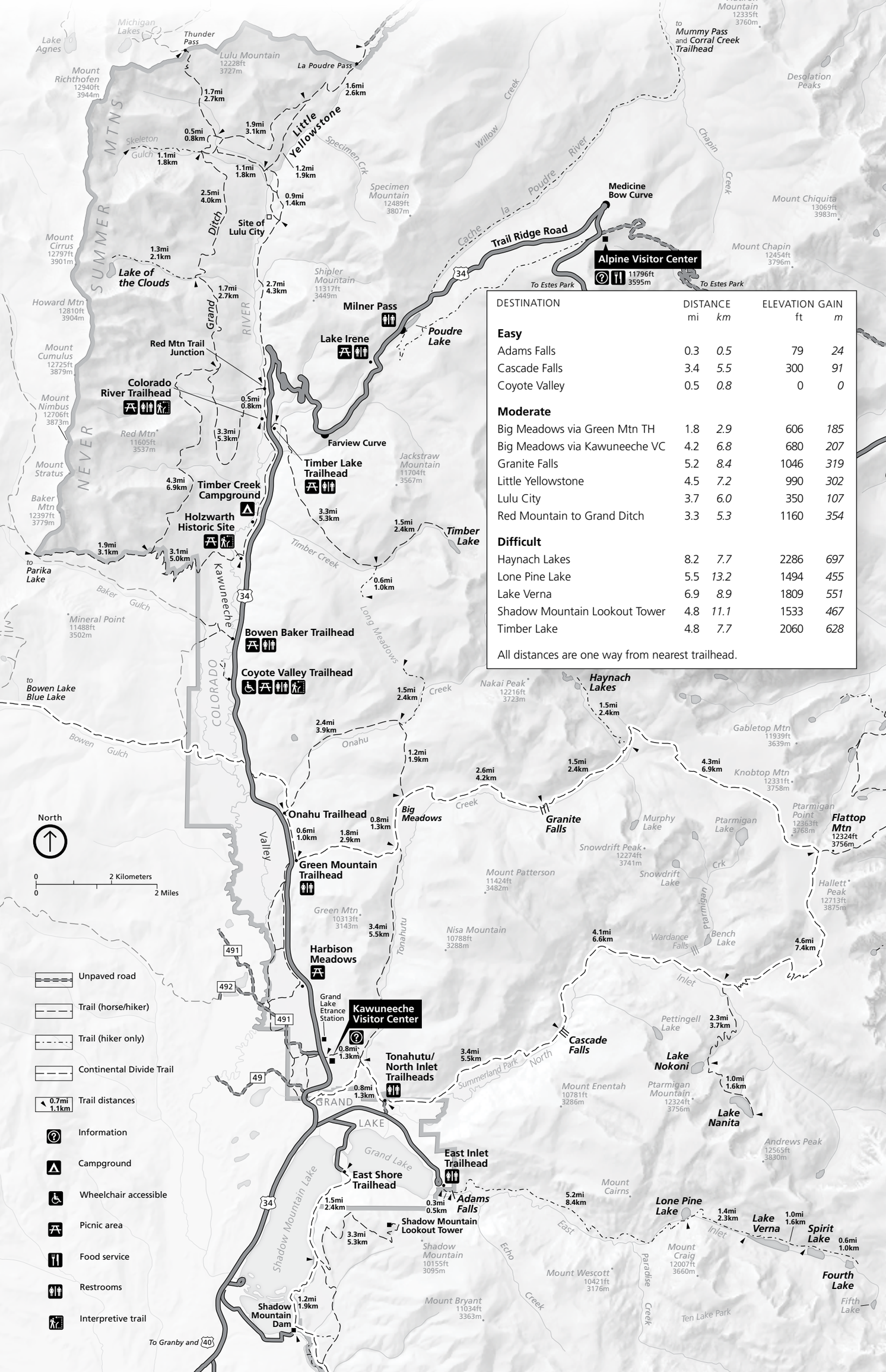
Lulu City/Yellowstone Loop (Colorado River Trailhead) After passing Shipler's cabins, you'll come to a sign saying Lulu City to the left and Little Yellowstone to the right. Stay right at the Y. Follow the trail all the way to the Grand Ditch. Formed of stark gray volcanic rock, Little Yellowstone is a miniature version of the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone. At the Grand Ditch take a left and follow the ditch for two miles until you see a sign that says, "Stage Road, Lulu City." Take the left and follow the trail down. At the bottom of the trail, take a right and head toward Lulu City. The hike is 13.8 miles in length and is a moderate to strenuous hike. (990 ft gain)

Shadow Mountain Lookout Trail (East Shore Trailhead) Visit an early fire lookout resting near the summit of Shadow Mountain and see a fantastic view of Shadow Mountain Lake, Grand Lake, and Lake Granby. This hike can be accessed from either the Grand Lake or Shadow Mountain Dam trailheads for the East Shore Trail. A small fee is required for parking in the Arapaho National Recreation Area. Allow a minimum of 4–5 hours for this hike. (1,533 ft gain)

Timber Lake (Timber Lake Trailhead) This is a 4.8 mile hike to picturesque Timber Lake, which sits at treeline at the foot of the Continental Divide and Mount Ida. There was a landslide two miles beyond the trailhead. Be careful around the slide area. Hike above the point of release, not through the landslide. The hike around the landslide is arduous and exceptionally difficult, as it is steep, muddy, and slippery. It is not recommended for those who have difficulty with off-trail wilderness travel. Allow a minimum of 6–7 hours round-trip for this steep hike. (2060 ft gain)

Tonahutu Start from either West Portal Road in Grand Lake or the Kawuneeche Visitor Center. Leaving from the visitor center, the trailhead is at the south end of the parking lot. The trail parallels the Tonahutu Creek uphill to Big Meadows, 4.2 miles from the trailhead. If you leave from West Portal Road, it is 5.4 miles from the trailhead. (680 ft gain)

Kawuneeche Valley Trails



DESTINATION	DISTANCE mi	DISTANCE km	ELEVATION GAIN ft	ELEVATION GAIN m
Easy				
Adams Falls	0.3	*0.5*	79	*24*
Cascade Falls	3.4	*5.5*	300	*91*
Coyote Valley	0.5	*0.8*	0	*0*
Moderate				
Big Meadows via Green Mtn TH	1.8	*2.9*	606	*185*
Big Meadows via Kawuneeche VC	4.2	*6.8*	680	*207*
Granite Falls	5.2	*8.4*	1046	*319*
Little Yellowstone	4.5	*7.2*	990	*302*
Lulu City	3.7	*6.0*	350	*107*
Red Mountain to Grand Ditch	3.3	*5.3*	1160	*354*
Difficult				
Haynach Lakes	8.2	*7.7*	2286	*697*
Lone Pine Lake	5.5	*13.2*	1494	*455*
Lake Verna	6.9	*8.9*	1809	*551*
Shadow Mountain Lookout Tower	4.8	*11.1*	1533	*467*
Timber Lake	4.8	*7.7*	2060	*628*

All distances are one way from nearest trailhead.