

Grizzly Peak (13,427 feet) – Winter Mountaineering by Dave Cooper

On a day when avalanche danger makes it unwise to venture onto most of the peaks in the area, consider a climb of Grizzly Peak. Or, head up here if you just want to enjoy a high altitude romp above treeline with outstanding views.

The ridges tend to be blown clear of snow, making the use of snowshoes unnecessary. The main things to watch out for are large cornices that regularly form along the ridge, high winds and

whiteout conditions that can make routefinding difficult. Of course it is still important to exercise caution in any areas that could potentially slide, but avalanche potential on this route is generally low to moderate.

Getting to the Trailhead: Drive to Loveland Pass on Highway 6.

Hike Statistics:

Trailhead to the summit of Grizzly Peak: 2.8 miles (one way). 2900 feet of total elevation gain (750 feet of this is climbed on the descent).

Difficulty: A moderate winter mountaineering outing at high elevation, ice axe recommended.

USGS Quad: Grays Peak, CO



The long, undulating north ridge of Grizzly Peak, with Torreys Peak just showing above skyline

Hike Description

From the parking area at the top of the Pass, head northeast up the broad, gentle ridge to the point where this ridge intersects the main north ridge of Grizzly Peak (Waypoint INTERSECT RIDGE).

It is important to note this point where the ridges connect, since it can be a little confusing on the descent if visibility is low. On a recent outing there was a wand with surveyors tape near this point, but you may want to leave your own flagging (which you should remove on your way down) or use a GPS to record the location.



Starting up the ridge from Loveland Pass. The slopes of Arapaho Basin can be seen in the background



Turn right and follow the ridge with its multitude of ridge points, all of which need to be negotiated on the way back. Look for the large cornices which form along sections of the ridge, making sure to stay away from the edge.

The impressive summit block of the Citadel seen behind the climbers



Going over one of several ridge points. The summit ridge of Grizzly can be seen in the background

Carefully inspecting the "crevasse" formed as the cornice separates from the ridge



The impressive cornices formed along the ridge

After passing the intermediate ridge points, start the last haul up the summit ridge with generally moderate scrambling on rock and snow. The views from the summit are worth the energy expended to get there.

