

“Trail Mix” - Rock Climb by Dave Cooper

Lumina (5.8) – one pitch, 8 bolts - The Dark Side, Shelf Road



Getting to the trailhead: Drive to Canon City on US Highway 50. Look for the Burger King at the eastern edge of town, on the north side of the highway at the intersection of US50 and Reynolds Avenue. Turn north onto Reynolds Avenue and follow it for a short distance until it dead-ends at a T-junction (Pear Street). Turn left (west) for one block and reach Field Avenue. Turn right (north) onto Field Avenue (partway along the road the name changes to Shelf Road (County Road 9), and becomes a graded road, suitable for two wheel drive vehicles) and continue for a total distance of 14.4 miles from US50. At this point look for a rough four wheel drive road heading steeply uphill to your left. This is just before you reach a 180 degree bend in Shelf Road.

For the Dark Side, drive 0.1 mile up this rough road, often impassable when wet or snow-covered. At the first right hand bend there is a small parking area on the left side of the road. Park here.

For Cactus Cliff parking, continue up the rough road another 0.4 miles to an obvious parking area, just past an outhouse.

Approach: For Lumina, from the Dark Side parking area walk west on the dirt trail past obvious campfires for just under 100 yards and look for a cairned trail taking off on your left. Follow this trail as it switchbacks up the hill to the cliff. Walk a short distance to the right until you reach the pinnacle. The climb is immediately left of the pinnacle.

Gear: Eight quickdraws plus gear for the anchors. One 60 meter rope is sufficient.

Guidebook: “Shelf Road Rock, a complete climbing reference”, by Fred Knapp, Rick Thompson and Aschert – Sharp End Publishing.

Climbing Disclaimer

Until the re-opening of the Cactus Cliff area in 1999, Shelf Road was known as an area offering mainly difficult routes. The development of the Cactus Cliff area provided a large number of quality sport climbs at a more moderate level, creating a renewed interest in the area. Classic easier climbs such as Crynoid Corner (5.7) and LaCholla Jackson (5.8) can be quite crowded these days.

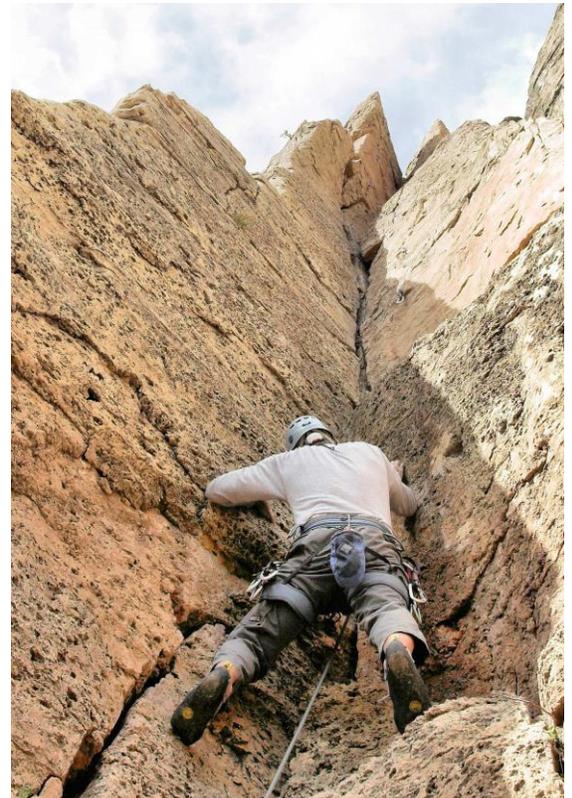
Lumina (5.8)

If the crowds or sun chase you away from Cactus Cliff, consider heading over to The Dark Side, almost directly opposite and north-facing. Lurking on the Dark Side is Lumina (5.8), “the finest climb of its grade at Shelf”, according to the guidebook.

While many climbers might argue with the grade assigned to this climb (I’ve seen it rated anywhere from 5.8 to 5.10a), few would question its quality.

Another moderate classic, Crynoid Corner (5.7)

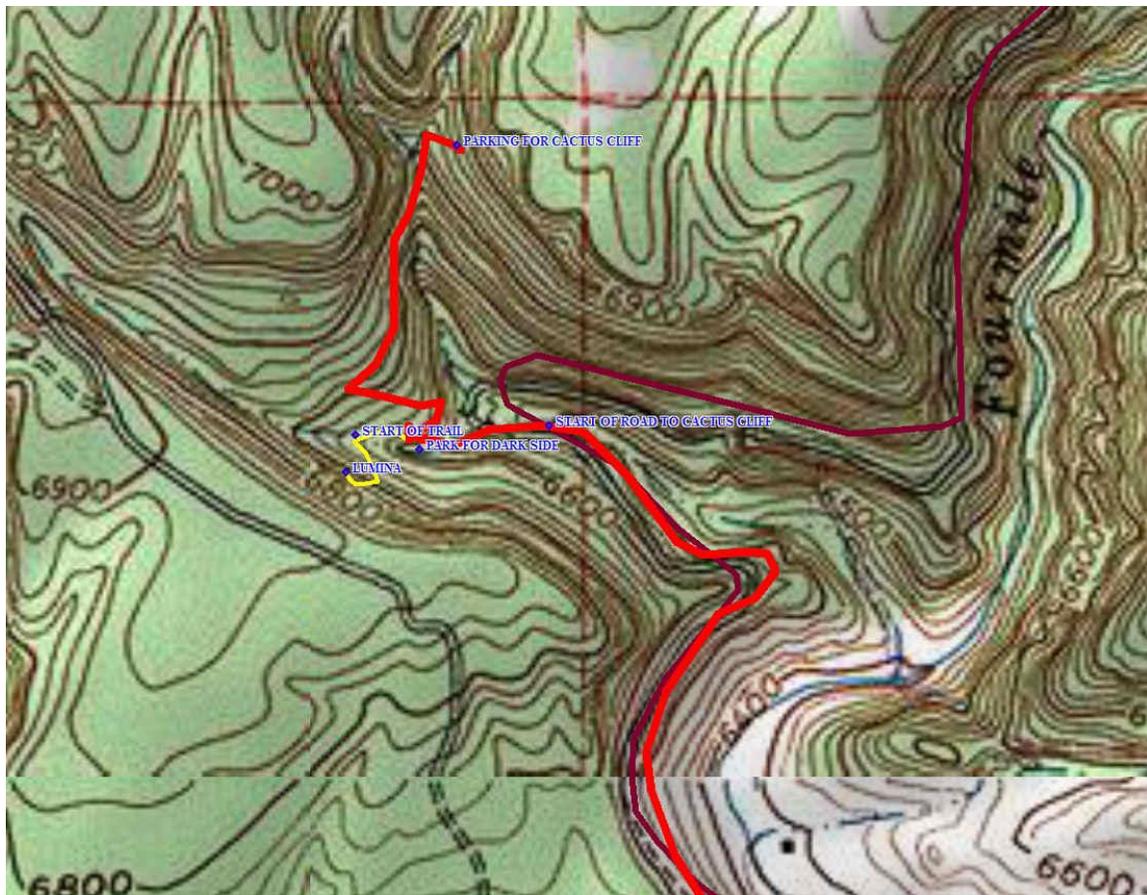
Continuously steep and varied, Lumina will keep your attention the whole way up, offering crack and face climbing as well as a small roof



