

Janet's Cabin Guidebook Excerpts

From Dawson, L. (1998). Colorado Tenth Mountain Huts and Trails: The Official Guide to America's Largest Backcountry Ski Hut System (3rd ed.). Basalt, Colorado: Who Press.

Located at timberline in the Culler Creek Drainage next to the Copper Mountain Ski Area, Janet's Cabin is a fine hut that attracts both novice and expert skiers. The hut was completed in 1990 by The Summit Hut and Trails Association, which owns the hut. Booking is by 10th Mountain. The lovingly crafted 3,000

ELEVATION	11,610 feet
COORDINATES:	39°27.844'N, 106°13.777'W
UTM	13 389 132E, 43 71 939N
COUNTY	Summit
10TH MTN MAP	Resolution Mt, Chicago Ridge
USGS MAP	Copper Mountain
TRAILHEADS	Vail Pass, Union Creek

square foot cabin is built with 10" Montana pine logs. Four bedrooms sleep a maximum of 20 guests. Heat is by wood stove, while sun-powered lighting, two propane cook stoves, and hut keeper quarters round out the amenities. If you like mountain lounging you'll feel at home on the large front deck, where you can bake in the sun while you watch skiers descend from the high bowls.

Janet's Cabin is dedicated to the memory of Janet Boyd Tyler, a Vail resident and avid skier who passed away in 1988. According to her eulogy, "Janet was renowned for her quick smile and readiness to constantly re-discover the joy of life. She discovered her life-long passion for skiing while attending school in New Hampshire. Early on, Janet met the challenges of the slopes, including (if the legends are true) Tuckerman Ravine in the White Mountains. She dug into all her pursuits with the same enthusiasm she gave to skiing, and she often viewed life's challenges from a skier's perspective. Mountain views, fresh clear air, the beckoning of trees beside the trails, but most of all a good powder morning-these were all perceptions she carried every day. Janet's lifetime ski pass is now buried in the foundation of Janet's Cabin."

The standard trail to Janet's Cabin takes Culler Creek from the Copper Mountain Ski Area (16.1). Though this trail is easy, it still requires backcountry wherewithal. Experts will find more challenge by skiing to the hut from Vail Pass (16.2), and the "super expert" will have an interesting day challenging the high ridge from Union Peak to the hut (16.6). Though not officially part of the 10th Mountain Hut and Trail System, Janet's Cabin readily connects with Jackal Hut via Tim's Traverse (16.5), and to the Shrine Mountain Inn via Upper Stafford Creek (16.3).

16.1 Union Creek Trailhead at Copper Mountain Ski Area-Janet's Cabin via Culler Creek

DIFFICULTY	Novice
TIME	5 hours up, 3 hours down
DISTANCE	4 ¾ miles
ELEVATION GAIN: 1,790 feet	
10TH MOUNTAIN MAP	Resolution Mt.
USGS MAPS	Vail Pass, Copper Mtn.

This trail up the Culler Creek drainage is the standard route to Janet's Cabin. Though rated Novice, skiers on this route should be fully equipped and know their map reading.

ROUTE DESCRIPTION: Take care with the complicated start for this route. Begin at the Union Creek Trailhead at Copper Mountain Ski Area. From Union Creek you have two choices. The popular option is to ride K and L lifts to the top of "West Tenmile" ski trail. You can get a one-ride lift ticket by presenting your 10th Mountain confirmation letter at the ticket window at Union Creek.

Ski about one-quarter mile down the extreme W (left) side of the "West Tenmile" ski trail to 10,640 feet. An altimeter eliminates guesswork here. Watch carefully for a blue diamond marked trail that leaves the ski run (crosses the ski area boundary) at this elevation and heads W through the forest. Your other option is to put on your climbing skins and climb the ski runs to this same point. Stay to the side of the run so you don't obstruct the downhill skiers.

In either case, after you leave the ski area follow an obvious trail-cut (take your skins off) as it traverses then drops W

into the Culler Creek drainage to cross Jacque Creek and Culler Creek in an open area at 10,460 feet. From the crossing, the trail stays on the N side of the creek for 2 miles to about 11,120 feet. Here the valley widens and becomes very low angled. Switch to the S side of the creek and continue up the drainage another mile to where the valley steepens and narrows. Put your skins on here.

Climb this steep section of the trail another one-quarter mile to the Janet's Cabin at 11,610 feet. The hut is just below the last timber a few hundred feet NW of Culler Creek. If you find yourself above timberline you have gone too high.

REVERSE ROUTE DESCRIPTION: Reverse the above route to the lower creek crossing at 10,460 feet. For the most fun put your skins back on here and continue to reverse your route back to the West Tenmile ski run. Then enjoy a downhill run to Union Creek.

As an alternative to the climb back to the ski run you can continue down Culler Creek via an obvious trail. After a fast 2-mile downhill you'll intersect maintained ski touring trails. Climb the ski touring trails to your right (E) at the first opportunity and continue climbing E until you hit the first downhill ski run. Descend this run to Union Creek.

SAFETY NOTES: This trail has no avalanche danger. Though it's easier than most 10th Mountain Trails, it's still backcountry skiing-so be prepared.