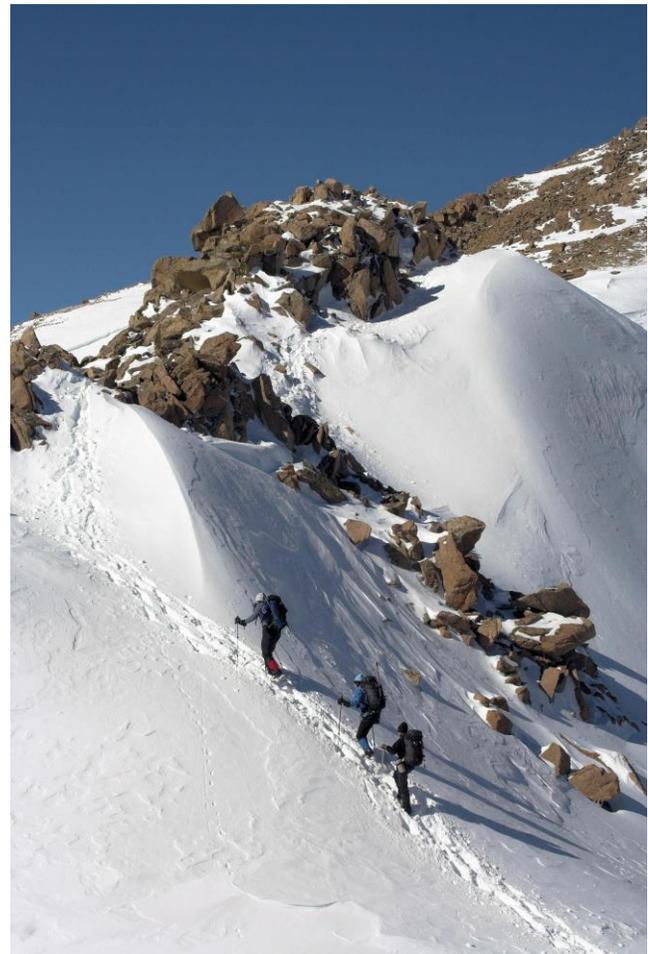


Heading up the summit ridge

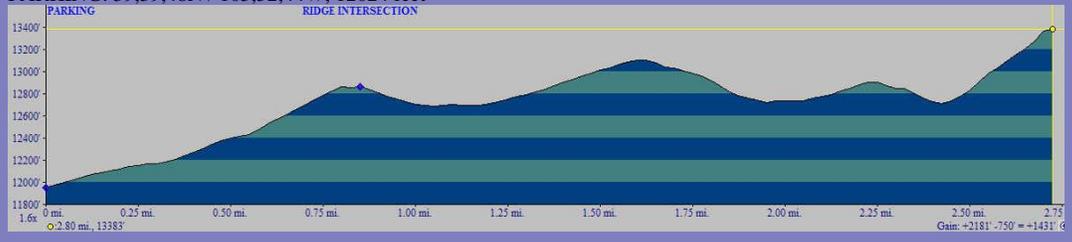
If the wind isn't too strong, the summit makes a great lunch spot. Look over towards Grays and Torreys peaks, which can provide an extended trip for strong climbers (this needs a second vehicle at the Stevens Gulch trailhead, off I-70). You will also be able to watch skiers on the nearby slopes of Arapaho Basin Ski Area.

OK, so you've had a good lunch and are ready to quickly head down to your car. Not so fast! Now those gentle bumps in the ridge that you crossed on the way up look like huge obstacles to be re-climbed on the way down. By the time you have retraced your steps to the ridge intersection you will definitely feel that you've had a workout.

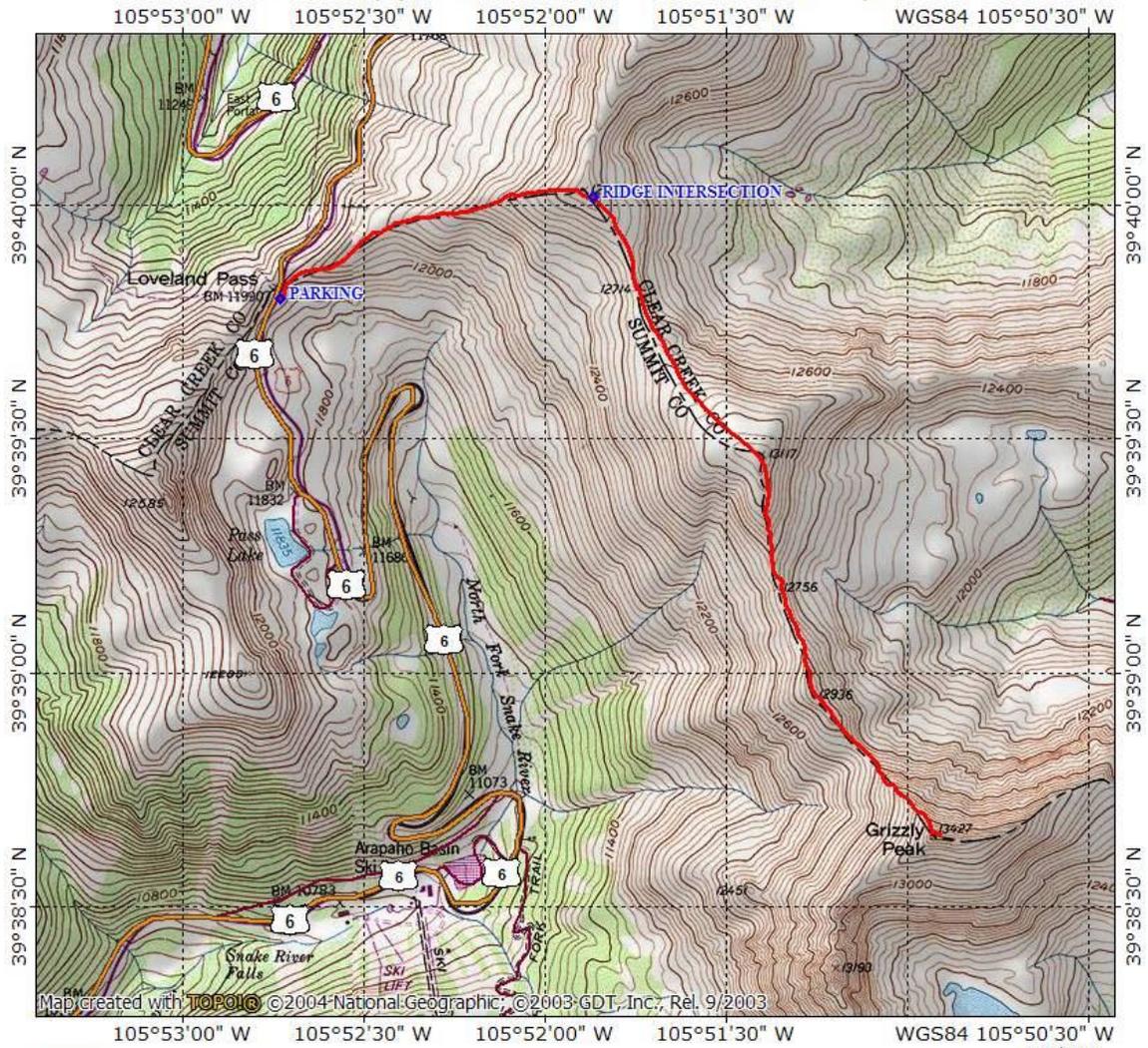
Heading back over one of the many ridge points to be re-climbed



