

**Ride Name:** **Purgatory Flats to the Animas River**

**Ride Area:** North County

**Nearest Town:** Durango Mountain Resort

**Ride Distance:** 8-9 miles round trip

**Useful maps:** Durango Trails Recreation TOPO map

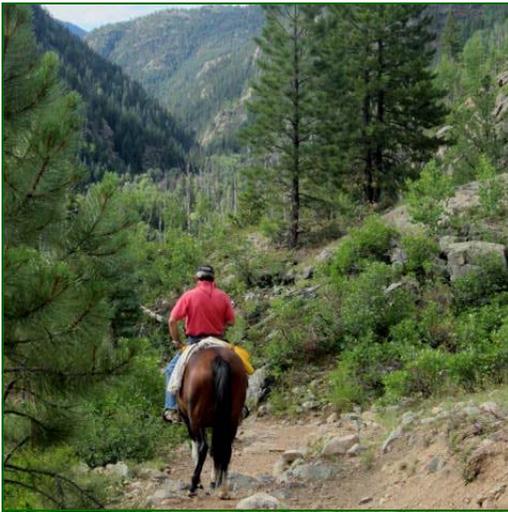
**Water on Trail:** Yes, lots

**Difficulty:** Difficult. There is a mile of steep drop-off along the canyon which causes the rating to go to difficult. If your horse moves off your leg cues and is responsive to your rein, then this trail will be OK. Horses use it regularly, but it is good to know about this section.

**Summary of Ride:** Just across from the DMR entrance, across from the parking area and just a bit south, this trailhead is clearly marked, but a bit congested. It takes a downhill grade for about 1 ½ miles with a few steps, overlooking the canyon below, then flattens on the canyon floor for another mile before beginning a climb along the west side of Cascade Creek below. The trail, once through this canyon, comes to an interesting area that includes the confluence of Cascade Creek and the Animas River, a scenic footbridge for hikers to cross the river, some old mining buildings and equipment, the picnic area for the Cascade Train and of course the track, which will give you a nice view of the train several times from 10:30 until 12:30. Take rain gear for a short afternoon shower, especially July and August.

**Driving Directions:** From Main Avenue in Durango, drive north on Highway 550 for 20 miles to the entrance to Durango Mountain Resort on the left. Immediately across is the "Twilight" entrance road. There are homes and condos on this road. Turn onto this road and stay left. There will be a parking area on the left. Trailer parking is limited, but allowed. Please do not leave manure behind. This parking is contingent on our keeping it clean! If you have a large rig and cannot find enough room, there is another parking area ½ mile before the DMR entrance called Gelundt Parking. It is not ideal, as it is on the wrong side of 550, but is available.

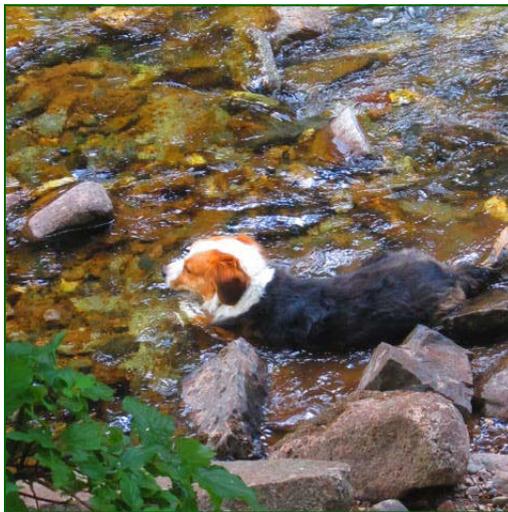
**Ride Directions:** The trailhead is across the road and just before the parking area. For about 1 ½ mile there is a downhill trail with a few steps, but is not difficult. You will reach a canyon floor with a meadow. The trail turns south (right) and follows the canyon toward Cascade Creek. The trail forks, with the left fork going over to the creek, and the right fork continuing toward a rocky canyon with the trail on the right side of the creek. It becomes more rocky and with a steep drop off to the creek below for about 1 ½ miles. Walking is fine, but keeping your horse over from the edge is better done on his back. The trail goes up and over a few rises and then down to Cascade Creek meeting the Animas River. You may want to continue on the trail which follows the river for miles beyond this point. This description turns here and goes back the same way.



