

**"Dreamweaver" - Mount Meeker (13,911 feet) - Technical Alpine Climb**  
by Dave Cooper



*Dreamweaver - the climb follows the narrow ribbon of snow and ice for 1000 feet*

One of the finest moderate alpine routes in Rocky Mountain National Park, "Dreamweaver" offers the aspiring alpinist a chance to test his or her mettle.

Depending on conditions, it may be a simple steep snow climb, a nice mixed route (snow, ice and rock), or, on occasion in the Autumn, reportedly a fine sustained ice climb.

Usually coming into shape sometime in May, conditions continuously change as the snow melts, revealing more rock but also, when nighttime temperatures fall below freezing, creating ice flows. By late spring /early summer much of the snow and ice has melted, leaving more difficult rock climbing in the 5.4 to 5.6 range. On June 1st. of this year we found almost perfect conditions which we rated 5.4, AI3, steep snow (50 degrees). Make sure you get an early start for this one. We left the parking area at 3am, which was about right. The bonus for this early start is often the sunrise views.

**Getting to the Trailhead:** The access road to the Longs Peak Ranger Station is located 6.4 miles north of Allenspark, or approximately 9 miles south of Estes Park, on State Highway 7. Drive a mile west up the access road and park in the large, paved parking lot by the ranger station. Rocky Mountain National Park fees are not collected at this location.

**Hiking and Climbing Statistics:**

4700 feet of elevation gain in 10.1 miles round trip. The climbing portion constitutes approximately 1000 feet of this elevation gain.

**Difficulty:** A long trail approach to a technical mixed snow, ice and rock climb. Conditions vary but we found 5.4, AI3, and steep snow on June 1st. of this year. (For those not familiar with the designation, AI stands for Alpine Ice).

**Technical Gear:** Since conditions vary so widely, it is best to be prepared for anything! The cruxes are usually quite short, so unless you expect to rope up for the entire climb, a 30 meter rope will usually be sufficient. A couple of ice screws and a light alpine rock rack should be sufficient for protection. Don't forget your helmet. Most people will want two ice tools for this route.

**Caution:** A hard freeze is required at night to stabilize the snowpack. Make sure you have the skills to assess snow stability and the climbing ability and conditioning to complete the climb in a timely manner. Get an early start.

Be aware of the potential for rockfall and always wear your helmet.

Remember, climbing is an inherently dangerous activity and you should always climb within your ability after carefully judging the safety of the route. We write about it, you take all the risks.



*Sunrise over the Twin Sisters*



*Sunrise on Mt. Meeker and Long's Peak. The Flying Buttress and Dreamweaver are at the left in this photo*



### **Approach**

From the Longs Peak Trailhead, follow the Longs Peak Trail for 3.1 miles to a saddle (Waypoint "SADDLE") where the Chasm Lake Trail divides from the Longs Peak Trail. The solar outhouse located here makes this a natural spot for a rest stop.

Continue on the trail towards Chasm Lake, crossing a snow slope above Peacock Pool which is often icy in the early morning. Upon reaching the Ranger Hut below Chasm Lake, leave the trail and head south towards the Flying Buttress, a dominant feature on Mt. Meeker's north face. "Dreamweaver" is immediately to the left (east) of the Flying Buttress.

### **Climb Description**

Start up the moderate snowfield and reach the point where the gully narrows to a few feet in width. The first crux may be located in this first narrow section. Continue up on easier ground to a point near the top of the Flying Buttress.

*Climbing the first crux section*

From the relatively flat spot near the top of the Flying Buttress, the gully bears left, but there are several different variations, all easy, which you can use to get into the upper part of the route in about 30 feet.

*Near the top of the Flying Buttress*

There are likely to be two more cruxes in this next section, the lower of these two being the more difficult on our outing.

