

# Away with the Wind & Sun

Beaver Creek has it all when it comes to mountain biking

The beauty of a mountain bike lies in its ability to reach into the backcountry, away from the persistent threats of paved places and the cacophony of the modern world. It takes you to spots where the only sounds are birds above and the rustle of chipmunks skittering away in the underbrush — or maybe that of a deer whose leaf-nibbling you've interrupted. A mountain bike's beauty also lies in that you select the intensity of your experience — a serene glide down a mountain road, or a shock-bashing, brake-squealing singletrack — and Beaver Creek Mountain is unique in this region for its ability to offer both.

## THREE WAYS UP

There are three ways to ascend Beaver Creek Mountain. If you're looking to make your lungs expand, ride up one of the service roads such as "Cinch" or "Dally," "Piece o' Cake" at Arrowhead, or the "Village to Village" connector at Bachelor Gulch. They're steady climbs beginning from 7,400 to 8,100 feet, and not for the faint of heart. For the

adventurous and experienced, "Stack It" and "Lost Buck" at Beaver Creek and lower "Village to Village" and Arrowhead Mountain trails at Arrowhead are notable singletracks, which will raise your heart rate to its upper limits and bring a smile to those seeking narrow places. But Beaver Creek's motto is "Not exactly roughing it," so of course there's also a way to avoid all this sweat: the Centennial Express Lift, which will briskly deliver you and your bike to mid-mountain's Spruce Saddle.

## NICE & EASY

From Spruce Saddle, "Cinch" and "Dally" offer placid rolls down the mountain while serving up stunning views. Though never steep, novice cyclists will want to be comfortable with how to use their brakes and gears before starting the long descent. If you're looking to get onto an easy trail, take "Dally" to Red Tail Camp, then get on the "Village to Village" trail.

"We offer something not found anywhere else in the West," says Mike Kloser, Activities Directory for Beaver Creek. "The 'Village to Village'

trail travels from Beaver Creek to Arrowhead on more or less of a 5 percent gradient, and this opens the door for a lot of levels of riders."

## FOR THE ADVENTUROUS

One look at a summer trail map will set adventurous spirits soaring. The map runs true to trail difficulty, so intermediate riders should be sure to stick to the trails marked intermediate; expert trails at Beaver Creek require expert skills. "Corkscrew" offers a challenging descent from Spruce Saddle. "Stack It" and "Lost Buck" in Strawberry Park are less intense. Study the map, plan your route and have a blast.

Most local riders use Beaver Creek as a springboard for rides that end outside the area's boundaries, incorporating the great on-mountain trails with connectors in the surrounding White River National Forest. Off of "Cinch," a favorite is "Polly's Plunge," which challenges even technically astute riders and finishes in Eagle-Vail. Another local favorite incorporates the "Village to Village" to Arrowhead, then follows the Arrowhead Mountain trail to the "A10" trail ending in Edwards. This, too, requires expert skills.

## HELP & GEAR

There's nothing like following a competent guide or instructor. Guide services are available through the Beaver Creek Hiking Center, Beaver Creek Sports and Freewheel Cyclery. With advance notice, the BC Hiking Center can even guide guests out of bounds.

If you're looking for instruction, the BC Hiking Center offers that as well. Another option is Vail

Mountain Bike Camps, which provides private instruction at Beaver Creek.

Freewheel Cyclery, located across the street from the Vilar Center, is the only full-service bike shop in Beaver Creek, so if you've brought your own bike and it needs TLC, or if you need to rent, they can assist you. Rentals are also available through Beaver Creek Sports.

— H. E. SAPPENFIELD

## GOOD TO KNOW

**GET FAMILIAR** with the gears, when to be in what gear and how to shift. You will have three chain rings up front that you will use your left hand to shift and gears in the back that you will use your right hand to shift. For riding on the flats to start, get in your middle ring or number two with your left hand and then use your right hand to shift into harder or easier gears.

**BECOMING FAMILIAR** with your brakes (knowing which is the front and back) is very important. Squeezing both brakes gently and evenly is the best way to start using them. Squeezing both brakes gently, letting up, then squeezing gently, and letting up is called "feathering" and is a common technique.

**WHEN RIDING** on the dirt either uphill or downhill, train your eyes to scan ahead of your front tire — from 5-10 feet out.

**RIDING DOWNHILL** on the dirt, stand up on your bike and hold your pedals level, bend your knees and elbows so you can absorb bumps, put two fingers on your brake levers, shift your weight back slightly behind the seat, and scan your eyes ahead. This is called the "descending position."