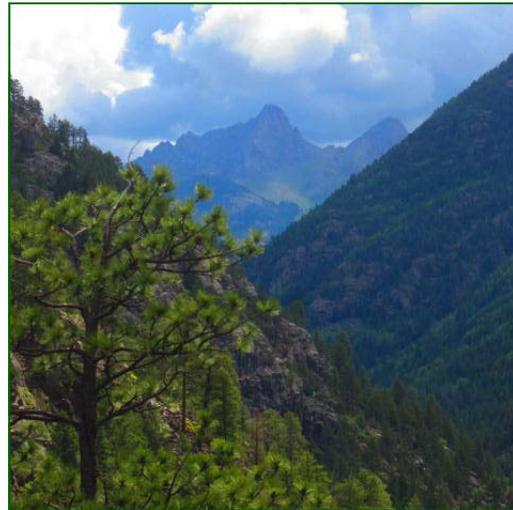
**First mile downhill**



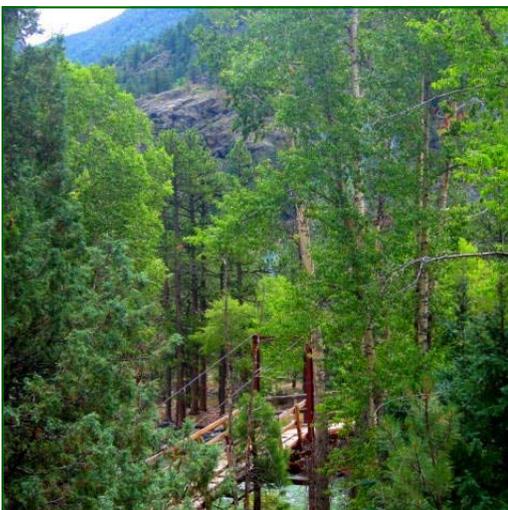
**Northeast to Spud Mountain**



**Ahhh!**



**Looking east to the Needle Mountains**



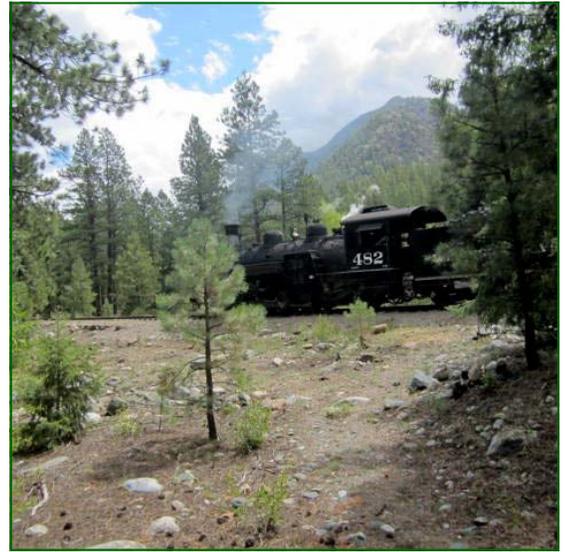
**Foot bridge near the train**

**Mining shack to explore**



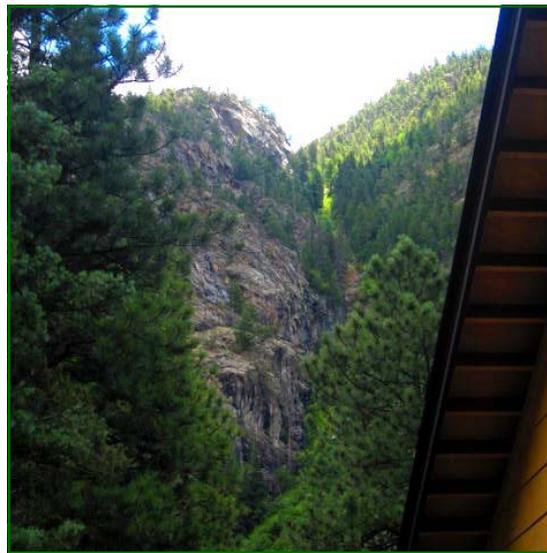


**What is it ??**

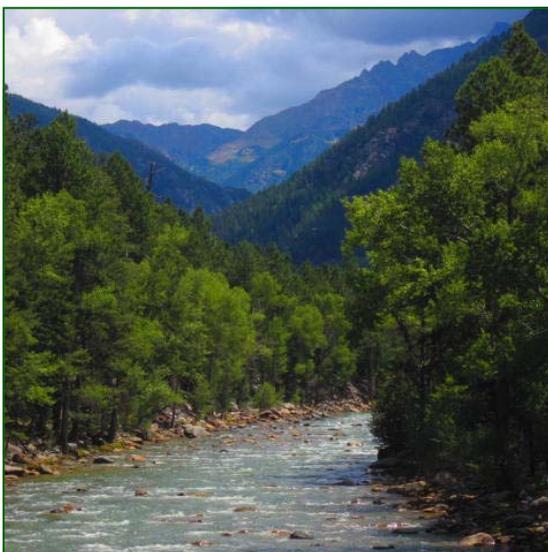


**3 trains passed in an hour**

**Cliffs at Cascade depot**



**The Animas River**



**Steep drop off to creek – 1 mile**

