

## 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division Hut – Guidebook Excerpts

**From Litz, B. (2000). *Colorado Hut to Hut*. New York, United States: Macmillan Publishers.**

### **23 - 10th Mountain Division Hut**

**HUT ELEVATION:** 11,370'

**DATE BUILT:** 1989

**SEASONS:** Thanksgiving through April 30 (winter); July 1 through September 30 (summer)

**CAPACITY:** 16

**HUT LAYOUT:** 1 room with 6 single beds, 1 room with 4 single beds, in addition to 1 double bed and 4 single beds in a communal sleeping area.

**HUT ESSENTIALS:** Woodstove for heat, wood-burning cookstove with oven, propane cookstoves, all kitchenware, outhouse, photovoltaic electric lights.

When the first edition of *Colorado Hut to Hut* was published, the 10th Mountain Division Hut and Uncle Bud's Hut were the new kids on the block. Along with the Skinner Hut and the Betty Bear, these huts created the link that finally connected the Camp Hale/Vail Pass huts with the Aspen/Edwards huts-a bridge between east and west. The 10th Mountain Division Hut, although now a bit weathered, remains very popular and is the quintessential hut. It was built and named in collective honor of the 10th Mountain Division soldiers.

The trails to the hut, while suitable for strong beginners, are classic intermediate trails. Novice skiers who are ready to push their limits a little and folks who are ready to lead their own trip would do well to head for this hut. The surroundings are magnificent. Above the hut to the west is Homestake Peak and a glacially carved cirque. There really is something for everyone here including those who want to just kick back in the sun on the porch and enjoy the vista of the Collegiate Peaks of the Sawatch Range or dream about bottomless powder. Make reservations through the 10th Mountain Division Hut Association (see Appendix A).

### **RECOMMENDED DAY TRIPS:**

**There are three good choices for day trips here.** A gem of a trail follows the Slide Lake four-wheel-drive road 0.6 mile to Slide Lake. If you get up early and ski to the lake, you'll enjoy a special treat at sunrise.

Industrious backcountry skiers will want to climb Homestake Peak, which is often covered with fine snow perfect for carving turns. By skiing southwest from the hut, it is possible to traverse up onto the east ridge. Once on the ridge, simply head straight up 1,400 feet to the top. This ridge is normally free of avalanche danger -though you need to exercise caution while climbing out of the trees and gaining the ridge. The glades to the west of the hut make for fun runs close to the cabin.

And finally, the eastern end of the high alpine ridge north of the hut boasts fine slopes for telemarking. Many people never explore this area-their loss!

### ***23A – Tennessee Pass Trailhead to 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division Hut***

**TIME:** 5 to 7 hours

**DISTANCE:** 5.7 miles

**ELEVATIONS:** Trailhead: 10,424', Hut: 11,370', Gain/Loss: +1,210'/-140'

**AVALANCHE:** Minimal Danger

**MAPS:** 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division: Galena Mountain; USGS 7.5': Homestake Reservoir, 1970; Leadville North, 1970; National Forest: San Isabel, White River; Trails Illustrated: Map #109 (Breckenridge/Tennessee Pass); Map #126 (Holy Cross/Ruedi Reservoir)

**TOUR OVERVIEW:** This trail begins on the summit of Tennessee Pass and heads west along a Forest Service Nordic trail and the Colorado Trail into the massive West Fork of the Tennessee Creek drainage. After the route meets the Crane Park! Slide Lake Trail, the trails merge and climb to the hut. This trail is not as popular as the Crane Park Trailhead and is generally used as an interconnect route with Vance's Cabin.

**DIRECTIONS TO TRAILHEAD:** From 1-70, take the Minturn exit (Exit 171), 5.4 miles west of Vail, and drive on US 24 south 24.4 miles to the top of Tennessee Pass. Approaching from Leadville, drive north on US 24 from the junction with CO 91 for 8.8 miles to the summit of Tennessee Pass. Park on the west side of US 24.

**THE ROUTE:** From the parking area, begin traveling southwest on the Nordic trail that joins the Colorado Trail. Begin a long, descending traverse to the southwest, into the West Fork of the Tennessee Creek drainage. After 2.3 miles the trail crosses a creek, then turns south and climbs to the Wurt's Ditch Road. The intersection is marked with trail signs for the 10th Mountain Trail, Colorado Trail, and Mitchell Creek.

Cross the road, following the Colorado and 10th Mountain trails south and west over a hill and down a quick descent to another junction. The left (southeast) trail heads to the gravel pit; the trail to the south/southwest heads up West Tennessee Creek to Uncle Bud's Hut; and the right (west/northwest) trail heads to the 10th Mountain Division Hut. Take the righthand trail, which then leaves the Colorado Trail and heads toward Lily Lake.

