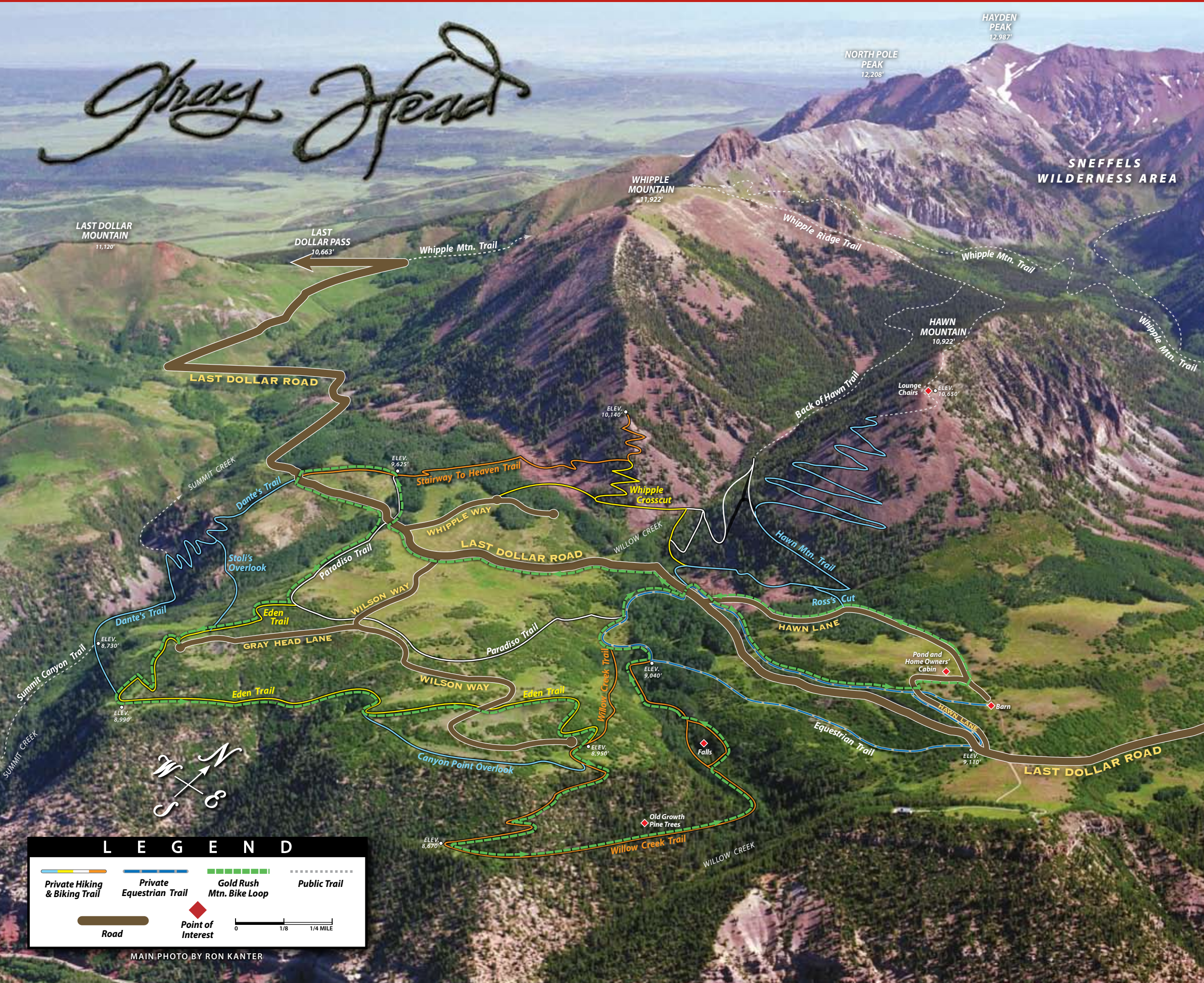


# Gray Head



## 1. Stairway to Heaven 1.7 MILES • HIKE BEGINNER+ ●●

Across from the Paradise or Dante's trails, this hike starts on the eastern side of Last Dollar Road. The route begins with a gradual ascent through spruce, fir and aspen, then climbs up the talus stepping-stones of Whipple Mountain. When you come to an intersection, head up to your left. Climb until you arrive at one of Gray Head's landmarks, a stunning rugged outcropping known as Barney's Barnacle. The views of the property and panorama of the San Juan Mountains are spectacular from this out-and-back vantage. From the intersection, continue down and into the east Willow Creek drainage. The trail links to Last Dollar Road and the Hawn Mountain trails.

## 2. Dante's Trail 1.6 MILES • HIKE INTERMEDIATE ■

This hike begins on the western side of Last Dollar Road near the northern boundary of Gray Head. The trail descends through rocky talus slopes with views of jagged basalt spires and buttresses formed by an ancient volcanic dike. At the bottom you'll reach Summit Creek where the trail meanders through a verdant riparian habitat before climbing to meet the Eden Trail and spectacular views of the Wilson Massif.

## 3. Stoli's Overlook 0.5 MILES • HIKE INTERMEDIATE+ ■■

Probably the most obscure of Gray Head's many trails, but just as rewarding, Stoli's Overlook is a traverse between the Dante's and Eden trails. This hike drops into a little-known drainage that is home to some of Gray Head's largest aspen trees. Look for tree art (dendroglyphs) carved by lonely Basque sheepherders in a spring-fed aspen glade.

## 4. Paradise Trail 1.3 MILES • HIKE/BIKE/EQUESTRIAN BEGINNER ●

This gentle path saunters around the mesa and is a great link to many other hikes. It's a favorite route for elk, whose cloven hooves leave their mark in the trail. It can be accessed from the Willow Creek Trail or the Last Dollar Road, just west of Whipple Way.

