

Staff Ride

Resources



Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program

Mann Gulch Fire - Travel Directions

The Mann Gulch Fire site is located on the Helena National Forest in the Gates of the Mountain Wilderness. The site is accessed from the Missouri River. Commercial transport on the river is available from the Gates of the Mountains Boat Tours, 3131 Gates of the Mountains Rd. 20 miles north of Helena, Montana. Coordinating early with the tour company is highly recommended. You may be able to negotiate. Due to resource considerations, coordination should also be conducted with Helena NF in advance of travel.

From Helena, MT

The Gates of the Mountains boat launch is approximately 40 minutes from Helena – north on Interstate 15 about 17 miles.

Take exit 209 for Gates of the Mountains.

Turn right (east) at the bottom of the off-ramp.

Follow Gates of the Mountains Road 2.7 miles to the end of the road and the Gates of the Mountains Marina.

From Great Falls

Take Interstate 15 south approximately 75 miles to exit 209.

Turn left (east) on Gates of the Mountains Road.

Follow the road 2.7 miles to the marina parking lot.

Gates of the Mountains Marina to Stand 1: Overview and 1949 Background

Make special arrangements ahead of time with the boat operator for drop off and pick up times at the mouth of Mann Gulch. The boat ride is about 15 minutes downriver. From where you get off of the boat, hike up along the bottom of the canyon along an unimproved trail for about 50 - 75 yards to an opening large enough to hold the group. This is a great place to deliver Stand 1, and it is also a good place to stash Trauma Kits/First Aid materials... You may conduct Stand 1 at the marina, should there be lag time there, but it is not the best location.

Stand 1WGS84 Datum GPS Coordinates: N 46°52.716' W 111°54.797'

Stand 1 to Stand 2 – Briefing Overlook

From the mouth of Mann Gulch hike about one mile up canyon on the undeveloped trail. Along the way, you pass Optional Stand 6 – Jansson's Turn Around Spot, located next to Harry T. Gisborne Memorial site.

Follow the trail past the memorial marker as it leaves the drainage bottom to the left (north). Stand 2 takes place on an open grass bench around the top of the lower third of the slope (south aspect).

Stand 2 is not a specific historic location. It provides good views of multiple areas of interest; jump spot, cargo and lunch areas, as well as the north aspect where Dodge went to meet Harrison, etc...

Stand 2 WGS84 Datum GPS Coordinates: N 46*53.149' W 111*53.703'

Stand 2 to Stand 3 – Turn Around

From Stand 2 hike approximately .5 mile southwest, contouring along, slightly up the slope. Stand 3 takes place about mid slope on a small spur ridge, where for the first time, one can look down into the mouth of Mann Gulch where the spotting occurred.

Stand 3 WGS84 Datum GPS Coordinates: N 46*52.983' W 111*54.142'

Stand 3 to Stand 3A – Tool Drop

From Stand 3, cut back to the northeast (toward the jump spot) approximately 500 yards heading towards the ridge line. Stand 3A takes place on a slight bench on the upper third of the slope (south aspect). In the vicinity of large rock slide areas.

Stand 3A WGS84 Datum GPS Coordinates: N 46*53.097' W 111*54.013'

Stand 3A to Stand 4 – Dodge's Escape Fire

From Stand 3 hike approximately 0.5 miles to the northeast gaining approximately 400 feet in elevation. The trail from here is not heavily used and becomes very narrow and steep, going across open terrain with poor footing. Participants will cross a couple rock slide areas before reaching Stand 4. There should be a wooden marker designating the site where Dodge started his escape fire, but it may be difficult to find, or missing.

Stand 4 WGS84 Datum GPS Coordinates: N 46*53.204 W 111*532.921

Stand 4 to Stand 5 – Ridge Top

From Stand 4, walk/scramble to the rim rock ledge, and pass through the notch where Sallee and Rumsey did to the ridge top, or traverse the slope for an easier route to the top. Stand 5 is on the ridge separating Mann Gulch from Rescue Gulch, where there is a flat area large enough to for a group to sit or stand. Hellman's cross will be located down slope into Rescue Gulch as well as the rock slide areas where Sallee and Rumsey took refuge from flames in Rescue Gulch.

Stand 5 WGS84 Datum GPS Coordinates: N 46*53.256' W111*53.937'

Stand 5 – Optional Stand 6 – Ranger Jansson Turnaround

From Stand 5 walk down past most of the memorial markers, then tie back into the undeveloped trail in the bottom of Mann Gulch. Follow this down canyon to Optional Stand 6, next to the Harry T. Gisborne Memorial Plaque. Allow approximately 45-60 minutes for people to visit markers enroute down to Stand 6... Visiting sites has great emotional impact and can make the event more personal.

Stand 6 WGS84 Datum GPS Coordinates: N 46*52.794' W 111*54.239'

Stand 6 – Boat Pick up and Marina: Integration

From Optional Stand 6, continue back down unimproved trail along bottom of Canyon to return to pick up. If you have time prior to being picked up by boat, you may try and include your integration here at site of Stand 1.