Go northwest through the woods into a creek drainage, eventually crossing the creek. Ascend along the southern side of the creek to another trail junction between the north side of Lily Lake and the south edge of a large meadow. Follow the trail that crosses northwest through a willow bog.

Climb a steep but short hill (around 200 feet of elevation gain) on the far side, then begin the long but moderate ascent along the north side of Slide Creek. This climb travels through open clearings and among occasional tree stumps and evergreen trees for 1.6 miles until you reach a flat meadow. Veer right (north) into the meadow and to the 10th Mountain Division Hut.

The greatest challenge on this route is to avoid turning off onto one of the many well-traveled, and errant, trails in the area. Pay close attention to map, compass, and trail markers, especially at intersections.

### ***23b Crane Park Trailhead to 10th Mountain Division Hut***

**TIME:** 4 to 6 hours

**DISTANCE:** 4.4 miles

**ELEVATIONS:** TRAILHEAD: 10,137', HUT: 11,370', GAIN/LOSS: +1,343'/-140'

**AVALANCHE:** Minimal danger

**MAPS:** 10th Mountain Division: Galena Mountain; USGS 7.5': Homestake Reservoir, 1970; Leadville North, 1970; National Forest: San Isabel, White River; Trails Illustrated, Map #109 (Breckenridge/Tennessee Pass); Map #126 (Holy Cross/Ruedi Reservoir)

**TOUR OVERVIEW:** Crane Park/Slide Lake Trail is the most popular route to the 10th Mountain Division Hut, gaining 1,300 feet in 4.4 miles. Initially, this route weaves through a network of plowed and unplowed back roads, so keep your map and compass handy. Note that the first mile of trail has been relocated and more stringent parking rules apply. The designated plowed parking area is near the main highway on the left (south) side of the road. Formerly the trail left the parking area and followed the plowed gravel road west through a small group of houses. Now the trail exits the road just west of the parking area, on the north side of the road (near a 10th Mountain sign) and parallels the road on the north through a meadow along the creek. Eventually, it ascends up into the woods, where it meets Wurt's Ditch Road (Tennessee Pass/10th Mountain Hut Trail; also, the Colorado Trail). From there the trail turns left (south) and proceeds over a hill to the cabin. Refer to the shared Tennessee Pass route (see Tour 23a) for a description of the trail between Wurt's Ditch Road and the hut.

**DIRECTIONS TO TRAILHEAD:** From 1-70, exit at Minturn (Exit 171), 5.4 miles west of Vail, and go south on US 24 for 24.4 miles to the top of Tennessee Pass. Continue 1.6 miles to the Crane Park turnoff (Forest Road 100), turning west at a large curve in the road. Traveling north from Leadville, drive from the junction of CO 91 on US 24 for 7.2 miles to the Crane Park turnoff (FR 100). A yellow piece of machinery marks the turn. Park near US 24, being careful not to block the road.

**THE ROUTE:** Ski west along the road from the official parking area. After a few hundred feet, you'll see a 10th Mountain trailhead on the right. Leave the road and ski into the meadow. The trail heads west and follows the creek until it reaches the Tennessee Pass/10th Mountain Hut Trail. Turn left (south), following the Colorado Trail and 10th Mountain trails south and west over a hill to another junction. The left (southeast) junction heads to a gravel pit; the south/southwest trail heads up West Tennessee Creek to Uncle Bud's Hut; and the right (west/ northwest) trail heads to the 10th Mountain Division Hut. Take the righthand trail, which then leaves the Colorado Trail and heads to Lily Lake and the Slide Lake four-wheel-drive road. Follow Tour 23a for the last 2.7 miles to the hut.

*Note:* As this book goes to print, the 10th Mountain Division maps do not reflect the trail changes. These will be corrected in the future



**Figure 1:** The 10th Mountain Hut is the quintessential hut.

### ***23c - 10th Mountain Division Hut to Uncle Bud's Hut***

TIME: 5 to 8 hours

DISTANCE: 7.2 miles

ELEVATIONS: 10TH MTN. HUT: 11,370'; UB HUT: 11,380'; GAIN/LOSS: +1,520'/-1,500'

AVALANCHE: Some avalanche terrain encountered; easily avoided

MAPS: 10th Mountain Division: Galena Mountain, Continental Divide; USGS 7,5': Homestake Reservoir, 1970; National Forest: San Isabel. White River; Trails Illustrated: Map #109 (Breckenridge/Tennessee Pass); Map #126 (Holy Cross/Ruedi Reservoir)

