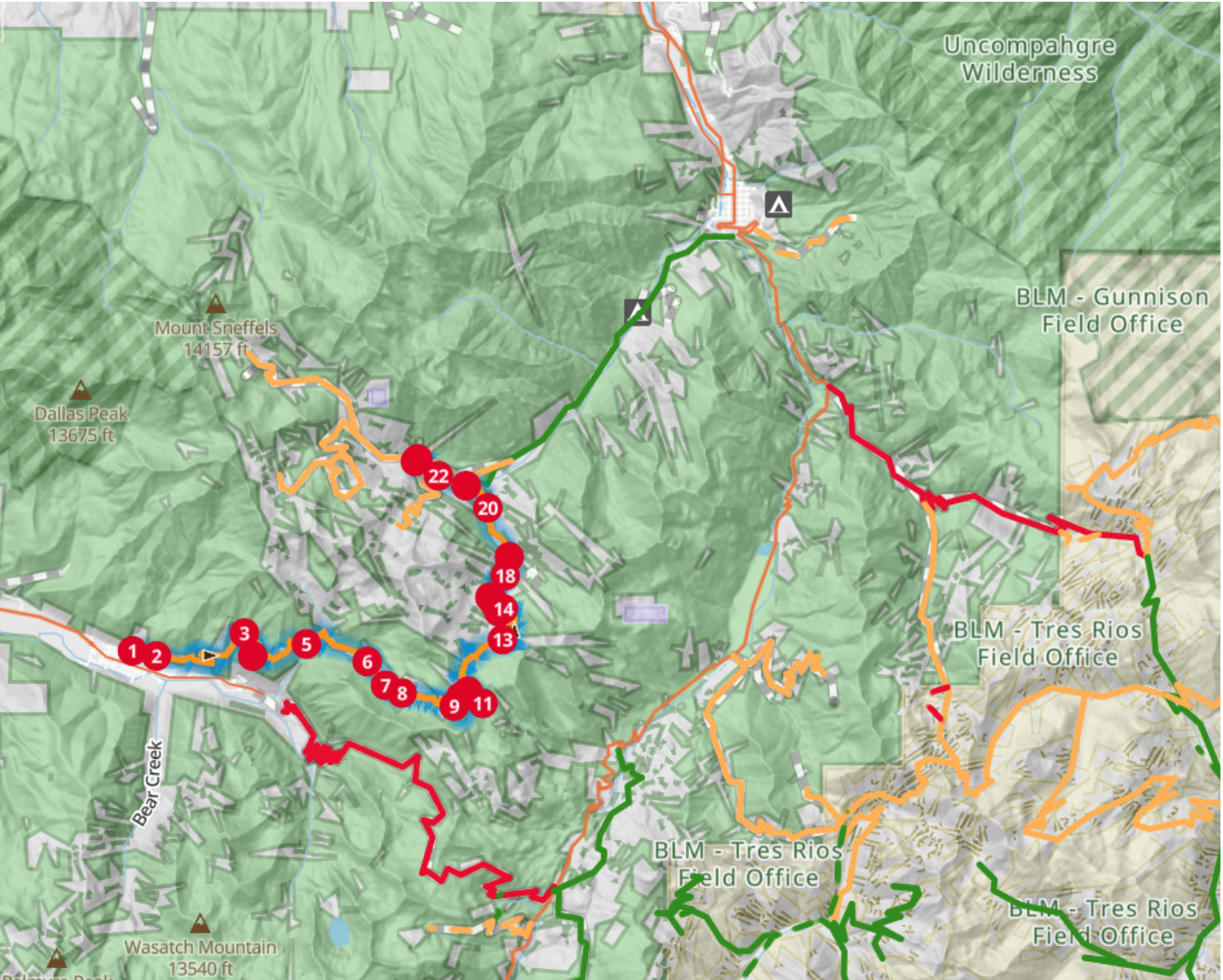


Imogene Pass

★ 4.9/5 (237 reviews) Telluride, Colorado (San Miguel County) Last Updated: 07/22/2024



Difficulty - Mandatory

4 - MODERATE

Difficulty - Optional

6 - DIFFICULT

Reported as of 11/01/2025

Seasonal Closure

Distance

12.05 mi

Duration (one-way)

About 3 hours

Highest Elevation	Shape of Trail	Typically Open	Best Direction	Official Trail Name
13216 ft	Straight Through	07/01 - 11/01	East	869
Nearest Town	Nearest Services	Management Agency	District	
Telluride	Telluride	Uncompahgre National Forest	Norwood Ranger District, Ouray Ranger District	

Highlights

Altitude

Forest

Ghost Town

Iconic

Mine

Overland

Scenic

Water

Imogene Pass offers gorgeous scenery and traverses a backcountry rich in mining history. It offers an opportunity to look back in time and relive what it would have been like to live and work in harsh alpine mining environments. Immense mining structures and machines are plentiful along what was once the most prosperous gold and silver mining area in Colorado. Book-ended by the beautiful towns of Telluride and Ouray at either end of the trail, it is no wonder this is a Jeep Badge of Honor Trail.