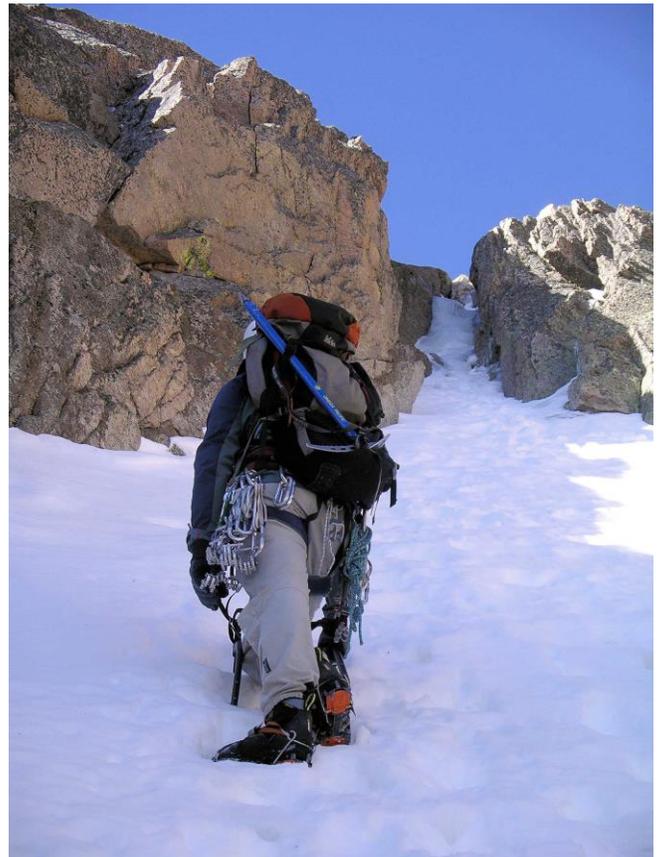


*Surmounting the second crux*

The third and final crux was also the sweetest of the day when we climbed the route - 30 feet of good water ice (WI3).

*Approaching the final crux section of excellent water ice*

Climbing up over this last challenge deposits you on the summit snowfield. From here it is a simple scramble on snow and talus to the summit ridge (Waypoint "JOIN

