

## Mount Lady Washington –East Ridge by Dave Cooper



*Morning light on Longs Peak and Mount Lady Washington-compressed.jpg*

Often overshadowed by neighboring Longs Peak, Mount Lady Washington offers a good hike and great views year round. It is especially attractive in winter and early spring since snow shoes are often not required. Except after a new snowfall the Longs Peak Trail is usually well packed down. In addition the east ridge tends to be wind scoured.

There are no maintained trails on Mount Lady Washington. The peak is often climbed via its northwest slopes from the infamous boulderfield, but a more direct route is via the east ridge. This ridge requires Class 2 boulder and talus hopping which can be a little tedious when covered with fresh snow, but as long as you are careful can be quite enjoyable and not difficult.

### Hike Description

From the Longs Peak Trailhead, start up the well-signed Longs Peak Trail. On a recent visit, as is often the case, the track deviates slightly from the summer trail just below treeline. Where the maintained trail crosses to the south side of Alpine Brook after 1.9 miles at 10,600 feet, a well-trodden path heads west directly up the drainage and rejoins the regular trail in a quarter mile. On some occasions both paths have

**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.

**Hike Statistics:** Trailhead to the summit of Mount Lady Washington (13,281 feet): 3850 feet of elevation gain in 3.9 miles one way.

**Difficulty:** A moderate trail hike on snowy and possibly icy trails in the spring, followed by off-trail Class 2 scrambling up the east ridge.

**USGS Quad:** Longs Peak, CO.

been tracked so things can get a little confusing, especially on the way down. Take careful note of your route so that you are able to retrace your steps on your return.

After rejoining the maintained trail pass the turnoff to Jims Grove and continue as the trail wanders up onto the Mills Moraine, reaching the Chasm Lake Trail junction at 11,530 feet, 3.0 miles from the trailhead. The solar outhouse makes this spot difficult to miss.

From the trail junction the east ridge of Mount Lady Washington lies directly west. Leave the trail and pick your way up the ridge, gaining another 1670 feet in the next 0.9 miles. From the summit the east face of Longs Peak, featuring the Diamond, is directly in front of you. Enjoy the view.