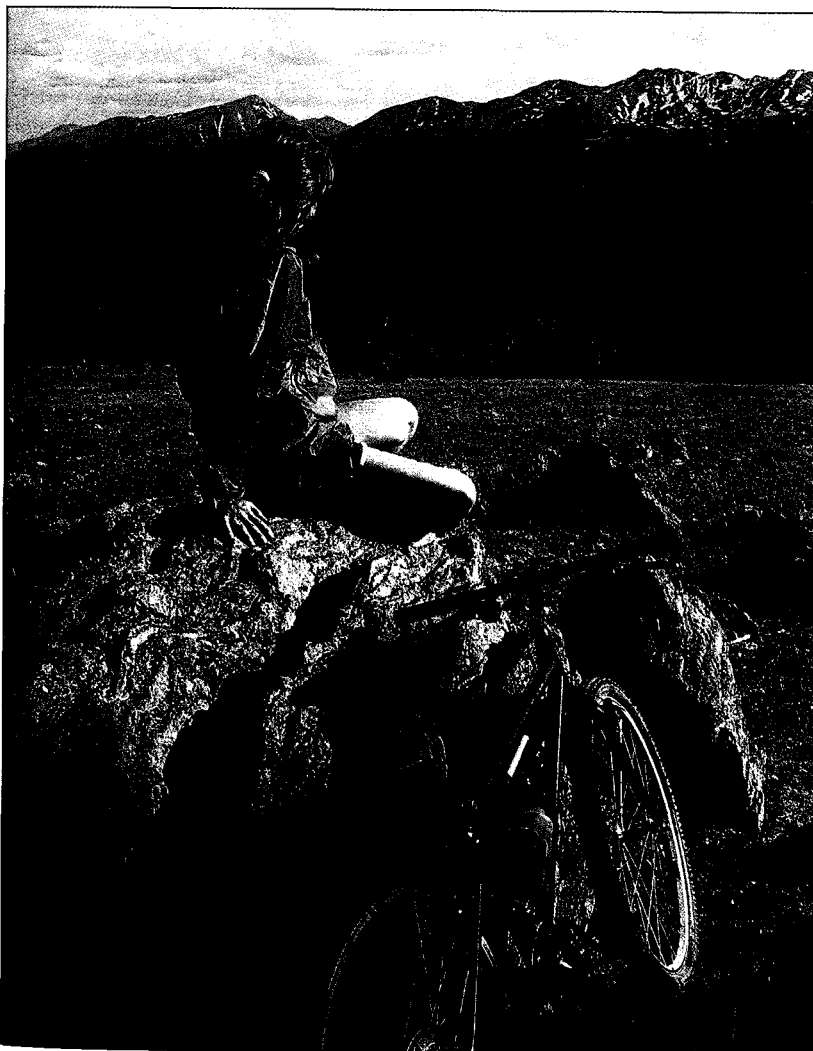
**TOUR OVERVIEW:** The trail between the 10th Mountain Division Hut and Uncle Bud's is a spectacular and geologically compelling route-one of the most scenic in the system. Running north-south, parallel to the Continental Divide on the east side of the Sawatch Range, the trail passes through an area that was heavily scoured during the Pleistocene glacial period (around 3 million years ago), and it's a stone's throw from textbook cirques, alpine tarns, and rock outcrops shaped and smoothed by the massive weight of glacial ice. The many creeks, descents, and climbs make for interesting and enjoyable route-finding. This route crosses the Holy Cross Wilderness Area and is closed to bikes.

**THE ROUTE:** From the 10th Mountain Hut, the trail heads south through a meadow, past a dead tree with a trail marker. Ski up over a flat ridge with a tiny, snow-covered pond, then drop into the North Fork of West Tennessee Creek below the east ridge of Homestake Peak. Continue south up and over a small, forested ridge and down to West Tennessee Creek. At the clearing in the valley bottom, correct your direction of travel and head slightly southwest. Cross the creek and pick up the trail as it climbs

south into the forest along the west side of a small creek. Enter a flat meadow, turn east, cross the clearing, and re-enter the woods.

Follow the trail east and then south over another ridge with a tiny lake, then begin a distinct drop into a marshy creek. Head south/southeast from this marsh past a trail junction (joining the Colorado Trail), then ski around the east scarp of Elevation Point 11,375' and begin a long, traversing descent to the southwest into Long's Gulch. Follow the creek upstream past the wilderness boundary (1.5 miles west of the trail junction), then begin ascending out of the valley to the southwest.

The trail climbs through rocky terrain onto a promontory that overlooks the valley and the peaks to the west. Contour to the east and easily drop down and across Porcupine Gulch. Begin the 600-foot ascent of the steepest and most demanding 1 mile of trail. From here, the route switchbacks up a steep and at times rocky trail until it gains the east ridge of Galena Mountain, near tree line. (For those headed north to the 10th Mountain Division Hut, this portion of the route presents very difficult telemark skiing; you may wish to leave climbing skins on to slow the descent.) Make a gentle traverse east down to a forested saddle. Descend to the hut by curving sharply to the southwest, following trail markers through a drainage and into a clearing. After dropping 400 feet, the trail leaves the creek and traverses southeast along the Colorado Trail up to Uncle Bud's Hut.



Beth Smith takes in the view near Uncle Bud's Hut.