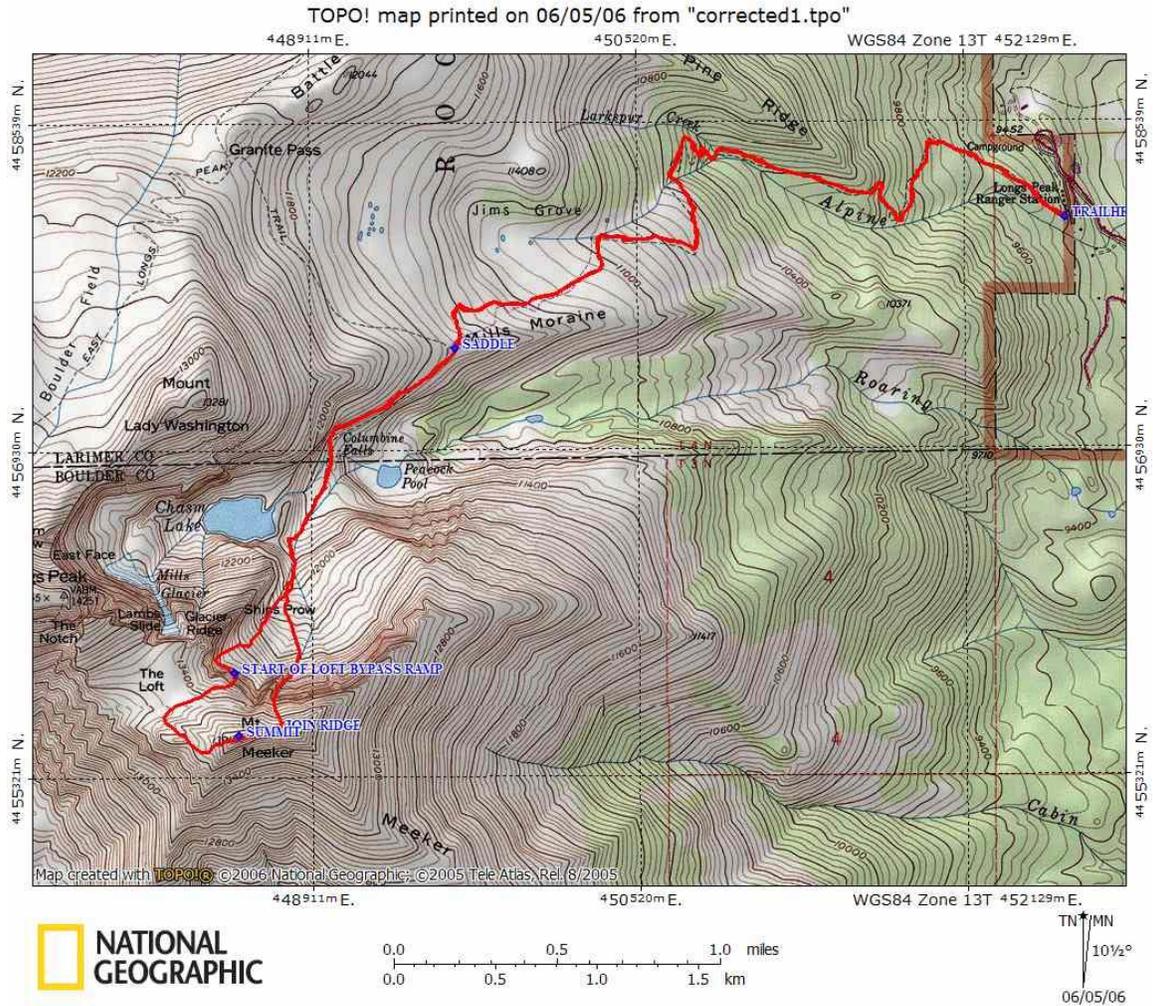


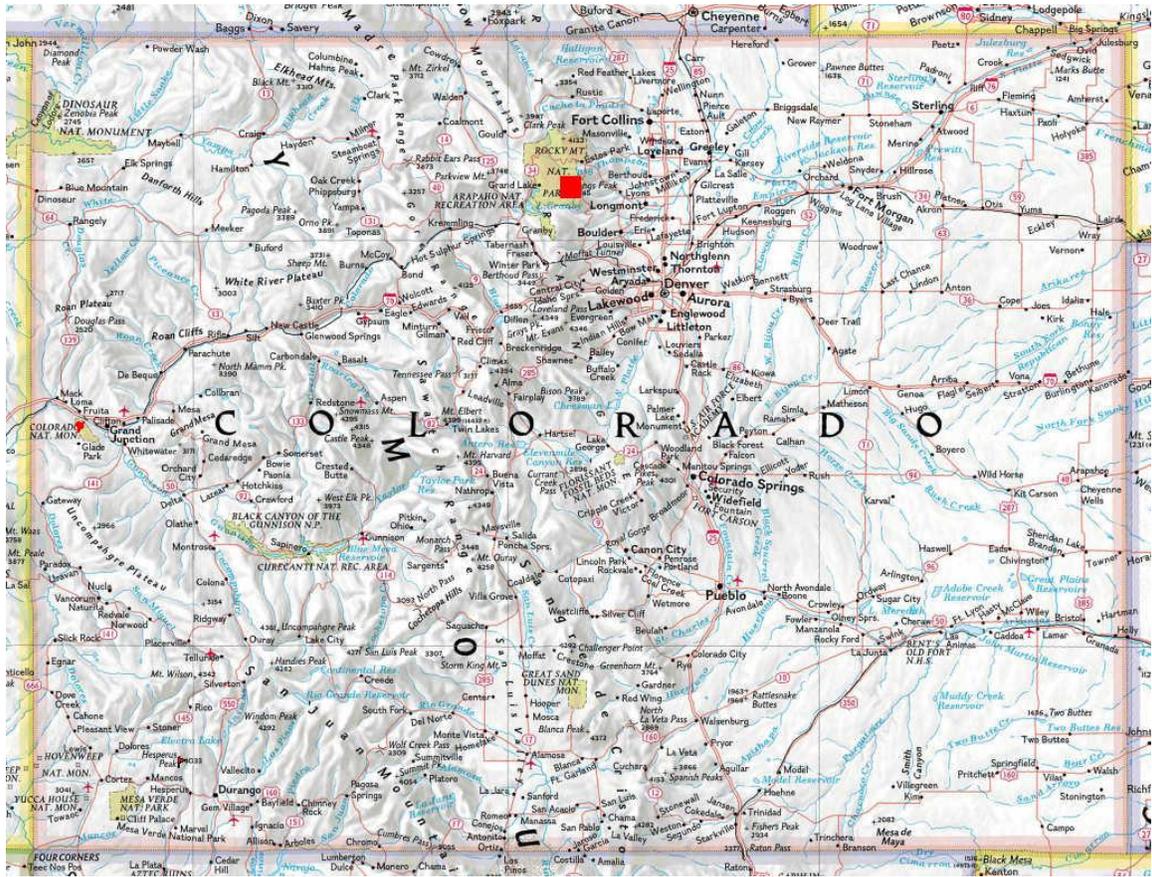
RIDGE"). Turn right and enjoy a short scramble on good rock to Mt. Meeker's tiny summit.

### Descent

To descend, continue west from the Meeker summit and pick up a trail leading down to the Loft, the giant flat area between Meeker and Long's. This trail can be tricky to follow when partially covered by snow, but the general direction is obvious. From the Loft, look for a series of large rock cairns leading down to a ramp on the east margin of the Loft. This route avoids the headwall immediately below the Loft. Carefully take the ramp as it cuts back left and deposits you on the moderate snow slope below the Loft. Be aware that this slope can avalanche. Make sure you're here early enough in the day.

A quick glissade and some talus-hopping gets you back to the Ranger hut and the Chasm Lake Trail. From here, heading back to the car is nothing more than a long trudge on the trail.





GPS Latitude / Longitude NAD83 (Deg., Min., Sec.)  
 TRAILHEAD: 40,16,18N / 105,33,26W, 9403 feet  
 SADDLE: 40,15,57N / 105,35,33W, 11533 feet  
 JOIN RIDGE: 40,14,56N / 105,36,10W, 13790 feet  
 SUMMIT: 40,14,55N / 105,36,18W, 13911 feet  
 ,START OF LOFT BYPASS RAMP: 40,15,5N / 105,36,19W, 12992 feet