Recommended Vehicle:

Stock SUV with High Clearance and 4 Low

Concerns:

- | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| ✓ None | ✓ No Full Size | ✓ Body Damage |
| ✓ Width | ✓ Height | ✓ Short Wheelbase Only |
| ✓ Narrow Shelf Road | ✓ Mild Off Camber | ✓ Moderate Off Camber |
| ✓ Extreme Off Camber | ✓ Impassable When Wet | ✓ Deep Sand |
| ✓ Mud | ✓ Pinstriping | ✓ High Water Crossings |

Summary:

Expect narrow shelf roads, steep climbs, and slight off-camber terrain above the treeline. The trail's northern end is the most difficult side, with many small rock ledges, as seen in Waypoint 12. The high-end rating comes from optional lines of travel at Waypoints 8 and 12.

Mandatory

4 - MODERATE

Optional

6 - DIFFICULT

The hardest part of the trail that you **cannot bypass - you have to drive it.**

The hardest part of the trail that is **purely optional - you can bypass it.**

Trail Navigation

Imogene Pass is a straight-through route connecting San Miguel County and Ouray County, crossing an elevation of 13,114 feet.

Ascending from the quaint town of Telluride, aspen trees surround the rocky dirt road. The road is narrow, but there are several places to get past oncoming traffic. The trail climbs sharply at times, where low range is needed for extra gearing. On the way to Tom Boy Mine and the summit, the trail becomes an even more narrow and intimidating shelf road 1-1.5 vehicles in width. Generally, a good line of sight is available to see oncoming traffic easily. Although uphill has the right of way, it's a good idea to use any pullout opportunities you might come across, no matter your direction of travel.

The trail is significantly more rocky and bumpy downhill from the summit towards Ouray, where you will encounter

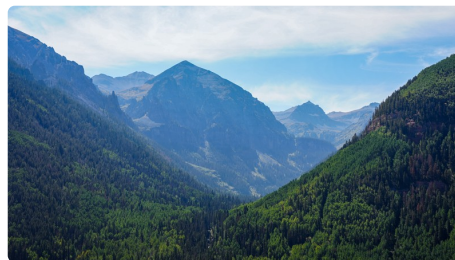
several sections of rock shelves, many with blind drops. This portion of the trail is the most challenging side and offers spectacular views as you drop into the valley. The trail's north end offers a few water crossings that can be powerful in early summer during peak runoff but are generally less than a foot deep. As you descend, you pass through a dense forest with several water holes and small rock ledges before intersecting with [Yankee Boy Basin](#).

1. Southern Trailhead (0 mi)



The southern trailhead looks like an alley behind neighborhood homes in the area. However, the trail is well-marked with Forest Service signs. Since this first stretch of trail is a residential area, please keep noise levels and speed to a minimum.

2. Seasonal Gate (0.32 mi)



A short distance from the trailhead is the boundary for Uncompahgre National Forest. A seasonal closure gate will be open if the trail is passable. The major trails in the San Juan mountains are bulldozed to clear snow and rockfall off the trails in hopes of making them passable sooner. Imogene is usually clear by the July Fourth weekend.

3. Scenic (2.15 mi)



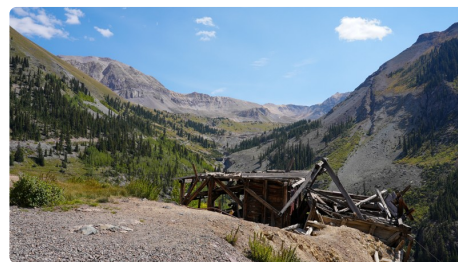
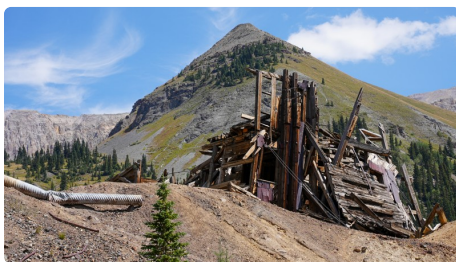
The trail quickly becomes a narrow shelf road with towering cliff faces to one side and sheer drop-offs on the other. There is excellent visibility ahead to spot oncoming traffic, but pull-offs and passing areas are limited. Generally, uphill traffic has right-of-way unless it is safer for uphill traffic to pull off to let others pass.