## 5. Eden Trail 1.4 MILES • HIKE/BIKE/EQUESTRIAN BEGINNER ●

Start this hike where the Paradise Trail crosses Wilson Way or from Dante's Trail. This is a lovely saunter that meanders along the edge of the mesa affording great views, and is prime in wildflower season. Don't forget to stop in on Steve and Terry for a libation and snacks mid-way on this beautiful walk-about.

## 6. Willow Creek Trail 2.2 MILES • HIKE/BIKE BEGINNER+ ●●

Begin this loop across from the northwest intersection of Hawn Lane and Last Dollar Road. After dropping into the aspen grove, cross the creek, take the right (high) fork and follow the contour of the mesa through stands of Gambel Oak and willow. The trail then descends to a lovely meadow overlooking San Miguel Canyon. From there, the route traverses a south-facing slope with enormous Ponderosa pines, reported to be some of the oldest in the state. Climbing through the aspen glades of Willow Creek—especially beautiful in the fall—the trail continues up through the drainage. Stop for a rest at the Gray Head waterfall before you head back to the Homeowner's Cabin for a cold drink.

## 7. Equestrian Trail 1.7 MILES • HIKE/BIKE/EQUEST. INTERMEDIATE ■

As the name suggests, why not use four legs instead of two on this homestead loop. Get to the barn early so Roudy doesn't yell at ya too much. Hop onto your favorite steed and enjoy a giddy-up around the back 40. Roudy and his wranglers can fill you in on the lore and legends of Gray Head and give you a taste for the trail before you don your hiking boots.

## 8. Hawn Mountain Trail 2.5 MILES • HIKE INTERMEDIATE+ ■■

This is the jewel in Gray Head's crown of amazing trails. Gradually ascend on a trail of hand-laid talus stone steps. Marvel at this mountain of eroded Mancos shale and be careful not to trip over your jaw as it drops at every turn of the head. Amazing views and stone lounge chairs at the summit. Over 30 switchbacks to the top make this a long but gentle climb. Return the way you came or continue along the ridge and hike a loop down the Back of Hawn Trail.

MAIN PHOTO BY RON KANTER