

Fulford Caving Adventure

Troop 188 will be hosting a caving adventure for scouts 14 years of age and older to Fulford Cave located approximately 30 miles south of Eagle, Colorado. We will be leaving the Linton Elementary parking lot at 7:00 AM Saturday April 23 and driving for approximately 3.5 hours to a campground near the cave. As we are going through Eagle we will stop to buy a quick lunch. After checking into the campground we will proceed to the cave for a 4 - 5 hour caving adventure. We will be accompanied during the entire trip by an experienced caver who is familiar with Fulford cave. After exiting the cave we will stay overnight at the campground. Dinner after the cave and breakfast the next morning will be provided by Mr. Keen. We will break camp around 9 AM on Sunday and start the drive back to Fort Collins. We will stop for lunch on the way home and should be back in Fort Collins around 2:00 PM. The cost of this trip will be \$35 per boy to help pay for gas, campground fees, helmet rental and food for Saturday night and Sunday morning. Money is due when we leave the parking lot. Scouts should also bring extra money to pay for their own lunches Saturday and Sunday.

Due to limited space in the vehicles, scouts should pack light as though this was a backpacking trip and bring only what they need for the caving adventure and a camping night in the mountains at 9500 feet. We will not be taking any patrol boxes so each scout should bring their own plate, utensils and cup.

Each scout should read the attached material so they can anticipate what to expect while in the cave and be prepared with the appropriate gear. We will have a caving demo with our guide, Thursday April 14 starting at 6:45 to 7:30 at Harmony Presbyterian Church to discuss what to bring while in the cave. All scouts planning to attend the caving adventure are required to attend the demo.

Permission Slip

As the parent or legal guardian of _____, I hereby give my permission for him to participate in the Fulford Caving Adventure April 23rd and 24th.

I give permission to the leaders of the above unit to render First Aid, should the need arise. In the event of an emergency, I also give my permission to the attending adults to seek emergency medical treatment, as needed. I further agree to hold the above named unit and its leaders blameless for any accidents that might occur during this outing except for clear acts of negligence.

In case of emergency, I can be reached by phone at _____.