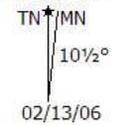
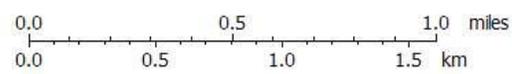
GPS Latitude / Longitude NAD83 (Deg., Min., Sec.)
 RIDGE INTERSECTION: 39,40.1N / 105,51,52W, 12936 feet
 PARKING: 39,39,48N / 105,52,44W, 12024 feet

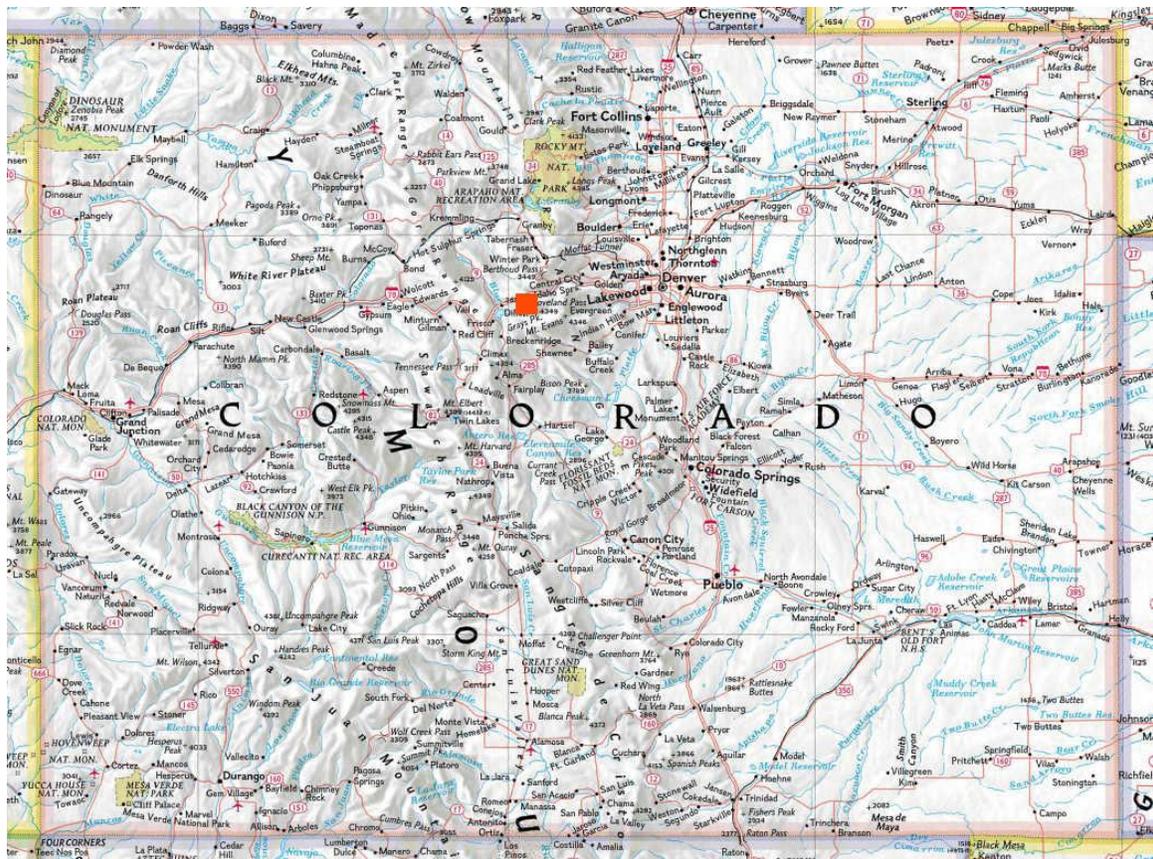


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Colorado Locator Map