## Dawson

### *Trailheads*

#### **Tennessee Pass Trailhead**

**ELEVATION:** 10,424 feet

**COORDINATES:** 39°21.725'N, 106°18.621'W

**UTM COORDINATES:** 13 387 11OE, 43 57 569N

**10TH MTN MAP:** Chicago Ridge, Galena Mountain

**USGS MAP:** Leadville North

To reach the Tennessee Pass Trailhead from the north (1-70), follow the above directions for Pando Trailhead and Camp Hale. From Camp Hale continue S on Highway 24 for 7.3 miles to the well-signed Tennessee Pass. Parking is obvious on the west side of the road (opposite the turnoff to Ski Cooper).

From the south ("old town" in Leadville), follow Harrison Avenue (Highway 24) N, then follow signs for Highway 24. You'll pass through the strip development on the north side of Leadville and come to an obvious, well-signed left turn onto Highway 24 to Tennessee Pass. It's about 1 mile from "old town" to this turn. Take the turn and follow Highway 24 for 8.8 miles to Tennessee Pass.

#### **Crane Park Trailhead**

**ELEVATION:** 10,137 feet

**COORDINATES:** 39°20,818'N, 106°19.904'W

**UTM COORDINATES:** 13 385 243E, 43 55 918N

**10<sup>TH</sup> MTN MAP:** Continental Divide, Galena Mountain

**USGS MAP:** Leadville North

From the north, follow the directions above to the Tennessee Pass Trailhead. Stay on Highway 24, and 1.6 miles past Tennessee Pass turn right (W) off the highway onto a dirt road. There is a sign here mounted on an antique road-grader for Webster's Sand and Gravel. The most reliable and secure parking is in an obvious plowed area within sight of the main road. If the gravel pit is operating, the road will be plowed to there. In this case, it's possible to eliminate some walking if you park at the well-signed intersection of the Wurts Ditch Road .9 miles from Highway 24. This option, however, leaves your car more vulnerable.

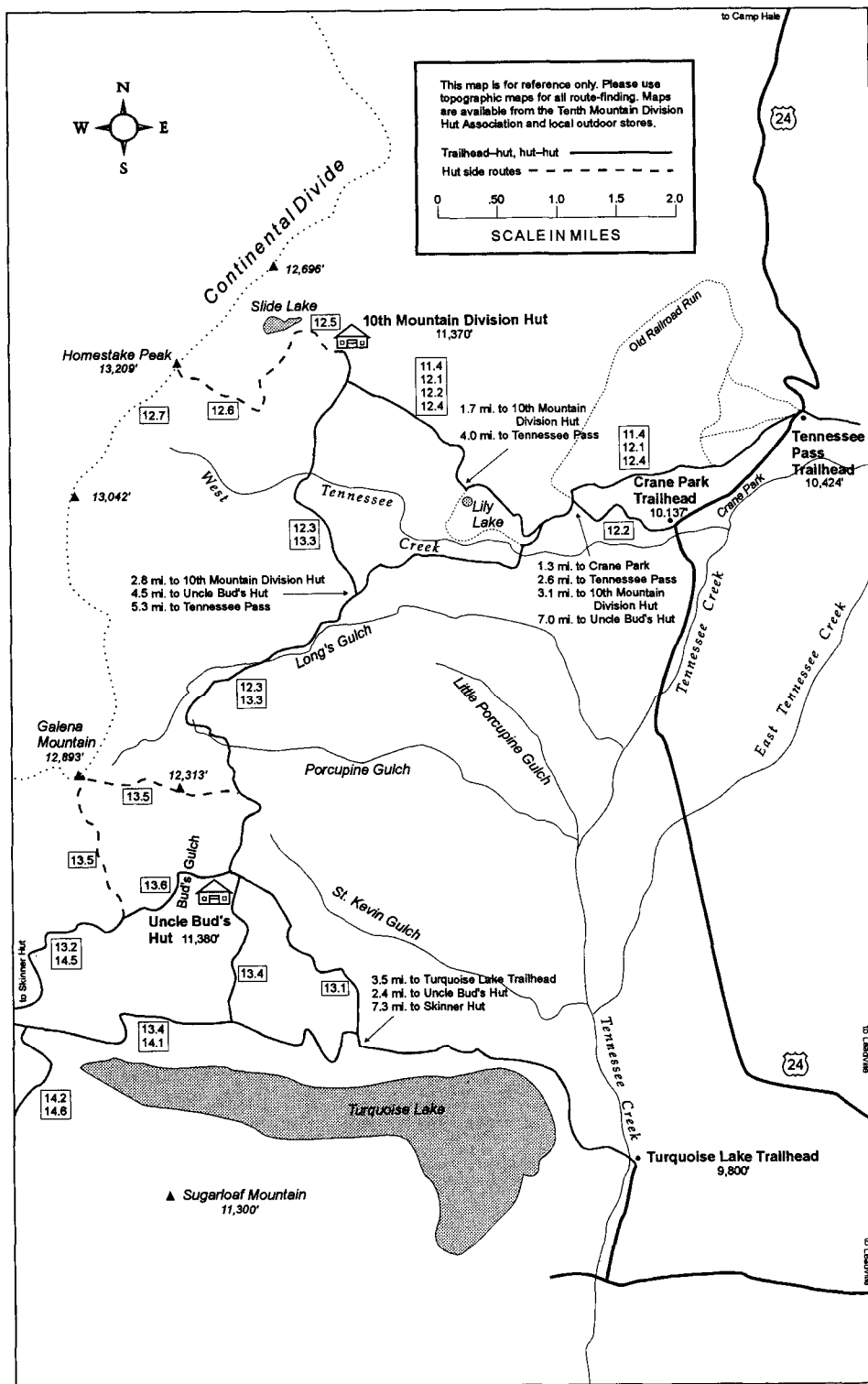
To reach the Crane Park Trailhead from Leadville, follow the directions above for Tennessee Pass Trailhead from Leadville via Highway 24. About 2.5 miles from Leadville you'll broach impressive Tennessee Park, with good views to the west of Galena Mountain and Homestake Peak. At about 7.5 miles from Leadville take a left onto the aforementioned road with the sign for Webster's Sand and Gravel.