Insurance Carrier: _____

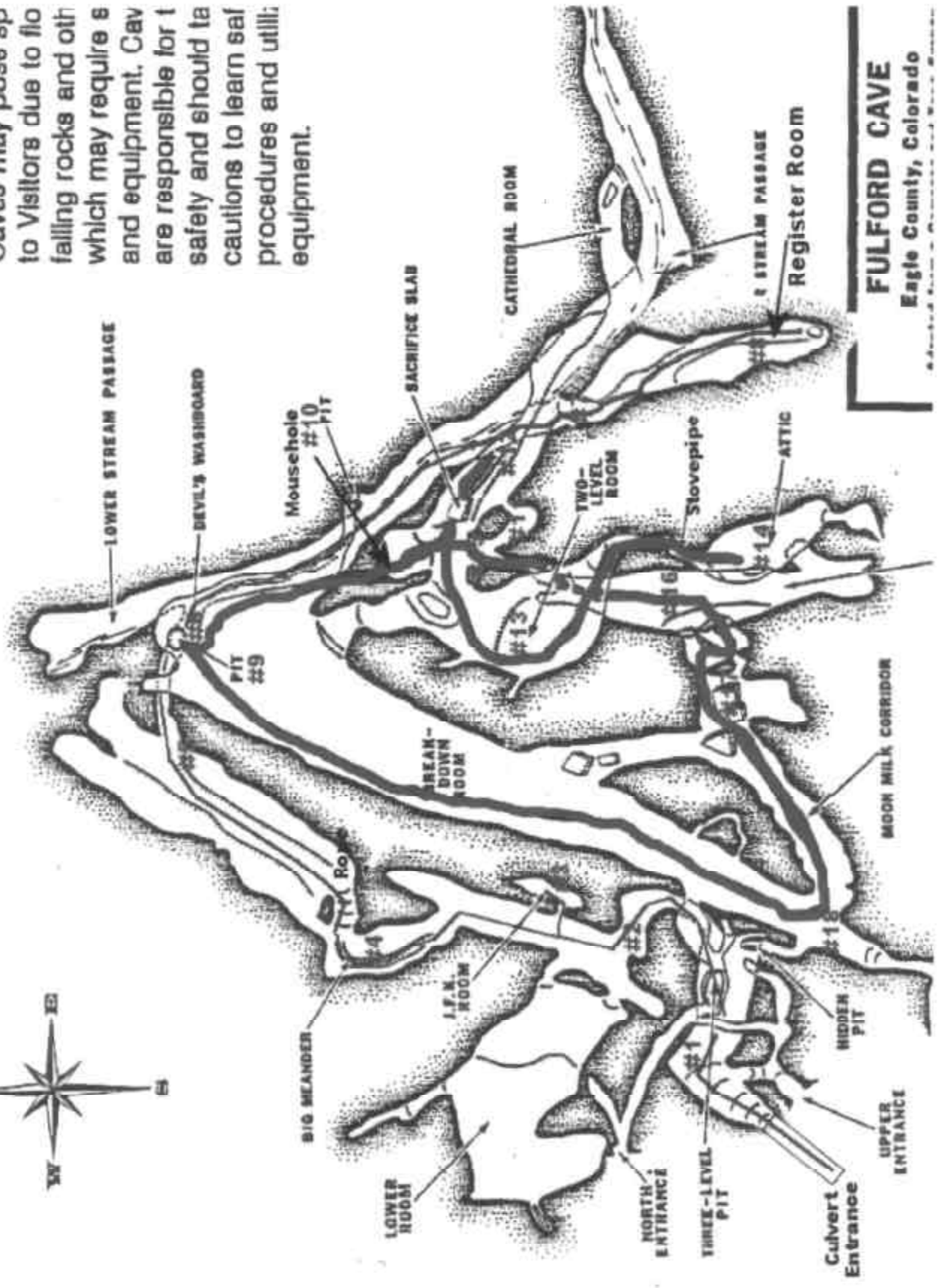
Policy Number: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Parent or Guardian)

As a boy scout with Troop 188, I agree to conduct myself in a manner consistent with scouting principals and agree to abide by the scout oath and law while on this outing.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

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FULFORD CAVE
 Eagle County, Colorado

Margaret's Guide to Fulford Cave

www.coloradocaving.com

Fulford Cave, southeast of Eagle, Colorado, is a popular destination for many cavers and spelunkers alike. It is not a very difficult cave, but does create challenges and common sense is advised when exploring the cave.



The trailhead starts from the Fulford Cave campground in the White River National Forest and the cave is marked on most recreational maps.

After a beautiful 3/4 mile hike (it seems like much longer than that) from the parking lot, you arrive at the entrance(s) to Fulford Cave. The most obvious is a large culvert, with cover, that has been broken and replaced too many times to count. Just above and to the right is the main (natural entrance) of Fulford. This ends in a nasty pit and free climbing should not be attempted. It is for experienced cavers, with vertical equipment.

A third entrance, called the North Entrance, is located to the left of the culvert in a rock ledge above the culvert (again, to the left). It starts as a "hole" in the rock (the entrance is down, not on the side of the rock). You drop in and go right to get to the three-level pit (be careful, because it's a long way down) or you drop in and take an immediate left to go down a short passage that ends in fill.

We always take the culvert entrance (the most popular and the safest) (pictured, right).

The cave is about 40 degrees, though it feels much colder once you have sat in a pool of water or two, so you'll want to dress accordingly. Shorts and t-shirts are not recommended, even though it may be hot day and the breeze up the culvert feels inviting. It is very easy to quickly become cold, and then hypothermic, in the wet, cold cave environment. Play it safe and dress for 40 degrees. You'll be glad you did, when you've been in the cave awhile and feel the chill, or the freezing rock underneath you.



