



HIKING - FOREST SERVICE - ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

NATIONAL FOREST – San Juan RANGER DISTRICT - Columbine

Updated: February, 2003



**ANIMAS RIVER TRAIL #675**

Length: 6.7 miles (10.7 km.)

**Recommended Season**

Spring ← Summer → Fall Winter

Use: Heavy

Difficulty: More difficult

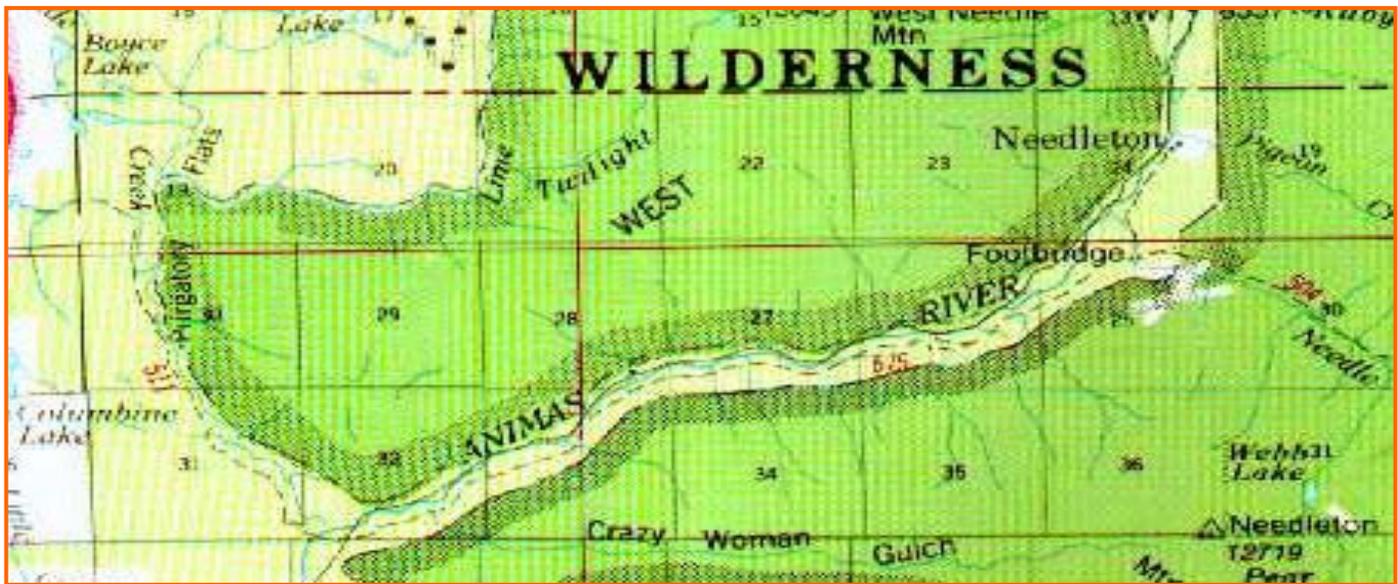
USGS Map (s): Electra Lake and  
Mountain View Crest

Starting Elevation: 7,700 ft.

End of Purgatory Trail at the Animas River Bridge

Ending Elevation: 8,300 ft.

Bridge at Needle Creek Trail



Recommended Season: Summer/Early Fall

Access #1: This trail is a section of trail linking Purgatory Trail and Needle Creek Trail. The first trail is the Purgatory Trail, which begins at the former Purgatory Campground, 28 miles north of Durango on US Highway 550, across the road from the ski area.

*Scan of the San Juan National Forest Map*  
Forest Service Maps and other publications are available at the Public Lands Center, in the Durango Tech Center, ½ mile west of Durango off Highway 160, or by calling (970)-247-4874.  
[www.sjma.org](http://www.sjma.org)

Access #2: This trail can also be accessed from the Needle Creek Trail. Since there are access points for this trail, please see the description of the Needle Creek Trail for a complete listing of its access points.

Attractions and Considerations: The Animas River Trail is an alternative to taking the train to get to Chicago Basin. The trail follows the riverbanks for its entire distance, offering fishing possibilities. The river canyon walls are steep and rocky, making the sun come up late and set early. There are many good campsites along the way. Since this is a major drainage, all water used should be filtered to prevent possible Giardia contamination. This trail is used by horse outfitters, so expect to see horse traffic.



Fishing Considerations:

The Animas River is rated good for brook, rainbow, and cutthroat trout.