## Chapter 12 – 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division Hut

High on a gladed hillside near timberline, the 10th Mountain Division Hut nestles in the arms of the Continental Divide. The log structure sleeps 16 and provides the standard 10th Mountain amenities, as well as a private upstairs bedroom. Completed during the summer of 1989, the hut was built with funds given by group of 10th Mountain Division veterans: Bill Boddington, Col. Pete Peterson, Maury Kuper, and Bill Bowerman.

For travel between the hut and the Tennessee Pass Trailhead, consider the 10th Mountain suggested route (12.1) that heads up the North Fork of West Tennessee Creek. While other routes are possible, they have not been used enough for inclusion here. The route from the 10th Mountain Division Hut to Uncle Bud's Hut (12.3) dips through more than 6 main and subsidiary drainages as it parallels the Continental Divide far above. You'll get good use out of your map on this route,





Plenty of mellow ski terrain surrounds the 10th Mountain Division Hut. You can make short scenic timberline probes or enjoy glade skiing at lower elevations. For experts, the Continental Divide looms above with plenty of peak climbs, bowl skiing, and ridge runs. In particular, cone shaped Homestake Peak just begs to be skied.

Several befuddling aspects, mostly arising from trail marking, add spice to ski touring in this area. First, portions of the Main Range Trail shown on the USGS are not accurate. This is due to rerouting of the



trail over the years. Secondly, the Main Range Trail is used for part of the Colorado Trail, which extends from Durango to Denver. As a result, the names Main Range Trail and Colorado Trail are often synonymous. To reduce confusion, these sections are called Main Range/Colorado Trail herein. The Colorado Trail is marked with small white triangles with the words Colorado Trail. Thirdly, a system of Forest Service managed ski trails (the Tennessee Pass ski touring trails) are used as portions of the Colorado Trail, and in turn used as 10th Mountain trails. The problem is that these are marked with blue diamonds similar to 10th Mountain blue diamonds. Finally, a network of marked snowmobile trails (marked with orange diamonds) pass through the area. The 10th Mountain suggested routes both intersect and follow all these trails, hence the possibility of confusion. The best way to deal with this situation is by extra careful map, compass, altimeter, and GPS use. Wherever possible, the route descriptions below attempt to clarify points of confusion.

## **12. 1Tennessee Pass Trailhead-10th Mountain Division Hut via North Fork West Tennessee Creek**

**DIFFICULTY:** Intermediate

**TIME:** 5 hours up, 3 1/2 hours down

**DISTANCE:** 5 3/4 miles

**TEXT MAP:** p. 162

**10TH MTN MAP:** Galena Mountain

**USGS MAP:** Homestake Reservoir, Leadville North

**ELEVATION GAIN:** 1,150 feet; loss: 204 feet

This 10th Mountain suggested route avoids several popular snowmobile trails, but still uses some "sled" play areas. Its primary purpose is to connect 10th Mountain Division Hut with Vance's Cabin as described in route 11.4. For the most efficient access to the 10th Mountain Division Hut, use the Crane Park Trailhead (route 12.2).

**SUMMER:** The 2 3/4-mile Slide Lake jeep trail from Wurts Ditch Road is a fine mountain bike route. See route 12.1 for other summer information.

