

## Jurassic Park - rock climbing by Dave Cooper



*Chris Ruppert of Denver on the fun 5.6 route, Coloradoddity, with a storm over Longs Peak-small.jpg*

I confess, I'm a guidebook junkie. I have bookshelves overflowing with guidebooks from all over - Alaska, Canada, South America, Europe and of course Colorado and other states in the Continental US. But when friends mentioned a rock climbing area near Estes Park, I discovered that none of these bookshelves contained descriptions of Jurassic Park.

In a sign of the times, I visited an on-line climbing site, mountainproject.com, to see what information I could discover, and found a plethora of information. Armed with this information, we headed up to this area of Rocky Mountain National Park to check out the climbing.

Sites like mountainproject are quickly becoming the place where new route information first appears, and provide a valuable source of information. I still like guidebooks for their consistency in describing routes and for the reliability of the information (I find guidebook authors in general to be more conscientious in providing details), but the internet is certainly filling an important role these days.

**Getting to the Trailhead:** The parking area at Lily Lake is located on the west side of Highway 7, 6.8 miles south of the intersection of Highways 34 and 36 in Estes Park. This is 2.6 miles north of the Longs Peak turnoff on Highway 7. **GPS coordinates for trailhead (NAD83):** 40° 18' 24" N, 105° 32' 16" W, 8,960 feet.

**Hiking and Climbing Statistics:** The approach gains a little less than 600 feet in 0.7 miles.

**Difficulty:** Mainly single pitch sport climbs ranging in difficulty from 5.2 to 5.12.

**Technical Gear:** At least a sixty meter rope was needed for many of the routes we climbed. A set of quickdraws, supplemented with a 0.75 Camalot for the route T-Rect. All of the routes we climbed were equipped with at least a two-bolt lowering anchor.



Jurassic Park is located just south of Estes Park, above Lily Lake on the flanks of Lily Mountain. A relatively small area, most of the climbing here is on bolt-protected sport routes. The rock is excellent granite.

*The rock climbs of Jurassic Park are located on these crags, a short distance above Lily Lake - small.jpg*

At an elevation of 9500 feet, Jurassic Park is a good destination for days when the Front Range is just too hot, but expect plenty of company at this popular area on those days. Climbs range in difficulty from 5.2 (just one as far as I know) to 5.12, with a fair scattering of moderate climbs in the 5.6 to 5.9 range (climbs we were interested in, after an extended climbing hiatus).

## **Approach**

From the parking area, follow the flat trail around the north side of Lily Lake for 0.3 mile until you reach an unsigned trail junction. Take the right-hand fork and follow the climbers' trail as it heads uphill, initially gently and then more steeply, gaining about 560 feet to the main climbing area. At this point there are 3 main formations on your left and one, "The Fin" to your right.

## **The Climbs**

The first formation on the left is called, appropriately, Left Hand Rock. We climbed two routes on the slab at the right side of this rock, immediately to the right of an unknown 5.2 bolted route. The left-hand climb is T-Rect (5.7+), an enjoyable mixed route. I placed the equivalent of a 0.75 Camalot in the horizontal crack between the second and third bolts (my trad rack consists of an eclectic mix of gear from several different manufacturers, which drives some of my climbing partners crazy). The climb to the right of "T-Rect, Triceratops (5.8- PG13) we found to be a little more challenging. Other climbers we talked to variously described this route as anywhere from 5.7 to 5.9. I felt that it was a solid 5.8.

