

CHAFFIN CREEK TRAIL #374 & 528

(Easy to moderate)

DIRECTIONS TO TRAILHEAD: From Triple Creek's driveway, turn left and proceed to the Conner Cutoff. At Hwy. 93 turn left (towards Darby). Approximately 3 miles on the 93 you will cross the river and take an immediate left. This is the beginning of West Fork Road (and the original detour). Less than a 100 yards you will turn right onto Tin Cup-Chaffin Creek Road (this is right before the detour). Drive west 2.8 miles to a junction and take the right fork, where a sign indicates the "Tin Cup-Chaffin Road." Drive 1.1 miles to the trailhead sign for Chaffin Creek, located on the turn of a switchback. There are no facilities at the trailhead and there is parking space for only a few vehicles along the roadside.

ELEVATIONS: Trailhead 4735 ft; Wilderness Boundary 5800 ft; Hart Lake 7336 ft; Tamarack Lake 7425 ft; Chaffin Lake 7505 ft.

MILEAGE: Wilderness Boundary - 3.5 miles; Hart Lake – 6 miles; Tamarack Lake – 6.5 miles and Chaffin Lake – 7 miles

TRAIL DESCRIPTION: Chaffin Creek Trail is well marked and has a refreshingly gentle grade (nearly flat) for the first 2 to 3 miles. It then gains elevation rather steadily, with a final steep climb just before the lakes. In the summer it endears itself to hikers by beginning in the luxurious open forest with abundant wildflowers, huckleberries and wild strawberries. The trail follows the north side of the stream and though mostly in trees, does offer occasional views of the canyon walls and nearby peaks. The path crosses the creek at the headwall at about five miles. Beyond the headwall, the creek crossing the trail appears to end abruptly at a solid rock wall. A large waterfall is located on the north side of the rock wall. To find the trail again follow the base of the rock face to the south (the left side as you face upstream). This will lead to a steep, rough trail that skirts the south side of the rock face and reaches Hart Lake. The elevation gain from the trailhead to Hart Lake (elevation 7,336 feet) is about 2,600 feet. Hart Lake has a dam at the lower end and is marshy. To continue on to Tamarack Lake follow the trail around the south side of Hart Lake and then walk upstream about one-half mile. Tamarack Lake (elevation 7,425) is an exceptionally beautiful, high mountain lake with excellent views, good fishing and the largest of the Chaffin Creek trail lakes. There is an old rock and mortar dam at its outlet. Cross the dam to access the north side of Tamarack Lake and follow the stream to Chaffin Lake. Chaffin Lake (elevation 7,505) lies about one-half mile upstream from Tamarack Lake. Chaffin Lake is a small, high alpine lake sitting at the upper end of the canyon. Steep rock walls and high bare peaks to the west and north provide a lovely backdrop.

HAVE A GREAT HIKE AND ENJOY!