**ROUTE DESCRIPTION:** Start at the Tennessee Pass Trailhead parking lot with cross country wax. At the south edge of the lot, about 100 feet from Highway 24, you'll find a Forest Service "double post" trailhead sign, check here for a current map and other information. Take the trail starting at the "double post" trailhead, then stay left to follow the marked Colorado Trail (small white triangles). Basically, this section of trail parallels the Continental Divide by traversing several miles of hillside above Highway 24. At 2 1/4 miles the trail crosses through a small gulch at 10,400 feet. Put your skins on here if your wax has a light grip. Continue as the marked 10th Mountain trail takes you on a westerly route leading up the North Fork of West Tennessee Creek 1 mile to pass just north of Lily Lake (10,589 feet).

Swing right (N) as you pass Lily Lake, cross the creek and a marshy area, then climb N for one-half mile to a low-angled clearing. From here the route climbs NW for 1 1/4 miles along the south side of the south fork of Slide Creek through a series of clearings until it reaches the south end of a large flat marshy area just below and to the south of the hut. The trail to this point can be confusing because of myriad snowmobile and ski tracks. In general, it follows the south Slide Creek drainage, but winds around enough to make "drainage tracking" hard. Your best insurance is to take great care near Lily

Lake to identify the distinct cone of Homestake Peak. Using this as a landmark, pay attention to your map, compass, and altimeter **to** stick to the trail. The route is marked by 10th Mountain, but don't depend on trail markers for navigation.

You can see the hut from the south side of the last low-angled marshy clearing-it's perched on a low-angled hillside on the north side of the clearing. With poor visibility this could be a confusing area, so take care.

**REVERSE ROUTE DESCRIPTION:** If you're skiing from hut to trailhead, you're in for a treat. First, ski the 10th Mountain suggested route across the flat clearing southwest of the hut, then take the fall line and enjoy a ski run through clearings down to the area just north of Lily Lake. From there intersect the North Fork Road and follow it down to a road fork at 10,340 feet. Turn left (N) off the road at the fork onto the marked 10th Mountain trail and follow the marked trail easterly to the Tennessee Pass Trailhead.

**SAFETY NOTES:** This is a relatively mellow route. It does take a few confusing turns to avoid the snowmobile trails, so put energy into your navigation.

**SUMMER:** The roads and trails marked on the USGS maps make fine horse, bike, and hiking routes for this hut. For regional routes, the Wurts Ditch Road is a fabulous bike ride in its own right, as is the Slide Lake jeep trail. The 10th Mountain marked trail that traverses from Tennessee Pass into the West Tennessee Creek drainage is only suitable for skiing.



## **12.2 Crane Park Trailhead-10th Mountain Division Hut via West Tennessee Creek**

**DIFFICULTY:** Intermediate

**TIME:** 4 ½ hours up, 3 hours down

**DISTANCE:** 4 1/2 miles

**TEXT MAP:** p. 162

**10TH MTN MAP:** Galena Mountain

**USGS MAP:** Homestake Reservoir, Leadville North

**ELEVATION GAIN:** 1,353 feet; loss: 120 feet

This route follows most of route 12.1, but has a more direct access from the Crane Park Trailhead. The actual Crane Park Trailhead varies with snow closure (see Chapter 1, Crane Park Trailhead).

**ROUTE DESCRIPTION:** To begin, either drive or ski up the gravel pit road from Crane Park to the obvious intersection of the Wurts Ditch Road. If you end up at the gravel pit, you have gone too far. The Wurts Ditch Road is usually well signed, but signs have a way of changing. Ski up the well-traveled, snow-covered Wurts Ditch Road just over one-quarter mile to 10,480 feet. Here you turn left (S) off the road onto the Colorado Trail and follow route 12.1 to the hut.

**REVERSE ROUTE DESCRIPTION:** Follow route 12.1 to the Wurts Ditch Road. Turn right (SE) on the Wurts Ditch Road and follow it just over one-quarter mile downhill to the aforementioned gravel pit road. This is the trailhead if the gravel pit road is plowed. If it is not plowed, turn left (N) and follow the gravel pit road to snow closure near Crane Park.

**SAFETY NOTES:** This route is very short, but stay alert and leave the trailhead before noon!

**SUMMER:** The 2 3/4-mile Slide Lake jeep trail from Wurts Ditch Road is a fine mountain bike route. See route 12.1 for other summer information.

### **12.3 10th Mountain Division Hut to Uncle Bud's Hut via Main Range/Colorado Trail**

**DIFFICULTY:** Intermediate

**TIME:** 8 hours

**DISTANCE:** 7 1/4 miles

**ELEVATION GAIN:** 1,460 feet; loss: 1,450 feet

**TEXT MAP:** p. 162

**10TH MTN MAP:** Galena Mountain

**USGS MAP:** Homestake Reservoir

This 10th Mountain suggested route is arguably the only intermediate trail from the 10th Mountain Division Hut to Uncle Bud's Hut. Lower routes would follow devious tracks through dark forest and force you to share trails with snowmobiles. Higher routes are all advanced and expert because of avalanche terrain. This route is longer than it looks on the map, and traverses through many subsidiary drainages. This is a change for skiers used to chugging up and down valleys, and requires attentive map work. The route is scenic, with changing views of the Mosquito Range to the east and the Continental Divide to the west and south.