Before entering the cave, make sure you are properly equipped for the trip. One of the most important things you'll need is some sort of head protection, a.k.a. like a helmet. A bicycle helmet will work and many people wear these with flashlights duct taped to them. Never try entering the cave without a helmet. You'll bump your head many times and not wearing a helmet is dangerous, and it hurts! You could get a serious injury deep in the cave with out a helmet. Tennis shoes are not recommended as all of the rocks in Fulford are wet and slippery, as I have found out many times. Wear hiking boots and you'll have a much safer trip.

In addition to proper clothing, you'll need additional sources of light for each person (3 sources each, recommended) a canteen, some snacks (like granola bars or candy bars, Snickers bars are my favorite) and, if you think you're going to need to "use the bathroom," you should bring a "pee bottle." You should never use the cave as a bathroom. It is a real no-no. This cave is for people to enjoy and they shouldn't have to worry about crawling around in a sewer. Please be considerate. Kill nothing but time,

take nothing but pictures, and leave nothing but footprints, and some cavers insist on even erasing those too. Consider the cave the same as you would a wilderness area, because it really is.

The culvert, about 2 feet in diameter, has a ladder welded inside to help you move down into the cave. At the last rung, you put your knees just below the last rung and step into the cave. It's about 1 1/2 feet from the bottom of the culvert to the ground. You have to duck under a large rock that is right over your head and then you can slide down the slippery slope or use the rope provided that is attached to the ladder to help you get down into the first room (#1). It's a good idea to let your eyes get adjusted to the darkness here before starting out on an exploration trip. We turn off our lights for about 5 minutes to help them adjust. When you turn your lights back on, you'll notice you can see much better.

Moving into the cave, you notice the walls turn white with moon-milk, when it is forming feels like cottage cheese but has hardened by now. To get an idea of what the cave originally looked like before the walls became discolored from human traffic, look up to the ceiling and, in some places, you can see the untouched moon-milk.

Continued down the corridor, you have to jog down and go over a very smooth rock, so smooth it has a lead color to it because of the amount of people going over it. (#2) Notice another pointy-shaped rock just below it on your right and look at it from the other direction (as you would see it coming out) so you can remember that this pointy rock marks the place you have to make a left (going out).

When you are coming back down the passage (going out) after the pointed rock, you will need to turn left when the section straight ahead looks like the correct way.

Going into the next room, you may pass an ice formation (depends on the weather and time of year). Directly up the slope from this, hidden in the wall behind a large rock, is the small entrance to the J.F.K. room. (#3) You can spot it by looking for a pointy rock that somewhat covers the entrance. Inside of the J.F.K. room you can spot some more moon-milk and nice stalactites (hang TIGHT to the ceiling) and the stalagmites (you MIGHT trip over them). As you come out the hole, look behind you to find a passage way leading to beautiful formations. Once you hit the end of that passage, turn back and carefully slide down the slope to the main corridor.

Continue moving down the corridor and, at one point, you have to step down into a corridor-like section which is called "The Big Meander" (#4) and be careful because on top of the passage you need to go down looks like the correct way and can easily fool you.

Coming out of The Big Meander, you find yourself at the bottom of a steep section with a rope hanging down. You can either go up the rope or continue just a little farther in at the bottom (it squeezes down a little) and then you may see some survey tape with an arrow (arrows in caves should always point the way "Out" not "In"). You can walk up the slope at an angle here and find yourself at the area where the people coming up the rope eventually end up. On the rope if you search the slippery slope you can see a crevice that is handy to use as a foothold, the slimy rope is very old, so do not depend on it too much.

Next, turn left and continue along a sort of ledge to the end of this room (#5), the angle of the room is such at the end that you have to lean over (diagonally) and "walk" with your hands a short distance until you come to a neat little passageway that winds

around and up, the passageway has a sort of dome feeling and you need to hunch over or crawl through it. You go up to the top of this passageway, a nice easy climb, until you come to a large rock, which is a convenient place to sit. If you are quiet (and on the right rock) you can hear the stream from the passageway that drops down the other side of the rock. Remember this rock because you stand on it and go up to get into the Breakdown Room later. This passage that you go up and down has the terrain of an "A" shape.

