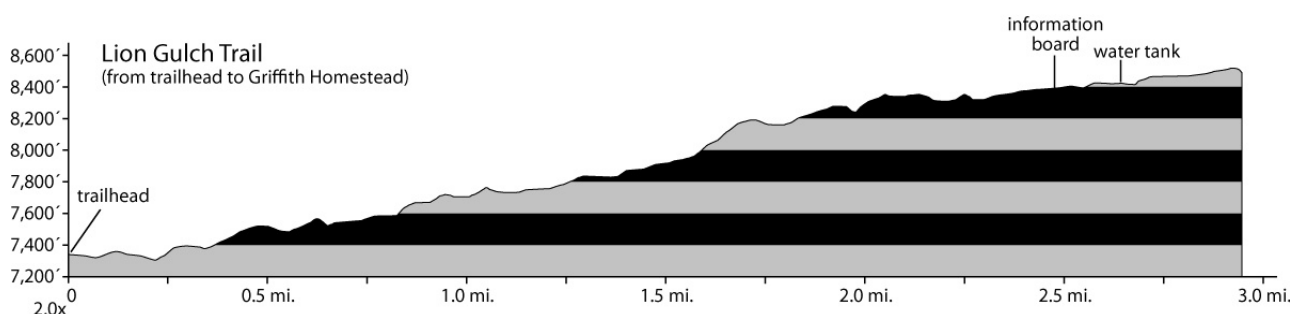


Priority:	<b>HIGH</b> (patrol methods: day hike; backpack; ride stock)
Ratings:	Hikers – Moderate, Stock Riders - Challenging
Open for summer patrol:	May 18 <sup>th</sup>
SPOT/USFS Radio:	not required (Radio: 04 > 09; Priority 4, Good reception)
Wilderness:	None
One-Way Length:	3.4 miles (trailhead to Griffith Homestead)
Beginning Elevation:	7,339
Peak Elevation:	8,523
Gain/Loss/Net Gain:	1,599/415/+1,184
USFS Regulations:	National Forest
Trails Illustrated:	#101 Cache La Poudre, Big Thompson
USGS 7-1/2' Quadrangles:	101 Cache La Poudre, Big Thompson
<b>Special regulations:</b>	Dogs must be on hand-held leash on this trail.



**Trailhead Location:** There are two routes to this trail

- Drive up the Big Thompson Canyon on US-34. Before reaching Lake Estes make a left onto Mall Road, a Larimer County connector road passing over the Big Thompson River below the dam. This will take you to US-36. Turn left and head southeast on US-36 for about six miles. The trailhead is located on the right side of the road at mile marker 8.

- Drive west from Longmont on CO-66 to the town of Lyons, and then head northwest on US-36 for about 12 miles. The trailhead is located on the left side of the road.

Facilities and trailer parking are available at the trailhead. Stock riders: The trail can be difficult for horses because erosion on steep sections has exposed rocks.

#### GPS Coordinates:

trailhead: N40°18.906' W105°24.319'

Homestead Meadows

(jct. Trail #949.1): N40°18.482' W105°26.741'

At the trailhead, there is a double-sided information board about the history of Lion Gulch and Homestead Meadows. Lion Gulch is one of the most heavily used trails in the Canyon Lakes Ranger District. Heavy use by horses, hikers, and bikers, as well as environmental damage from rains after the Big Elk Fire, which burned more than 4,400 acres of forest and meadows over 10 days in July 2002, has caused erosion problems at certain points along the trail.

The trail descends to a bridge that crosses the North Fork of the Little Thompson River, where there is an informational plaque about Homestead Meadows. At 0.3 mile you will find a second bridge; the first of 9 crossings of a small stream that courses through Lion Gulch. There is a fork in the trail shortly after you cross the bridge; the left fork for hikers goes up the hill, while the right fork for horses parallels the North Fork of the Little Thompson for a short distance. If you want to, you could take the horse trail on the way in and the hiker trail on the way out, or vice versa. These trails merge about 0.1 mile up the hill where horses

**Trail Description:** Based on encounter rates observed during PWV patrols, this is one of the three highest-use trails in the Canyon Lakes Ranger District.

*continued on the following page*

**GPS Coordinates:**

*N40°18.439' W105°26.636' Homestead Information Plaque*

*N40°18.482' W105°26.741' Trail jct. Trails 949 & 949-1 - Homestead Meadows*

*N40°18.541' W105°26.791' Walker Homestead*

*N40°18.599' W105°27.020' Griffith Homestead*

*N40°18.692' W105°27.086' jct. - Spur & Road 120*

*N40°18.833' W105°27.207' jct. Road 1006 & Road 120*

*N40°18.937' W105°26.882' jct. Road 120 & Road 1004*

*N40°18.952' W105°26.371' Irvin Homestead*

*N40°18.918' W105°26.321' horse corral - beginning of "ridge trail"*

**Northern Area of Meadows:**

*N40°19.150' W105°27.511' jct. Road 1006 & Road 120A*

*N40°19.179' W105°27.480' Brown Homestead*

*N40°19.358' W105°27.423' jct. Road 120 & Road 120A*

**Southern Area of Meadows:**

*N40°18.332' W105°26.732' jct. Trail 949-1 & Road 120*

*N40°18.255' W105°26.753' jct. Road 120 & Spur to Road 322*

*N40°17.933' W105°26.912' jct. Road 120 & Road 322*

*N40°17.800' W105°26.545' jct. Road 322 & Spur Trail*

*N40°17.832' W105°26.300' Engert Homestead - building lost in Big Elk Fire*

*N40°17.724' W105°27.232' jct. Road 120 & Road 1007*

*N40°17.650' W105°27.252' Laycook Homestead and south meadows*

*N40°17.726' W105°27.305' jct. Road 1000 & Road 1007 - route to Hill Homestead*

*N40°18.103' W105°27.907' Hill Homestead*

*N40°17.368' W105°27.600' Boren Homestead*

and hikers share the same trail. There is another bridge (N40°18.736' W105°24.778') about a mile from the trailhead. Stream crossings after that are either via single or double logs or fords. Practice caution in the gulch if heavy rains are expected; flooding has been known to occur.

At the halfway point the trail switchbacks through a rock outcropping, (N40°18.567' W105°25.315'). Continue in a westerly direction for about 1.4 miles where you will encounter an information sign about the Homestead Act. There is an unmarked spur trail at this location that heads south to a stock tank. The main trail junction is about 0.1 mi west of the information sign, where there are several signs that tell you where to go to visit the homesteads.

There are eight homesteads in this area, which were built between 1889 and 1923. The Walker and Griffith Homesteads are just to the north of the trail junction. The Irvin and Brown homesteads are about 1.5 miles further to the north. To reach the other four homesteads, Engert, Hill, Laycook and Boren, turn south at the trail junction and take the respective trails that will lead you to these homesteads. Riders should note that there is a stock tank just to the north of the trail junction east of the Walker Homestead.