**ROUTE DESCRIPTION:** Start without skins, perhaps with a bit of Nordic wax. From the front deck of the 10th Mountain Division Hut, ski S into the large marshy clearing, then S across the clearing to intersect a stream in a shallow gulch. The trail splits at this point, with the left (E) fork following routes 12.1/12.2 to trailheads. For your route, take the right (W) fork and follow the standard marked 10th Mountain trail as it traverses SW to a small pond, then drops through a clearing S to the North Fork West Tennessee Creek (11,100 feet), your second drainage crossing from the hut (count them as you go).

Continue S as you climb a small ridge (11,130 feet) that separates the North Fork West Tennessee Creek from the west fork of West Tennessee Creek. Next, drop S through timber to 10,980 feet in the beautiful open valley of West Tennessee Creek. Navigation in West Tennessee Creek can be difficult when visibility isn't the best. Cross the middle fork of West Tennessee Creek, then climb one-quarter mile SW to a flat marshy area at West Tennessee Creek (11,080 feet).

Swing E for one-quarter mile through the marshy area, then enter a trail cut in dark timber. Follow this trail E, then turn right (S) and climb to a small lake. From this lake climb to a small saddle (11,140 feet),

then drop S through a clearing into a marshy area in a subsidiary drainage. Cross S through the marshy area and continue descending SE to intersect the Colorado Trail at 10,880 feet. (At this point the Colorado Trail is marked on the USGS map as the Main Range Trail. To add to the confusion, it is also the Longs Gulch Trail in the USFS Tennessee Pass ski touring trail system.)

Turn right and follow the trail as it leads SW for 1 1/4 miles up Longs Gulch to 10,900 feet. Here you'll see some possible avalanche slopes on the north side of the drainage. Avoid these by staying in the timber to the south of the trail. Regain the trail in the timber and follow it as it climbs SW to a flat saddle with several small lakes.

Drop S into Porcupine Gulch from the saddle and cross Porcupine Creek at 11,240 feet. Still counting drainages? Climb S out of Porcupine Gulch, pass timberline, and continue climbing to 11,800 feet on an alpine shoulder. This is the high point of your route. The climb out of Porcupine Gulch switchbacks up through a slice of timber to avoid avalanche slopes to the right, then stays high to pass above other avalanche prone slopes. Take extra care to choose a safe route here, as you could easily deviate into avalanche terrain. The trail as marked on the text map is accurate, while the trail on the USGS map is inaccurate. If you have time, take a scenic detour at the shoulder and climb point 12,313.

It's all downhill from the shoulder to Uncle Bud's Hut, so strip your skins. From your position on the shoulder, ski E down to timberline at a sparsely timbered saddle (11,680 feet). At this point it is very important to swing Wand stay in Bud's Gulch (unnamed on the USGS map, marked on the text map), since it's all too easy to ski the tempting glades down into St. Kevin Creek and end up far from the hut. A compass check can help you here.

Skiing down Bud's Gulch takes you through timber for 400 vertical feet to 11,360 feet where you broach an elongated low-angled clearing. The 10th Mountain marked route follows the Colorado Trail down the left side of the clearing to 11,260 feet. You then swing E and climb through sparse timber one-eighth mile and 120 vertical feet back up to the hut.

This last little climb can be bothersome after all the drainages you've trudged through. On the map it looks like you can contour to the hut from the upper end of Bud's Gulch, but this route is blocked by some fairly dense forest. The alternate that works-if you are good with navigation-is to ski the wide rib dividing St. Kevin Gulch from Bud's Gulch. Stay to the east side of the rib in light timber and traverse the east side of several bumps. Again, don't drop down into St. Kevin Gulch. The hut is only visible from several hundred feet away on either route.

**SAFETY NOTES:** A topographic map is essential on this route; refer to it often. An altimeter and perhaps a GPS can help a great deal with this sort of skiing. You drop into a drainage, read your elevation (and GPS coordinates), and you know exactly where you are (provided you have counted drainages).

**SUMMER:** The Colorado Trail is a fine hike or horse route. Most of the route is within designated wilderness, so cyclists should look for other routes. Portions of the 10th Mountain route described above (those that leave the established trails) are marked ski trails with no summer tread.

## **12.4 - 10th Mountain Division Hut to Vance's Cabin via Tennessee Pass**

**DIFFICULTY:** Intermediate

**TIME:** 8 hours

**DISTANCE:** 9 miles

**ELEVATION GAIN:** 760 feet; loss: 1,150 feet

**TEXT MAP:** pp. 142, 162

**10TH MTN MAP:** Galena Mt., Ch. Rdg

**USGS MAP:** Leadville North, Pando, Homestake Reservoir

This 10th Mountain suggested route is the standard ski-through between the 10th Mountain Division Hut and Vance's Cabin. It crosses a major highway (U.S. 24) at Tennessee Pass, then passes by the Ski Cooper ski area. If you're on a long ski-through, plan a resupply at the highway.

