

Proposed Jack Voss Trail – DGNP # 9130

The proposed Jack Voss Trail (J.V.T.) covers two segments that connect at Cody Lake and BSA Camp Cody: (a) the original section, used from 1937 through 1969, and (b) the “high trail,” built in 1969 and still in present use by the Scouts when in camp. The Scouts and the public continue to trek sections of the entire trail depending on their ultimate destinations.

Original section. The original J.V.T. begins at about 5,600’ elevation at the Sciots Tract homeowners association’s clubhouse, a portion of which had been the Sciots Camp store. The 1937 trail used by Jack Voss and the other “Big Brawny Bruisers” to carry supplies and gear to Camp Cody started here. The trail follows the Sciots Tract road (“Masonic Boulevard”), generally southeast, to the road’s end, paralleling Strawberry Creek. It fords Cody Creek and reaches U.S. Forest Service road 10N26 at the Blamey family’s cabin just west of where Cody Creek flows into Strawberry Creek. The trail goes briefly east (the “Blamey cut-off”), paralleling road 10N26, until it picks up the less maintained road 11N22 at the fork located at about 5,800’ elevation and then continues up the east side of Cody Creek on 11N36. Through the 1940s, Otto Link lashed supplies to his Indian motorcycle and ferried the heavier loads up this trail to the next Cody Creek crossing. Scouts shifted the supplies onto their pack frames and finished the hike into Camp Cody. Just above the 6,400’ contour, the road becomes the “jeep track,” shown as the dashed line in the southeastern corner of Section 30. In 1949, Troop One dads and older Scouts created this jeep track by widening the hiking trail with hand tools. The jeep track fords Cody Creek at about 6,500’ and then leaves Cody Creek to continue up the east side of the Cody Lake’s outlet creek to a wider location at about 7,000’ in the northeast corner of Section 1. This spot is the “jeep base” which the 1949 volunteers made big enough for a driver to turn the borrowed jeep around and head back down to Sciots for another load. From the jeep base, the hiking trail leaves the Lake’s outlet creek and climbs south-southwest up the ridge that’s roughly parallel to the approximate shared boundary of Section 6 and Section 1. In this general area Camp Cody set up its first shooting range in 1949. The trail drops down to the southeast corner of Cody Lake to the lakeshore elevation of approximately 7,250’, entering BSA Camp Cody near Link Lodge. Built in 1967, Link Lodge replaced the Back Packer’s Pack Back Lodge that Troop One dads built in the late 1930s. Each summer until 1969, at this spot Scouts built a gateway from poles and lashings, posting signs that welcomed visitors to Camp Cody.

High trail section. Going through Camp, the J.V.T. passes Link Lodge, crosses a bridge over a (usually) dry creek, and then passes Silvius Lodge, Hetherington Lodge, and the dining

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area. Leaving Camp Cody, the J.V.T. follows the “high trail” route pioneered in 1969 by Bill Voss, Jack’s middle son. As it leaves the Camp, the hiking path traces Cody Lake’s southwestern shore, passes a spring, climbs steeply through granite boulders on improved steps, and reaches the promontory that looks east and down into the Lake’s glacial bowl. At this point each summer older Scouts erect a lashed pole gateway welcoming visitors to Camp Cody. From the promontory, the improved trail continues uphill through timber to a roughly graded parking lot at the end of road 10N26B. This route is the dashed line in the center of Section 1. It is from this parking lot at approximately 7,380’ that Scouts presently pack their gear and camp supplies back downhill to Camp Cody. To remember Jack Voss after he died, an adult volunteer made marker posts inscribed “JVT” which the older Scouts place along the trail from the parking lot down to the lakeshore. The J.V.T. “high trail” section continues west from the parking lot along the rutted, narrow dirt road (10N26B), crosses over an unnamed intermittent creek (Cody Creek’s western fork) near the center of Section 1 and turns north (right) onto road 10N26 to reach to a large, conspicuous flat area with summer grasses, sagebrush, and few trees. The gray, powdery soil appears to be volcanic. From this dusty “helicopter flat,” heavy loads have been airlifted into Camp Cody at least three times. The first helicopter lift in 1969 required Bill Voss to find and build the “high trail” extension of the J.V.T. The J.V.T. ends at the helicopter flat at approximately 7,250’ where road 10N26 takes the westerly (left) bend and becomes partially paved.

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NOTE: The US Forest Service road numbers from the El Dorado National Forest map found at https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5357479.pdf

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