4. Social Tunnel (2.6 mi)



The Social Tunnel was blasted through the stone cliffs. This tunnel has seen horses, wagons, and vehicles pass through it for over 130 years. Spectacular views abound in every direction. There is room at this point for one or two vehicles to pull off to the side to let traffic through or take in the views. More information on why this is named Social Tunnel can be found in this article from [Denver Channel 7](#).

5. Smuggler Union Mine (3.52 mi)



Nearing the timberline sits Smuggler Union Mine. Gold and silver were first discovered in the Smuggler's vein in 1875, and the Smuggler Union Mine quickly became one of the most lucrative mines in the area. The Bullion Tunnel is now gated off but used to transport ore from Ouray to Telluride for processing. Many mine shafts are still present, and there are signs advising travelers of the unstable nature of the structures and open mines in the area.

6. Tomboy Townsite (4.53 mi)



The trail enters the Savage Basin, where the massive Tomboy Townsite once stood. Constructed in the 1880s and active until 1927, Tomboy was once home to more than 2,000 residents. Many people lived here year-round, utilizing tunnels dug out of the snowpack to travel between buildings during winter. Once you leave the mine on your way toward the summit, you'll see more of the shacks and various other structures of the Tomboy Complex. Signs are posted in various places around Tomboy, notifying visitors that the structures in this area are unstable and are private property. Please stay on the road and do not attempt to enter any buildings.

7. Columbia Mine (5.01 mi)



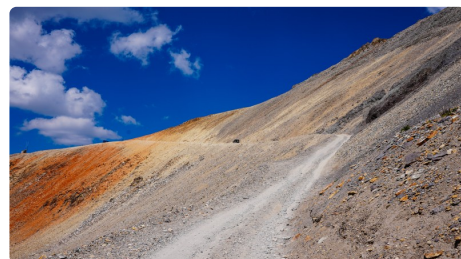
Numerous mine sites continue to dot the landscape with an epic view back towards Telluride.

8. Confusing Intersection - Stay Right (5.29 mi)



The trail splinters into three different routes. Although the main road appears to lead to the left, that route only takes you to another former mine site. Stay right, following either the first or second route up the hill as they reconnect in a short distance.

9. Begin Shelf Portion (6.13 mi)



Nearing the final climb to the summit, the trail narrows substantially with few pull-out opportunities. This situation is exacerbated early in the summer when dozers cut single-lane roads through snow drifts with 20-foot walls on both sides, making it impossible to see oncoming traffic. Be sure to look far ahead and use available pullouts when necessary.

10. Imogene Pass Summit (6.58 mi)



After a steep climb out of Savage Basin, the trail tops out on Imogene Pass, 13,114 feet. The summit has a small parking area for travelers to stop and enjoy the 360-degree views. A short, steep hike up to the east from the summit leads to the remnants of Fort Peabody, a sentry post for Colorado National Guard soldiers, constructed in

1904 to prevent union miners or their sympathizers from entering San Miguel County during the height of statewide labor disturbances. More information on Fort Peabody is available here courtesy of the [US Forest Service](#).

11. Viewpoint (6.88 mi)



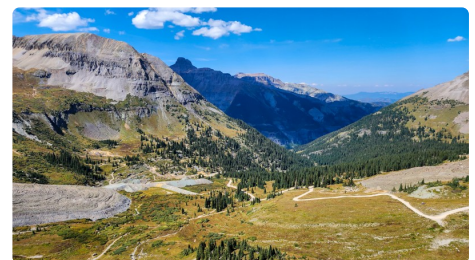
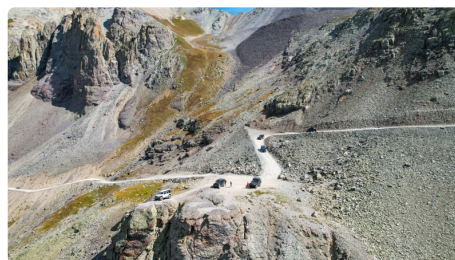
This viewpoint is the highest drivable elevation along Imogene Pass, at 13,217 feet. There is a large parking area for numerous vehicles where you can look out to the east, past US 550, and gaze down upon Red Mountain and several other 4x4 trails like Corkscrew Gulch and Minnehaha Basin. Ptarmigan Lake and a few old structures can also be seen south of this viewpoint.