SUMMER: The Culler Creek trail is fine for cycling, hiking, or horseback. Copper Mountain Resort has a comprehensive summer program that includes cycling. Call Copper Mountain for details (see directory).

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

Hut Elevation	11,610'
Date Built	1990
Seasons	Thanksgiving through early May
Capacity	20
Hut Layout	2 bedrooms that sleep 6 each, and 2 bedrooms that sleep 4 each, all single beds
Hut Essentials	Woodstove for heat, propane cookstove, all kitchenware, photovoltaic electric lights
Other Goodies	Sauna, indoor composting toilets

Janet's Cabin is a memorial to Janet Boyd Tyler, a colorful fixture on the Colorado ski scene for many decades. The cabin is at the head of Guller Creek, adjacent to the Colorado Trail. This is one of the most popular backcountry huts in Colorado and may be crowded on weekends. Much of its popularity stems from the fact that the trailhead is a very short drive from the center of Summit County and not far from Vail and the Denver metro area.

The relatively short and uncomplicated tour to the hut also contributes to the popularity of Janet's Cabin; skiers of all abilities can ski to this hut. The hut's location allows intermediate and expert skiers access to the fine bowl skiing near Searle Pass and Sugarloaf Peak, an area used extensively for winter training by the U.S. Army's 10th Mountain Division ski troops during World War II.

This roomy structure is state-of-the-art and fully equipped to sleep 20 people. The main floor is huge and has couches and tables for several groups, as well as plenty of cooking space. Also located on the main floor are composting toilets, a ski/boot room, and a large south-facing deck. (The cabin cannot be accessed via the south deck, so skiers have to enter the cabin from the north entrance.) Upstairs are several large bedrooms. This luxurious hut even has a sauna; the Nancy Dayton Memorial Sauna was airlifted to the cabin in October 1991.

Janet's Cabin is not open for day use. Nor is it open in the summer, because of wildlife-habitat studies nearby. Make reservations through the 10th Mountain Division Hut Association (see Appendix A).

Union Creek Trailhead to Janet's Cabin

Time	3 to 5 hours
Distance	4.6 miles
Elevations	Trailhead: 9,820' Cabin: 11,610' Gain/Loss: +1,970'/-180'
Avalanche	Minimal danger
10th Mountain Division Map	Resolution Mountain
USGS 7.5' Map	Copper Mountain, 1987
National Forest Map	Arapaho
Trails Illustrated Map	#108 (Vail/Frisco/Dillon); Map #109 (Breckenridge/Tennessee Pass)

TOUR OVERVIEW: The Union Creek Trailhead is the most popular route to Janet's Cabin. It runs up the center of a long, almost treeless valley where navigation is easy and skiers will rarely need to break trail. But this route is a true backcountry trip to a high-altitude cabin, so don't let the high skier volume lull you into nonchalance. Be prepared, and get an early start.

The most confusing part of the trip is finding the parking area, getting to the shuttle buses, and finding your way out of the Copper Mountain ski area.

DIRECTIONS TO TRAILHEAD: Drive to the Copper Mountain Resort. Drive south on CO 91 past Copper's main entrance, then take the next right into Alpine Lot, formerly East Lot. As of press time, Copper Mountain was allowing Janet's Cabin guests to park in the northeast corner of Alpine Lot. This may change, so look for signs directing you to Janet's Cabin parking. Hop on a shuttle bus (buses run between 7 a.m. and 10 P.M.) and ride to the farthest stop west, Union Creek, which is at the Nordic center and shuttle turnaround point. The route begins on the west side of the Nordic center building. *Note:* Please read parking information in your confirmation packet for the most current parking instructions-things can change!

THE ROUTE: Ascend the west edge of the ski area until you reach a public access trail that traverses into Culler Creek. This ascent can be accomplished by one of two methods: One option is to strap on your skins and climb a ski run

named West Tenmile Trail (while dodging downhill skiers and keeping a sharp eye out for the trail entrance); the second and more popular choice is to present your hut reservation slip (good for one complimentary ride) to either the ticket window or the lift operators and ride up Copper's K or L lift to the top. From the top of the lift, descend West Tenmile Trail for a few hundred feet to the access trail. The point of entry for the trail is marked with a blue diamond and a Forest Service sign. Finding this trail is tricky because the entrance is in the forest on the west edge of the ski run, just below the top of the lifts; most skiers usually drop down too far.

Follow the Nordic trail into the woods on a steep drop, then along a traverse into the Guller Creek drainage. You will intersect the Colorado Trail/Guller Creek Trail at a point where the trail crosses Guller Creek. A sign reading "Vail Pass/Backcountry Uses in Winter," which used to mark the intersection, is now gone. For the next 0.5 to 1 mile, the trail cruises up Guller Creek, first on the northwest side of the creek, then crossing to the southeast side midway through a large meadow. As you approach the head of the valley-marked by steep, forested slopes-begin a gradual ascent along the forest's edge. Continue along the southeast edge of the valley until you enter a distinct, treeless gully that climbs steeply south toward alpine peaks and bowls. Janet's Cabin, its roof visible to a sharp eye, is at the top of this gully on the right, hidden in a stand of trees.