You go over the big rock and down (stay to the right to avoid the drop) and you come out on something called "The Devil's Washboard." (#6) You are now in the stream passage and can clearly hear the stream. If you want to see where it disappears, go down the slope, very carefully (it's smooth) from the Devil's Washboard and find where the stream disappears underneath the wall. Before you get to the stream, there is a large rock in your way and you go the right of it to see the fast pace stream. No one knows where the stream goes after it leaves this room. A connection has never been found, but dye tracing (coloring the water) has shown the stream eventually feeds the beaver pond down at the parking lot, so there's a lot of undiscovered cave yet to be found.

Go back to the Devils Washboard and look at the passageway you came out of to get to it. Remember what the Devil's Washboard looks like and that's where you turn on the way out.

Continuing up the stream passage, you drop down off the Devils Washboard and walk uphill, going through a small passageway. You come out almost at the turnoff to the Upper Register Room (#7) (the old Fulford map incorrectly shows this much farther upstream than it really is, so don't be fooled). It will be on your right and you'll see a tiered rock wall that you'll have to climb to get to the Register Room. The climb is in two sections. The first is easy and the second is a little harder (stay to the left for the easiest climb). Do this very carefully because it is easy to slip and fall. Adults should stay below younger explorers to catch them in case they slip.

Once you are in the Upper Register Room (#8) you'll notice the ceiling is really high. If you image this as a waterfall, you follow the path of the "water" upstream for quite a ways until you come to some very nice "curtains" and flowstone on your right in what is called the Upper Register Room (pictured, right). You can go up quite a ways in this section. At the very end, and down to the left) is a little room called "Pete's Plunge." It's where a caver fell while free climbing in 1986 and it took almost a full day to get him safely out of the cave.



Retrace your steps back to the stream and then downstream to the Devil's Washboard and then remember that left turn on the washboard that leads into the passageway that goes up to the big rock. From here, we usually take first-timers out of the cave for lunch and then come back in for the harder part of the cave, but if you feel up to another 2 or 3 hours of caving, you can stand on the rock and climb up into the breakdown (large rocks) and to your right. At some point, if you are talking, you will hear your voice echo and you'll know you have popped into the Breakdown Room. The place where you climb up into the Breakdown Room is labeled "pit" (#9) on the old Fulford Map.

The pit is against a wall, which is one end of the Breakdown Room. If you keep your eyes along the wall and look uphill, you'll see the direction you need to go in order to go up and pop out in the Two-Level Room. Staying as close to the wall as you can and moving uphill, you go up a short of obvious passageway. Keep your eye out for a big rock above you and on your right. If you go too far, you end up ducking into a small chamber and will need to backtrack a few feet to see a big rock up and on your right (as you come up). At this point you should be below the rock. You move away from the wall and beneath the rock and end up at the base of the rock. There are three ways to go here: look under the rock and you'll see one way (this is best for kids). Tall people can go over and just to the right of the rock. The more adventurous can go around the rock to the left, carefully holding on to the top of the rock. This is what I've been told is called the "Hug Me" rock by other cavers. It's a little tricky to go around to the left and hard to go over to the right, unless you are tall, so I always go under.

You continue up this passageway (just keep going uphill) until you come to a rather imposing obstacle where the passageway continues up and to the left but, you have to climb up a little and it's difficult to do the first time. Kids will need a "knee" to stand on to continue on. The easiest way for adults is not trying to chimney face in but to turn around and have your back to the part you have to climb. You lift yourself into a corner of the climb (your left, as you face out) and then shift your bottom over onto the rock that sticking out (on your right, as you face out). Once you are straddling this rock, you and easily lift yourself up into the passageway. This is the second-most difficult pitch to climb I've found in the cave.