12. Rock Ledges (7.21 mi)



As the trail begins its descent down the northern slope, you will encounter a series of rock shelves. There are multiple lines of travel across the shelves, with some lines being steeper and more difficult than others.

13. Poser Rock Viewpoint (8.31 mi)



A prominent rock outcropping is the perfect setting for a great "hero shot." There's ample parking and breathtaking scenery. A large geologic landform, Rock Glacier, is visible in the basin below. This is a living glacier, typically only moving a few centimeters a year.

14. Campsite (9.02 mi)



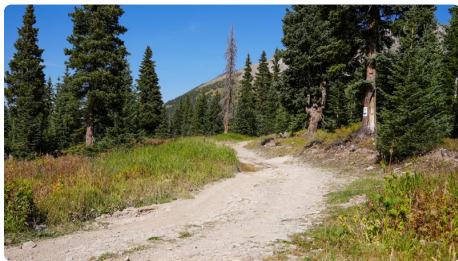
Follow the trail through the curve to the left. The short spur to the north leads to a small campsite best for ground tents and small offroad-type trailers.

15. Camp Bird Mine (9.09 mi)



Follow the trail downhill to the right. The spur road ahead leads to Camp Bird Mine #2 and Imogene Basin.

16. Campsite and Camp Bird Mine (9.22 mi)



Another small campsite to the north is suitable for small offroad trailers and ground tents. The road to the south into the brush leads to Camp Bird Mine #3 and the Hidden Treasure Mine.

17. Water Crossing (9.32 mi)



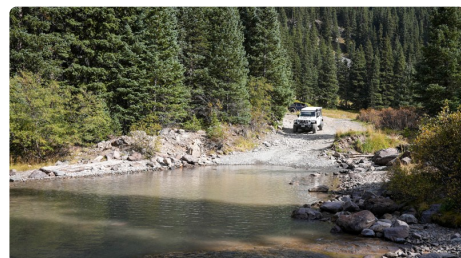
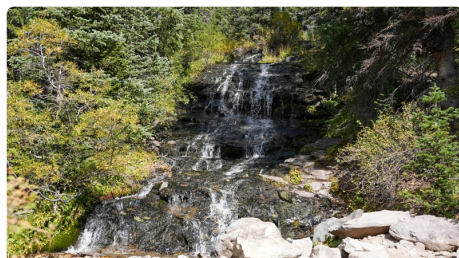
The trail crosses Imogene Creek several times. The water could be moving swiftly. However, the bottom is hard-packed gravel, and the water is shallow enough for a stock high clearance vehicle to pass with ease.

18. Water Crossing/Richmond Basin (9.75 mi)



Vehicles can cross Imogene Creek again by either a small bridge or water crossing. After the creek, the Richmond Basin trail intersects here, heading south and offering a few dispersed campsites not far from the bridge. Continue north to finish Imogene Pass.

19. Waterfalls (10.04 mi)



The trail crosses Imogene Creek one last time with waterfalls on both sides of the trail. A short spur road to the north leads to a larger waterfall that is visible from the main road.

20. Trail Split (10.79 mi)



Stay left at this y-intersection. The trail to the right leads down Camp Bird Road and through the Camp Bird Mine.

21. Old Cabin/Mine Tailings (11.24 mi)



Pass by an old mining cabin and a blocked-off mine shaft.

22. Water Crossing (11.63 mi)



The trail briefly travels through a long stretch of creek. This creek crossing has a solid bottom lined with small stones.

23. Silver Basin/Water Crossing (12 mi)



The trail crosses Sneffles Creek either by bridge or by fording the creek. The crossing here can be 1 to 2 feet deep and has a solid bottom. The trail heading north just before the crossing leads down Silver Basin.

24. Northern Trailhead (12.05 mi)



The trail intersects with Ouray County Road 26. A left heading west will take you up Yankee Boy Basin. A right heading downhill to the east will lead to Camp Bird Road and the town of Ouray after 6 miles.

✓ Dispersed

Along the trail, there are very limited dispersed camping options on both sides of Imogene Pass. On the Ouray side of the pass, free dispersed camping is available near the intersection of Imogene Pass and the trail into Richmond Basin.

Trailhead Coordinates

[37.940068,-107.811654](#)

Starting Point

Telluride, CO