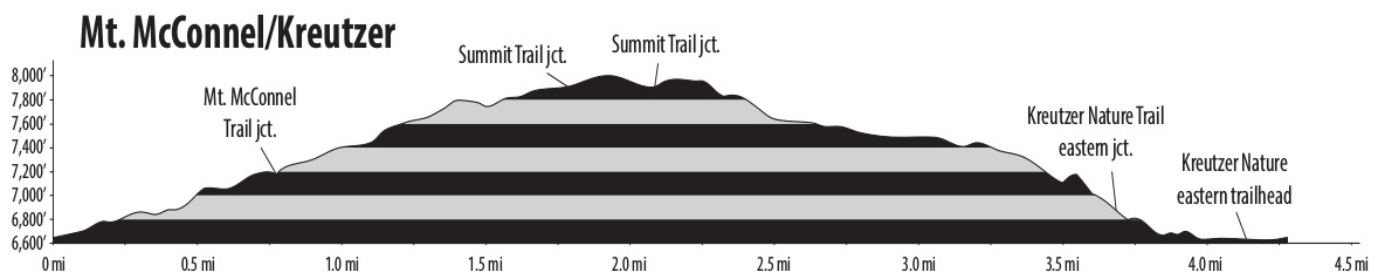


Priority:	<b>MEDIUM</b> (patrol method: day hike)
Ratings:	Hikers – Easy; Stock - Prohibited
Open for summer patrol:	May 1 <sup>st</sup>
SPOT/USFS Radio:	<b>not required</b> (Radio: 01 > 03; Priority 4, Good
Wilderness:	Cache La Poudre
One-Way Length:	4.4 miles (from western Kreutzer trailhead to summit of Mt. McConnel and return via eastern Mt. McConnel [“primitive”] and eastern Kreutzer trails)
Beginning Elevation:	6,651
Peak Elevation:	7,998
Gain/Loss/Net Gain:	1,658/352/+1,306 (one way to summit)
USFS Regulations:	National Forest & Special Regulations > Wilderness
Trails Illustrated:	#101 Cache La Poudre, Big Thompson
USGS 7-1/2' Quadrangles:	Big Narrows
<b>Special regulations:</b>	Dogs must be on handheld leash and stock are not allowed on these trails.



**Trailhead Location:** Poudre Canyon; drive 23.5 miles from Ted’s Place, just past mile marker 99. At the turnoff for Mountain Park Campground, cross over the bridge spanning the Poudre River and immediately turn right to the day use parking area. Continue to the toilet area, where there are five parking spaces for people hiking this trail. A sign here says it is the trailhead, but the true trailhead is about 100 yards uphill to the southeast, just across the upper road; you’ll see a second trail- head sign. (There is an area map posted at the trailhead.)

#### **GPS Coordinates:**

western trailhead: N40°40.966’ W105°27.839’  
 western jct. of Kreutzer &  
 Mt. McConnel trails: N40°40.705’ W105°27.757’  
 western wilderness  
 boundary: N40°40.05’ W105°27.81’  
 jct. Mt. McConnel  
 and summit trail: N40°40.377’ W105°27.769’  
 Mt. McConnel summit: N40°40.319’ W105°27.878’  
 eastern Wilderness  
 boundary: N40°40.64’ W105°27.42’  
 eastern jct. of Mt. McConnel &  
 Kreutzer trails: N40°40.639’ W105°27.421’  
 eastern trailhead  
 (near bridge): N40°40.960’ W105°27.714’

*The Mt. McConnel Trail is a National Recreation Trail*

**Trail Description:** Due to their proximity to Mountain Park Campground, both the Mt. McConnel and the Kreutzer Nature Trail are popular hikes during the summer months. Furthermore, the Kreutzer Nature Trail has at least 23 interpretative signs along its length that provide information about local geology, ecology, plants, and animals. Your patrol begins on the western arm of the Kreutzer Nature Trail (and ends on its eastern arm). This trail system was constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in 1936 during the Depression and was named after William Kreutzer, who was the first official forest ranger in the U.S., in the 1890s. Mt. McConnel was named after R.C. McConnel, one of the first rangers in the Poudre District, who served here in the early 1900s. The trail makes several switchbacks, then turns and climbs gradually westward, paralleling the campground. After 0.4 mile, it makes a sharp left turn and climbs for another 0.4 mile to the high point of the Kreutzer Nature Trail, where the west end of the Mt. McConnel Trail starts. Note that there is a