Just a few feet farther and you come to the "Mouschole." (#10) This is where you can stand up and have your head and shoulders sticking out into the Two Level Room. Have someone with a camera take pictures of people as they pop their head out of the Mouse Hole.

Once you are out of the Mousehole, you will find yourself in the Two Level Room, so named because it has two levels. You are now in the lower level. Look down and to your left as you come out of the Mouse Hole and you'll see a large, flat boulder with a couple of small nobbs on it. That's called "Sacrifice Slab." Before you get carried away, look behind you and see what the mouse hole looks like if you have to go out that way. Now, carefully walk down into the room and find the small column that is growing in a small alcove. It would be down and to the right of the mouse hole by about 50 feet. The column is about a foot tall and joins the ceiling and the floor. This is the way out, so remember that column.



Just to the left of the column is the passageway that goes to the start of the climb to the Cathedral Room. (#11) You should not attempt the climb to the Cathedral Room unless you are a very good climber and know what you are doing. At one point, if you slipped, you could slide off a ledge and not stop until you hit the floor of the Two-Level Room, quite a ways below.

If you go back to Sacrifice Slab, you will see you can crawl under it, drop down and continue on a passage that ends up in an overlook (#12)... about 100 feet above the Upper Register Room.

From the Two-Level Room, going to the right when you leave the Mousehole you can climb up and go through a rather large hole and find yourself in the upper section of

the two level room (#13). Follow the slope of that room up and up some more and you end up at the Stovepipe, which leads into The Attic (rope or webbing required to safely enter the Attic).

If you do go into the Attic (#14), you'll notice a hole with webbing in the room. That leads to a small passageway you follow to get into the Stalagmite Room.

After you've seen what you want to see in the Two-Level Room, find the column again and start the crawl down the passageway. (#15) Just before the end of the passageway (it goes into a small, tight opening) look up and you'll see a much larger passageway that allows you to almost walk into the Stalagmite Room. (#16)

The Stalagmite Room is so named because it contains the cave's largest stalagmite. Look downslope in this room and you'll find some large holes. This is where you drop down into a passageway that you follow through breakdown and you come out in another room (unnamed). (#17) Look for a very large boulder directly in front of you as you come out of the passageway and you'll see that if you stay on the right side of the boulder you have a sort of path that drops down and down some more and you find yourself in Moonmilk Corridor.

Following Moonmilk Corridor until it empties into another room and you are at the other end of the Breakdown Room where you came up the pit. Turning to your right as you come out of Moonmilk Corridor to Breakdown Room (#18), you stay at a right angle to the downhill pitch of the ceiling (meaning don't go up or down in this room, but across it). As you continue, it will look almost like the room ends because the ceiling gets about 2 feet above you, but continue the way you are going and you'll see the floor drop away and you'll be back in a big room (actually the same room all along). Continue at the right angle as far as you can go and you'll come a wall. It is at the bottom of this wall that you will find the pit you came out of to get to the Breakdown Room. Drop into this pit and look for a hole where you can see that large rock that you stood on to enter the bottom of the pit.

From there, you can hear the stream again. Go away from the sound of the stream, down and around and make retrace your steps out of the cave.

I hope you've enjoyed my virtual tour of Fulford Cave. It is a fun cave, if you take precautions, wear the proper clothing, have three sources of light and use a map. Here is a link to the Fulford map that the U.S. Forest Service sometimes leaves at the trailhead and I've added the routes and numbers referenced on this page. You can also watch a short slideshow of my explorations of Fullford Cave. Please remember to take care of the cave. If you don't, it won't be around for the next generations to enjoy. If you find you enjoy caving, consider joining the local chapter of the National Speleological Society (called a "Grotto"). Go to www.caves.org for more information.