to be negotiated. If you aren't familiar with climbing on limestone the apparent fragility of the rock takes a little getting used to, and indeed there is a fair quantity of loose rock to be found in the area, though perhaps not on this route. As always, use a helmet whether climbing or belaying.

Start by climbing up the block in the crack perhaps ten feet left of a large detached tower called the "Pinnacle" (shown in the photograph). The first bolt is 2 feet to the right of the crack. Head up and over a small roof, then continue up the crack, passing a total of 7 bolts (the guidebook says 8 bolts, so perhaps we missed one) on your way to the anchor chains.

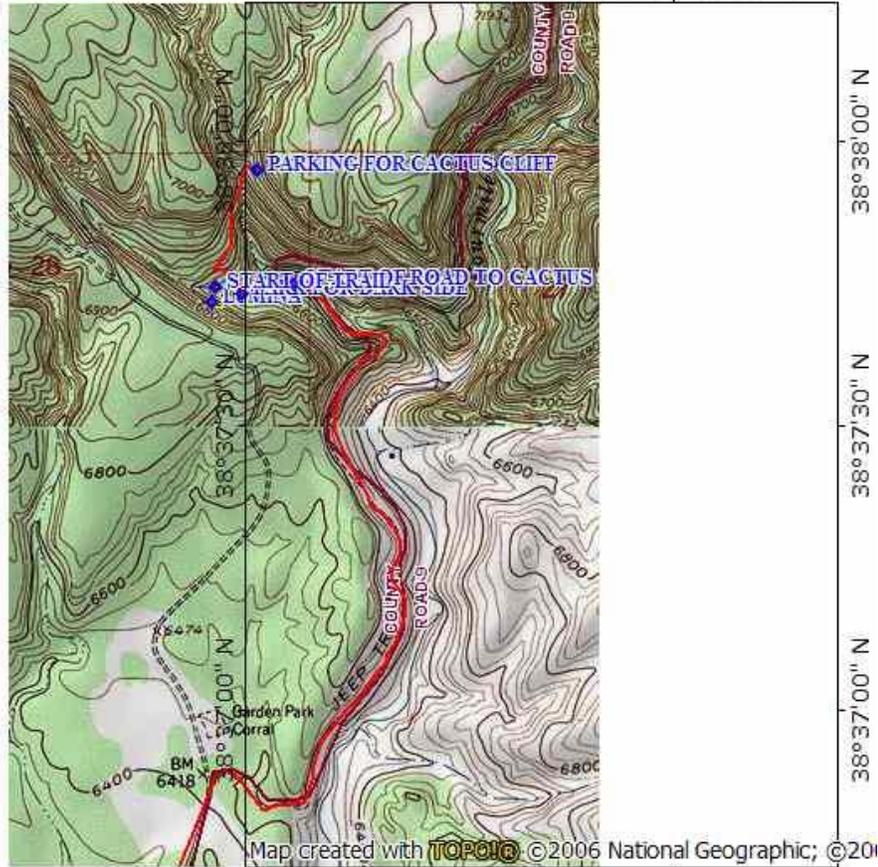
A note about Shelf Road climbing: this is the quintessential sport climbing area – if bolted crack climbs are a problem for you, stay away from Shelf. The route ethic here is definitely to allow this. However, if you can get past this you will find the climbing to be stellar. Also it was fascinating to watch the difference in the way an old trad climber like myself, versus my sport-climbing partner Dave, climbed some of these cracks. While I was more comfortable jamming the cracks, Dave face climbed the routes. I think we both wished we could emulate the other's technique!



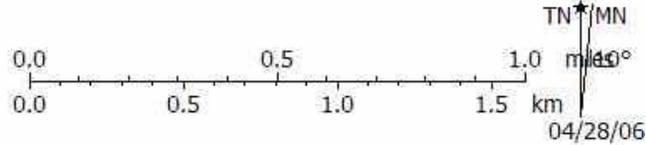
Map showing the Dark Side and Cactus Cliff

TOPO! map printed on 04/28/06 from "lumina and cactus cliff1.tpo"

WGS84 105°13'00" W



WGS84 105°13'00" W



Map of general area