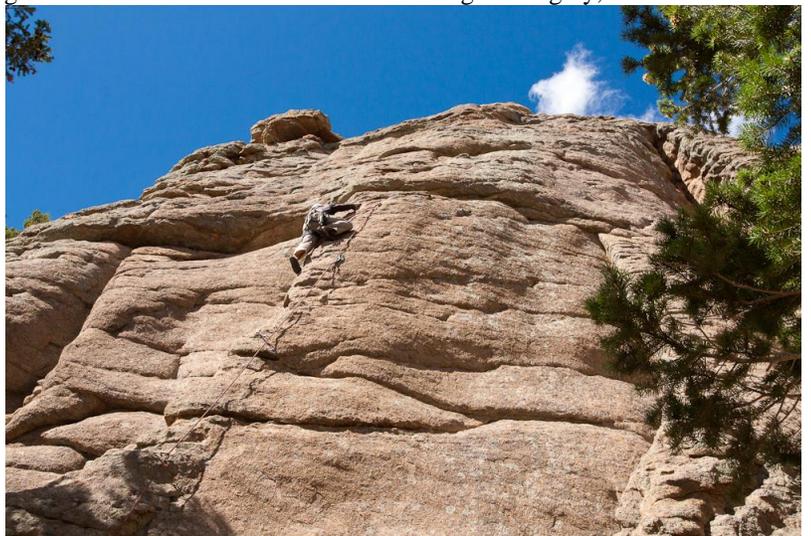
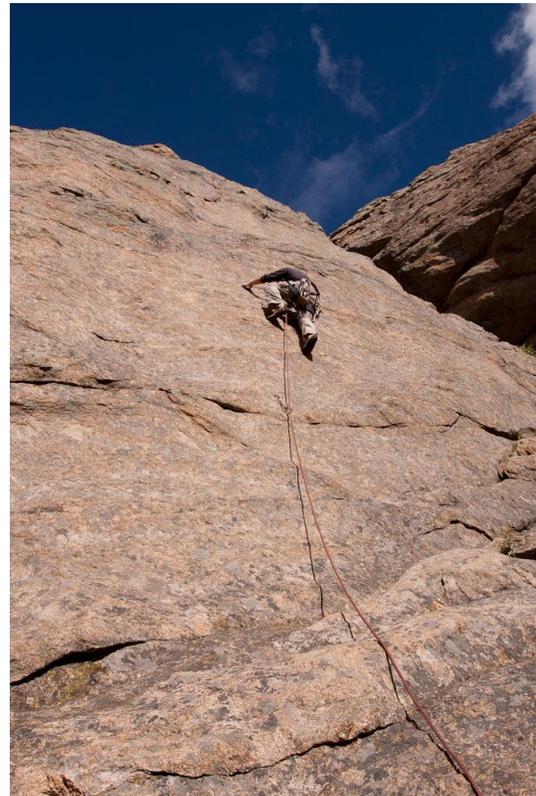
*Dave Goldwater leading Triceratops (5.8- PG13) - small.jpg*

We enjoyed the left-most route on the second rock formation, immediately to the right of Triceratops, a fun, easy route called Coloradoddity (5.6), which climbs a blunt arête. The location of this arête, with spectacular views of Longs Peak and Mount Meeker beyond, make this a photogenic climb.

To the right of Coloradoddity is "Stout Blue Vein" (5.8), with a rather awkward traverse that we all thought took a contrived line. Still worth doing, though. Continuing up the hill we climbed two more routes on the next formation, Dinosaur's Foot; Index Toe (5.8), on the first major rock rib of the formation, and Strategy (5.7). Index Toe was very nice, though it felt a little more difficult than its rating. Strategy, a short climb just right of the large detached boulder, received mixed reviews. I thought it was worthwhile, requiring some thought, while Ginni just didn't care for it.

*Dave Goldwater, from Denver, leading Index Toe - small.jpg*

I also took the time to check out more climbs for our next visit, including the



spectacular route at the far end of the formation known as The Fin. Check it out.



