
Corral Creek

3,070 acres (4.8 square miles)

Setting

This area occupies a narrow strip of land between I-70 and the Eagles Nest Wilderness Area. The terrain consists of steep west and south facing hillsides above Black Gore Creek north of Vail Pass, and Tenmile Creek to the south. Many avalanche paths cross the unit. The bulk of the area is densely forested with spruce and fir, as well as some aspen in the Gore Creek campground area. Corral Creek is the major creek in the unit, and flows from Uneva Peak. The elevation ranges from 8,600 feet near Gore Creek, to 11,900 on the SW slopes of Uneva Peak.



A view of the west side of Corral Creek drainage

What's special about it

Wildlife migration: The primary importance for protecting this area is to extend Wilderness protection down to the edge of I-70 so to ensure the effectiveness of the wildlife movement corridor through the area. As a sub-alpine roadless strip, it plays an important role in connecting the Eagles Nest Wilderness to the Ptarmigan Hill roadless area to the south. This is part of an extremely vital north-south migration corridor for wildlife, particularly the endangered lynx, as well as bighorn sheep, mountain goats, and elk. A "wildlife bridge" is expected to be built just west of the Vail Pass summit that would link the Ptarmigan Hill and Corral Creek roadless areas.

Recreation: The area is also important access to five hiking and horseback trails that enter the Eagles Nest Wilderness Area from I-70. Polk Creek and Corral Creek are important fisheries for the imperiled Colorado River cutthroat trout. This roadless area acts a scenic corridor for the Tenmile-Vail Pass National Recreation Trail that passes along its northwest boundary.

Potential threats

Given the ease of access from the Vail Pass Recreation Area, it is conceivable that rogue ORVs (including snowmobiles) could begin encroaching on the area if crowding on the south side of the interstate gets intolerable.

Division of Wildlife habitat qualities, species of significance

This area supports a strain Colorado River Cutthroat trout. Corral Creek is on a movement corridor for elk.

Outreach results

In anticipation of future regional transit opportunities, this area is proposed for interim protection of its wilderness values—using a special designation at this time, pending final decisions about the location of that transit route. Once the route is selected, remaining lands will become Wilderness. See attachments for details.