**ROUTE DESCRIPTION:** From the 10th Mountain Division Hut follow reverse route 12.1 to the parking area at Tennessee Pass. From there, take route 11.2 to Vance's Cabin.

**SAFETY NOTES:** See routes 11.2 and 12.1.

**SUMMER:** See routes 11.2 and 12.1.

### **12.5 - Slide Lake from 10th Mountain Division Hut**

**DIFFICULTY:** Intermediate

**TIME:** Several hours round trip

**DISTANCE:** 1 1/4 miles round trip

**ELEVATION GAIN:** 330 feet round trip

**TEXT MAP:** pp. 162, 170

**10TH MTN MAP:** Galena Mountain

**USGS MAP:** Homestake Reservoir

If you itch for a timberline tour but lack the skills to climb the Divide or ski the couloirs, take a scenic cruise to Slide Lake.

**ROUTE DESCRIPTION:** The route is simple. Put your skins on at the hut, then simply climb the hill northwest of the hut, bearing right (N) as the hill gets steeper. At timberline, around 11,500 feet, keep Homestake Peak on your front left as you continue to Slide Lake (11,700 feet) in a superb high basin. On the return, ski the glades that tempted you as you climbed.

**SAFETY NOTES:** Avoid avalanche slopes on all sides of the Homestake Peak basin.

**SUMMER:** This is a fine horse ride or hike. Cyclists can ride the Slide Lake jeep trail to the marked wilderness boundary just below the lake.

### **12.6 - Homestake Peak from 10th Mountain Division Hut**

**DIFFICULTY:** Advanced

**TIME:** 5 hours round trip

**DISTANCE:** 4 1/2 miles round trip

**ELEVATION GAIN:** 1,839 feet round trip

**TEXT MAP:** pp. 162, 170

**10TH MTN MAP:** Galena Mountain

**USGS MAP:** Homestake Reservoir

About 736 peaks in Colorado top the 13,000-foot mark. One of these is Homestake Peak (13,209 feet) which rises west of the 10th Mountain Division Hut. A classic glacier-made cone, Homestake has a relatively avalanche safe climbing route, and makes a good branch route from the hut. Most of the ski lines are too avalanche prone for safe winter descents, but the ascent route (east ridge) can yield some fine lines, provided the snow has not been wind-scoured. For the best skiing, enjoy Homestake Peak during the spring corn-snow season.

**ROUTE DESCRIPTION:** To climb Homestake Peak, follow route 12.5 to Slide Lake. From the south side of the lake, climb SE about one-quarter mile and 200 vertical feet to a vegetated hillock at the 11,900-foot level. From here avoid the avalanche runouts from Homestake's east ridge by contouring and gently climbing low-angled terrain to the broad ridge crest. Simply follow the ridge to the summit. The ascent route is the safest descent. During the spring corn season, you can enjoy some fabulous ski lines down the north face of the east ridge from about the 12,400-foot level. For a super corn extravaganza, ski the bowls from the Continental Divide south of the peak, then traverse back to the hut. You'll find other corn-snow lines around Slide Lake.

**SAFETY NOTES:** While ascending the east ridge, evaluate avalanche danger to either side. Don't let temptation lead you into skiing down dangerous slopes.

**SUMMER:** This fine summit hike adds a "Thirteener" to your list.



**ELEVATION GAIN:** 2,000 feet round trip

**TEXT MAP:** pp. 162, 170

**10TH MTN MAP:** Galena Mountain

**USGS MAP:** Homestake Reservoir

One of the safest ways for advanced mountaineers to enjoy the winter high country is by doing ridge runs. The Continental Divide south from Homestake Peak is a fine candidate for such an endeavor. At the least, you can make a short probe to several small bumps close to the summit of Homestake Peak, enjoy the view, then get back to the hut by teatime. At the most, you can take the Divide to Galena Mountain, then descend to Turquoise Lake or Uncle Bud's Hut.

**ROUTE DESCRIPTION:** To do this route, take route 12.6 to the summit of Homestake Peak, then simply stick to the Divide ridge as it leads south. Where logic dictates, make small traverses below the high points of the ridge, usually on the west side.

**SAFETY NOTES:** You're very exposed to storms on a ridge such as this. In midwinter, most escape routes will be cut off by avalanche danger. Thus, you must plan this ridge run with care. Also, if you plan on traversing the entire ridge, a good weather prediction is mandatory (see Appendix 2). Consider corn-snow season for this route, as avalanche danger will be more predictable and the weather will be milder.

**SUMMER:** This is a fine hike. Beware of afternoon lightning.