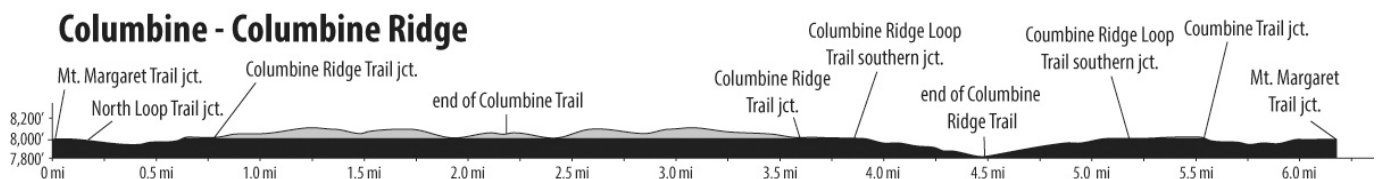


Trail: Columbine 976, Columbine Ridge 976-2, & Columbine Ridge Loop 976-21

Priority:	LOW (patrol methods: day hike; ride stock)
Ratings:	Hikers – Easy; Stock Riders – Easy
Open for summer patrol:	May 18 th
SPOT/USFS Radio:	not required (Radio Channel: 02, then 03, then 01; Priority 3, Good reception)
Wilderness:	None
One-Way Length:	6.0 miles (for a “loop” of these three trails) [Columbine only = 2.2 mi one-way]
Beginning Elevation:	7,987
Peak Elevation:	7,987
Gain/Loss/Net Gain:	607 / 607 / 0
USFS Regulations:	National Forest
Trails Illustrated:	#111 Red Feather Lakes, Glendevey
USGS 7-½° Quadrangles:	Red Feather Lakes



Trailhead Location: There are two different ways to access this patrol:

Via the Mt. Margaret Trail: From Ted's Place, follow US-287 north for 10.5 miles to the “forks” at Livermore. Turn left onto the Red Feather Lakes Road (CR-74E). At mm 20.8 you will see the Mt. Margaret parking lot and trailhead on the right (north) side of the road. Facilities and stock trailer parking available at trailhead. No water. Access is from the lower Mt. Margaret Trail via its junction with the Columbine Trail, 2.5 miles from the Mt. Margaret trailhead.

Via the eastern end of the Frog Pond Trail (from the Dowdy Lake Campground): From Ted's Place, follow US-287 north for 10.5 miles to the “forks” at Livermore. Turn left onto the Red Feather Lakes Road (CR-74E). At mm 23.0, turn north on Dowdy Road and drive until the pavement ends. Turn east (right) onto Dowdy Lake Campground Road and go to the Day Use Area at the north end of the Dowdy Lake Campground. **Note that parking here requires fee payment (\$5.00) or a pass.**

GPS Coordinates:

<i>Frog Pond trailhead N of Dowdy Lake:</i>	<i>N40°48.056' W105°33.478'</i>
<i>jct. with Mt. Margaret and East Dowdy Lake trails:</i>	<i>N40°48.265' W105°32.292'</i>
<i>jct of Mt. Margaret Trail with Columbine Trail:</i>	<i>N40°48.352' W105°32.195'</i>
<i>jct. with North Loop Trail:</i>	<i>N40°48.473' W105°32.269'</i>
<i>jct. with Columbine Ridge Trail:</i>	<i>N40°48.584' W105°32.887'</i>
<i>north end of Columbine Trail:</i>	<i>N40°49.253' W105°33.258'</i>
<i>southern jct. Columbine Ridge - Columbine Ridge Loop trails:</i>	<i>N40°48.707' W105°32.652'</i>
<i>northern jct. Columbine - Ridge Columbine Ridge Loop trails:</i>	<i>N40°48.895' W105°32.540'</i>
<i>north end of Columbine Ridge Trail:</i>	<i>N40°49.053' W105°32.161'</i>
<i>Mt. Margaret trailhead:</i>	<i>N40°46.820' W105°32.269'</i>