*The classic -Edge of Time- on The Fin, with Longs Peak in the background-small.jpg*

*Chris Martinez, from Aspen leading the classic -Edge of Time- on The Fin -small.jpg*

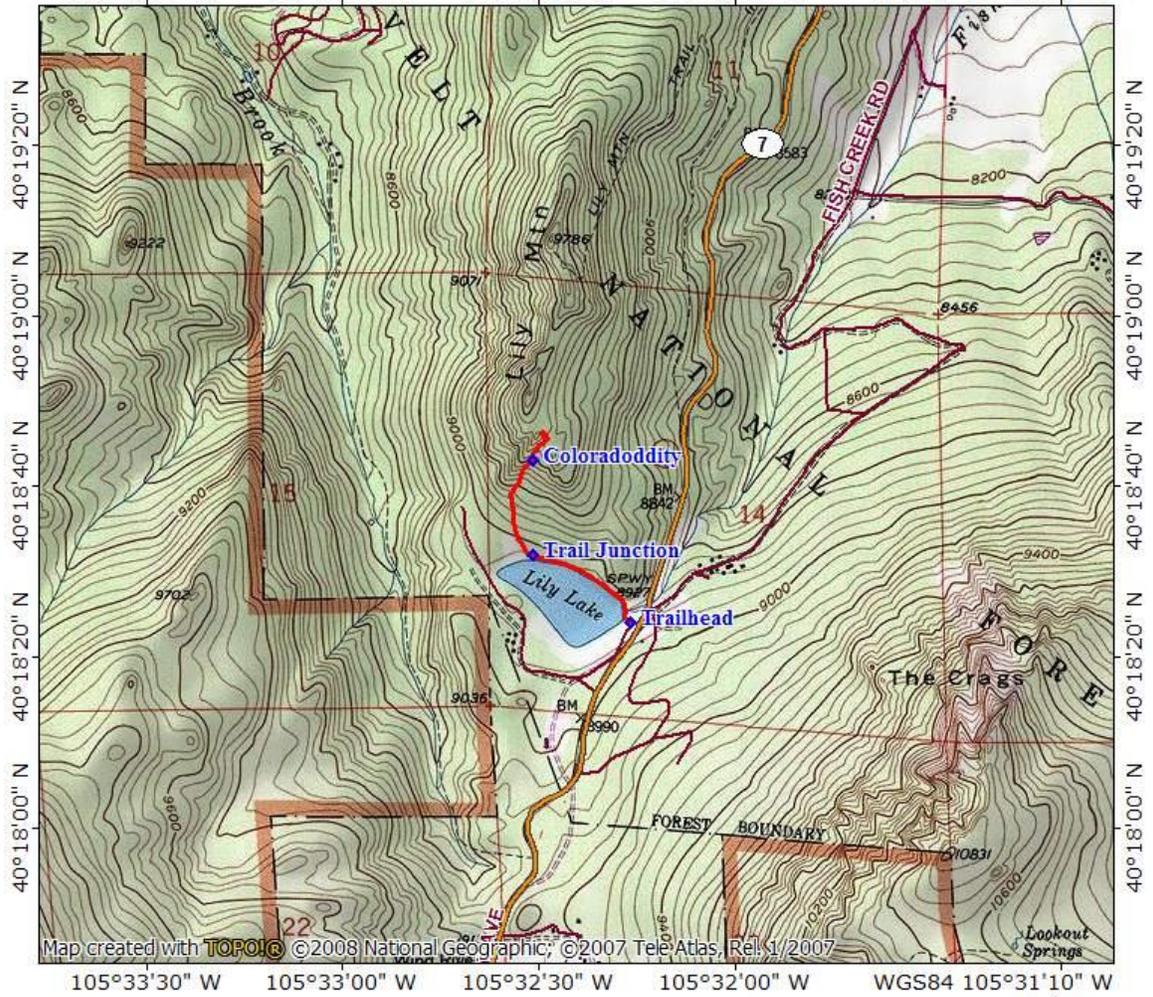


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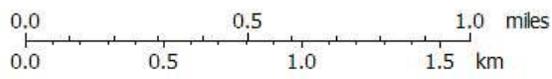
Remember, climbing is an inherently dangerous activity and you should always climb within your ability after carefully judging the safety of the route.

TOPO! map printed on 09/08/10 from "jurassic park.tpo"

105°33'30" W 105°33'00" W 105°32'30" W 105°32'00" W WGS84 105°31'10" W



Map created with TOPO! © 2008 National Geographic; © 2007 Tele Atlas, Rel. 1/2007



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Map detail showing the location of some climbs

