

## *Great Hiking Trails in the Gunnison Area*

**1. Ohio Creek Beaver Ponds** – Spectacular scenery and hike (only about 30 minutes hike from where you park). The total length of the trail is about 1 mile (so 2 miles round trip).

Directions to Beaver Ponds: From Gunnison, travel north on Highway 135 to its intersection with the Ohio Creek Road, CR 730. Continue north on CR 730 for approximately 22 miles to the Beaver Ponds Trailhead. (This road is also the road to Lake Irwin if that helps you.) (NOTE: There is one fork along this 22 mile road that some people will error on. (just remember if there is any doubt stay left - You want to keep the Castle Rocks in view on your left until the last few miles where the Aspen trees take over. It takes about 45 minutes to get to the parking lot from the house.

The brook trout fishing is very good. The pond is very large, probably 4 acres in size. You may want your waders to really take advantage of the big brook trout.

**2. Mill Lake** – This hike is 3 miles and takes about 1.5 hours to reach the lake. I would put this in the medium category of difficulty as you'll feel it – but not technically hard at all. Big, hungry cutthroat trout can be found in this Alpine lake. I caught a 24" fish in 2015 – and we had guests in 2015 that also caught a 24" cutthroat.

Directions to Mill Lake - Drive to Pitkin - and take the road to the left leading out of town (you can't miss it as there is only one road). Drive about 7 miles to the campground parking area. You'll see the trailhead signs – just follow the signs to get started.

**3. Pine Creek** - You'll want to visit Pine Creek (it's the canyon along the Gunnison River immediately below Blue Mesa Dam.

Directions to Pine Creek:

From Gunnison, take Highway 50 towards Montrose. After you pass the Blue Mesa Dam on the far end of the Blue Mesa Reservoir, start looking for the mile marker sign 130 on the left side of the highway. Directly opposite that sign is a sign on the right side of the highway that says: Pine Creek Boat Tours/Fishing Access. Turn right at that sign and go down the dirt road about 3/4 of a mile to the boat tour parking area. Walk down 232 steps to the canyon floor. From here you can hike about a mile through the canyon.

If you walk, wade, crawl upstream from the bottom to the giant waters just below the spillway, you'll find virtually virgin trout water. You have to fish very deep (5-6 feet nymphing), but you can catch monster rainbows and lake trout.