Email Margaret NSS #52522: margaret@coloradocaving.com

Visit my main Web site at: www.coloradocaving.com

TOPOI map printed on 04/09/05 from "Untitled.tpo"

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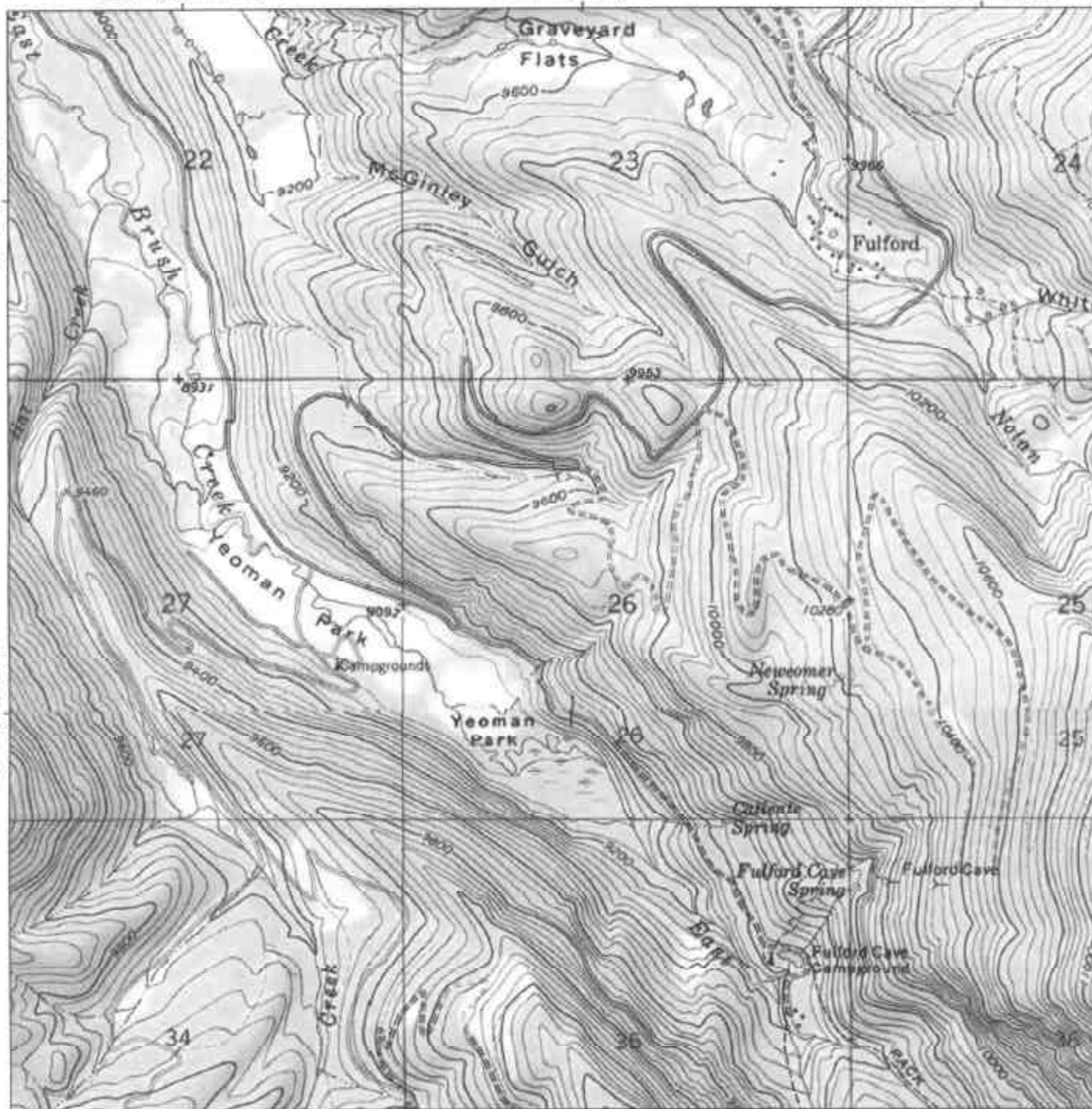
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