★ The Mt. McConnel Trail has been adopted by BSA Troop 83, Fort Collins

★ The Kreutzer Nature Trail has been adopted by Rocky Mountain and Meadowlark Churches

flat rock (about 3 ft in diameter and 1 ft high) in the middle of the trail at this junction that you have to step over or around. The wooden trail sign marking this junction faces to the east so, although it is quite visible coming from the east, it is very easy to miss if you are coming up the trail from the west. Just 10 ft east of this junction is an interpretative sign for the Creation of the Poudre River Canyon. To continue your patrol on the Mt. McConnel Trail, turn back sharply to your right (west) at the junction and follow the Mt. McConnel trail uphill. Look for several cleverly constructed rock benches and seats along the trail that offer respite and great views. These were built right into the mountain slopes, supposedly by the CCC. There is a great view to the north from the trail where it switches back just below an impressive rock escarpment and extensive talus slope and boulder field about 1.4 miles from the trailhead. From this point, the trail continues climbing steeply and passes several more rock benches and seats built by the CCC. About 0.75 mile above the junction with the Kreutzer Nature Trail, the Mt. McConnel Trail enters the Cache La Poudre Wilderness (1.6 miles above the trailhead). (This is the only system trail in this Wilderness.)

After another 0.25 mile, look carefully to the west, along the right-hand side of the trail, for the unmarked 0.14 mile-long Summit Trail (#992-1). From the summit of Mt. McConnel there is a great view of the canyon carved by the South Fork of the Cache La Poudre River to the south-west and beyond it, on the horizon, you can see the Mummy Range. You can also see portions of the Pingree Park Road from this

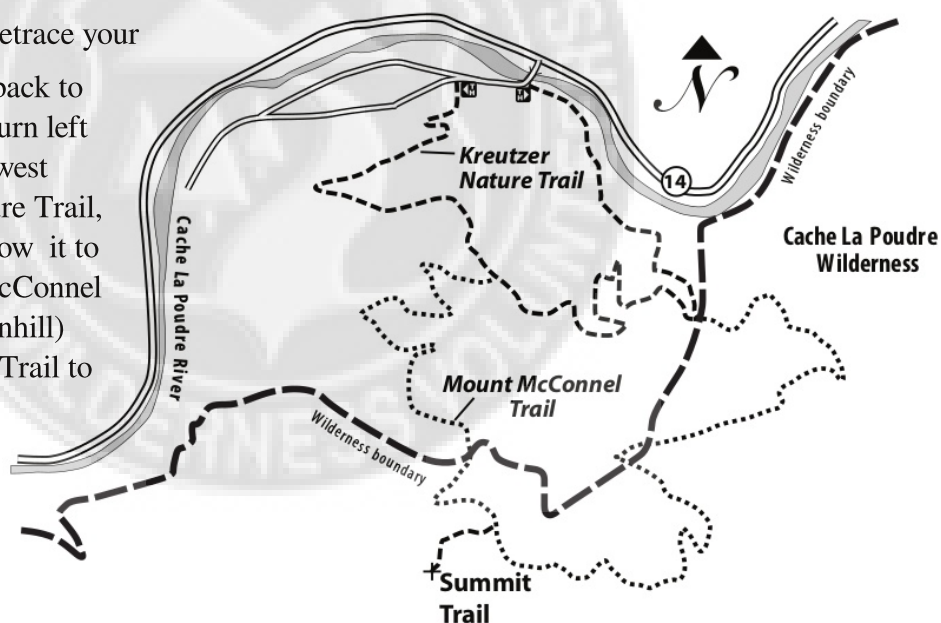
vantage point.

We recommend that you now retrace your route: Follow the Summit Trail back to the main Mt. McConnel Trail, turn left (northwest) and descend to the west junction with the Kreutzer Nature Trail, then turn east (right) onto it, follow it to the east junction with the Mt. McConnel trail, turn left (northwest -- downhill) and follow the Kreutzer Nature Trail to its east trailhead, very near the road bridge across the Poudre River.

If for some reason you patrol only the Kreutzer Nature trail,

please note this fact in the COMMENTS section of your patrol report.

**Mt. McConnel primitive trail:** If you are feeling ambitious at the summit, and are a strong hiker, you can take the Summit Trail back to the main Mt. McConnel Trail and turn right, to the southeast. The east arm of the Mt. McConnel Trail is steep, primitive, and not often used. You will eventually rejoin the Kreutzer Nature Trail. At this point you can go either of two routes back to Mountain Park Campground. You can follow the Kreutzer Nature trail uphill and to the west until you reach its junction with the west arm of the Mt. McConnel Trail and then follow it (Kreutzer Nature Trail) downhill, retracing your path down to the western trailhead. Alternatively, you can follow the Kreutzer Nature Trail to the north and northwest as it contours around the northeast flank of Mt. McConnel and gently descends toward the Poudre River. This route will take you to the eastern trailhead of the Kreutzer Nature Trail near the bridge over the Poudre River.



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