Trail Description: These three trails should be patrolled (and reported) together. Assuming that you begin your patrol at the Mt. Margaret trailhead, proceed through an open ponderosa pine forest with interspersed meadows and quaking aspen to the northwest. Approximately 0.8 mile from the trailhead

the trail cross the South Fork of Lone Pine Creek either via a stringer bridge for pedestrians or a hardened stream crossing for stock and bicycles. Continue northerly for another 0.6 mi to a pair of gates (one for vehicles and one for hikers/riders). Proceed to the NNE until you

Trail: Columbine 976, Columbine Ridge 976-2, & Columbine Ridge Loop 976-21

reach a 3-trail junction (Mt. Margaret, Frog Pond, and East Dowdy Lake trails) 2.5 mi from the trailhead. Continue northward on the Mt. Margaret trail for 0.1 mi to the junction with the Columbine Trail. Turn left and proceed WNW up the Columbine Trail.

The Columbine Trail is an old double-track roadbed for all but about 100 yds of its length. It passes through ponderosa pine and scattered meadows and groves of quaking aspen (+ Rocky Mountain juniper and Douglas-fir). The trail then passes junctions with the North Loop and West Loop trails and then crosses a small, unnamed stream. You will reach the signed junction with the Columbine Ridge Trail 0.8 mi from the Columbine trailhead. After another 0.25 mi (at N40d-48.470m W105d-33.098m), the Columbine Trail diverges from the main double track (old road leading to the SW toward Dowdy Lake) as a distinct 24"-wide path leading uphill and almost due north. Follow this route as it parallels an old eroded roadbed blocked off with small trees.

As the trail begins to approach a small lake (which is not shown on Trails Illustrated map #111) just beyond a barbed-wire fence (with a power pole on the far side of the lake) [GPS N40d-48.641m W105d-33.259m] follow the path that swings around to the NE just before a small barrier of dead trees.

The trail leads north in a sinuous path passing by two abandoned sawmill sites before ending at private property approximately 2.3 mi from the Columbine Trail jct. with the Mt. Margaret Trail. There are big rocks on either side of the trail, a large cut-off stump on the left side, and a barrier of logs across the trail at this point but currently there is no "End of Trail" sign.

From this point, turn around and proceed down the Columbine Trail to the junction with the Columbine Ridge Trail. Proceed NE up this attractive trail that passes through ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, and a smattering of quaking aspen. There are a series of wonderful rock outcroppings along the western side of this trail. You will pass two signed junctions with the Columbine Ridge Loop trail (on the east side of the Columbine Ridge trail). Continue on the Columbine Ridge Trail to its end just short of a rock outcropping at an "End of Trail" sign.

Turn around and patrol down the Columbine Ridge trail until you reach the northern junction with the Columbine Ridge Loop Trail. Take this short "loop" trail through ponderosa pine, numerous groves of

quaking aspen (+ Rocky Mountain juniper and Douglas-fir). The path of the lower eastern and southeastern portions of this trail are marked by short (1-2 ft high) rock cairns. Proceed uphill back to the southern junction with the Columbine Ridge Trail. Take the Columbine Ridge Trail back to the Columbine Trail, turn east and follow this trail back to the Mt. Margaret Trail and then take the Mt. Margaret Trail back to the trailhead.

Remember that you are NOT patrolling the Mt. Margaret Trail during your patrol of the Columbine trails (#976, 976-2, & 976-21), you are just using the Mt. Margaret Trail as an approach to the latter trails. You should not schedule a patrol for the Mt. Margaret Trail if this is your reason for being on it. Do NOT include Mt. Margaret observations, contacts, violations, weeds, or other in your Columbine trails trail report. The Columbine Trail is 2.3 mi long one way; the Columbine Ridge Trail is 0.95 mi long one way, and the Columbine Ridge Loop Trail is 0.45 mi long (and you travel 2.6 mi one way on the Mt. Margaret Trail to get to the start of the Columbine Trail). Thus, the total round-trip distance of the entire patrol/trip as described above is 11.9 miles. However, there is little elevation gain or loss along the route so that this is an "easy" patrol.

Please note any of the three Columbine trails that you did NOT patrol on your trip in the *COMMENTS* section of your patrol report.

Note that all of these trails can be hot and dry in the summer months so carry plenty of water.