

## 56

## ROARING RIVER TRAIL

(upper trailhead)



## Coordinates

## Trailhead

N 43° 37.649'

W 115° 26.288'

Middle Fork of the  
Roaring River

N 43° 39.478'

W 115° 26.648'

**Distance:** 5.2 miles out-and-back**Total Elevation Gain:** 1,000 feet**Difficulty:** Moderate**Elevation Range:** 6,950 to 7,850 feet**Topographic Map:** Little Trinity Lake**Time:** 2 to 3 hours**Season:** Mid-July through October**Water Availability:** East Fork of the Roaring River,  
Middle Fork of the Roaring River, several creeks**Cautionary Advice:** None**Additional Information:** Boise National Forest,  
Mountain Home Ranger District (208) 587-7961**Pit Latrine:** No

## ROARING RIVER TRAIL

If you are looking for solitude in the Trinity Lakes area, this hike is an excellent choice. The relatively unknown hike's trailhead is located near the Trinity Lakes Guard Station. It is a beautiful trek that leads through wildflower-filled meadows, over several beautiful creeks, along a ridgeline with spectacular views and finally to a remote setting along the Middle Fork of the Roaring River. Like many of the hikes in the Trinity Lakes area, this one starts at high elevation and descends to its destination.

The Trinity Ridge Fire burned in the area, although there are still areas of old-growth forest. Roaring River Trail is nearly eight miles long (one way) and ends at Lower Roaring River Trailhead where sections of the trail just above the trailhead, were destroyed by a massive mud slide a few years ago. You can extend the hike beyond the Middle Fork of the Roaring River as the trail continues across open hillsides and through aspen groves to a couple of small creeks in a narrow tree-lined drainage. This is remote country that sees few recreationists.

In July and early August, there are many wildflowers on the open hillsides including valerian, phlox, mountain bluebells, lupine, Indian paintbrush and

penstemon. The views from the ridge-line into the Roaring River drainage and north to Steel Mountain are sensational. There are several spots along the route to camp. The best location is near the easy ford of the Middle Fork of the Roaring River.

## TRAILHEAD DIRECTIONS

From I-84 and Broadway Avenue in Boise, follow I-84 east 41.0 miles to ID 20 in Mountain Home (Exit 95).

Turn left onto ID 20 and continue 30.8 miles. Turn left onto Pine–Featherville Road. Follow this road north for 27.3 miles and turn left on the dirt-surfaced FR 172 (passing through the small town of Pine at 17.6 miles where you can get gas and other products at the Nitz Pine Store). Follow FR 172 for 13.8 miles to a T-junction, and turn left onto FR 129 (Trinity Ridge Road). Continue on FR 129 for 3.6 miles (passing through a gate at 2.5 miles). Turn right on 129D and continue 0.2 mile to the end of the road and signed trailhead. The gate on FR 129 is locked from November 11th until July 14th. If the gate is locked, you can walk the road to the trailhead.

## THE HIKE

From the signed trailhead, veer northwest through burned forest. The hillsides near here are covered with valerian and fireweed. The beautiful pink fireweed is usually in bloom the first couple of weeks in August. At 0.2 mile, the trail skirts

a grassy meadow and continues to its north side before descending to an easy ford of a beautiful, small creek at 0.5 mile.

The trail now makes a gentle descent through a grassy meadow filled with pockets of false hellebore, mountain bluebells and mountain ash. At 0.8 mile wind through a switchback and ford the East Fork of the Roaring River. There are rocks to assist with the mid-calf ford, but you



One of many meadows en route to the river



View northwest from the ridge at 1 mile

may need to remove your boots. Beyond the ford, the trail ascends a lupine-covered hillside, reaching a ridge at one mile sandwiched between the middle and the east forks of the Roaring River.

Continue north on the ridgeline and enjoy the stellar views west into the Middle Fork drainage and northeast to the triangular apex of 9,730-foot Steel Mountain. At 1.4 miles, the trail drops along a beautiful hillside covered with valerian and columbine. After a loss of 400 feet, enter old-growth Douglas fir forest and then continue a gradual descent to where the trail levels in an open area at 2.4 miles. Here, lupine, sulphur buckwheat and penstemon bloom. Reach a ford at the Middle Fork of the Roaring River at 2.7 miles where deadfall spans the river. The river is more like a large creek here. There are several

places to camp along the perimeter of the river, before and after the ford.

If you want to extend the hike, ford the small river over deadfall. The trail veers left through waist-high mountain bluebells and then winds north on an open hillside. At 3.2 miles, reach a high point in an aspen grove. Now enter an area that is badly burned. The trail here is somewhat vague in short sections. Descend nearly 350 feet, weaving between deadfall, to a couple of beautiful unnamed creeks set among Engelmann spruce and Douglas fir at 3.9 miles. Look for a nice campsite about 50 feet downstream of the ford of the second creek.

Beyond the creeks, the trail continues north for nearly four miles to the Lower Roaring River Trailhead. Most of the forest along this section was destroyed by the Trinity Ridge Fire and is not as scenic as the upper section of the trail.



Middle Fork of the Roaring River



