

Eleven Mile Canyon - Rock Climbing

by Dave Cooper



Elevenmile Canyon is a mecca for fishermen and rock climbers alike-small.jpg

Getting to the Trailhead: Drive to the town of Lake George on Highway 24, 19.6 miles west of Woodland Park. Turn south on County Road 96. In 0.9 miles bear right (staying on CR96) at the intersection of County Road 96 and County Road 61. In 0.1 mile stop at the entrance station and pay a \$5 day use fee. (The “America the Beautiful Annual Pass” is not honored at this location). Continue on the narrow, graded road as it winds its way through the canyon. Elevenmile Dome is reached 2.7 miles past the entrance station. There is parking directly below the dome.

Elevenmile Canyon is one of our long-time favorite rock climbing areas. Located, in the heart of the South Platte region, the climbing is primarily on the granite domes characteristic of the area.

The domes offer bolted face climbs as well as trad routes, and with climbs covering the spectrum of difficulty from beginner to advanced it's obvious why the area is so popular.

Even though the canyon is located at an elevation of 8000 feet, the southern aspect of many of the routes means that the climbing season here can extend well into October, with people climbing throughout the winter months on those warm, sunny days. There are many campgrounds in the canyon, though most close during the winter.

Elevenmile Dome provides a good introduction to the area. You'll find both bolted and trad climbs from 5.4 to 5.10b, one to three pitches long. One of the most popular is Moby Grape (5.7), a moderate trad route.

Difficulty: Moby Grape is rated 5.7 on the Yosemite Decimal System.

Approach: 20 feet

Gear: Moby Grape requires a standard rock rack. To rappel from the top of the first pitch you'll need two ropes.

Amenities: Campsites can be reserved at <http://www.recreation.gov/> or by calling 1-877-444-6777. Some of the campground names are Riverside, Springer Gulch, Cove, and Blue Mountain Campground.

Guidebook: We use the excellent, comprehensive guide: "Rock Climbing Colorado", by Stewart M. Green (Falcon Publishing, Inc.).



Moby Grape. The first pitch climbs the right-facing corner-small.jpg

We have found that another trad classic, at the left end of the face, The Overleaf (5.8), is difficult for its grade, but if you're up to it, makes for a good climb. Other rock formations further up the canyon that have good, moderate routes are Arch Rock, Turret Dome and Pine Cone Dome.

The Climb

Moby Grape is climbed in 2 to 3 pitches, the first pitch being the crux. In fact, many parties climb the first pitch and rappel from the fixed anchors below the roof. Note that this requires two ropes.

The first pitch climbs the prominent right-facing corner for about 140 feet to a belay stance below the large roof. To continue on the second pitch, make an awkward move left around a bulge and then diagonal up and left on easy terrain, aiming for the low angled slabs below the summit block. Rope drag may dictate breaking this pitch into two.

Descent

Traverse left (southwest) below the summit block until you reach a gully. Carefully descend the gully back down to the road.



