

Mount Tweto by Dave Cooper



Heading up the jeep road towards Mount Tweto-small.jpg

Whenever the weather fails to cooperate with your weekend plans, it's good to have a backup. This was the case recently when a vigorous spring storm left an unexpected gift of one to two feet of heavy, wet snow.

Obviously anything steep was out of the question. Whatever slopes didn't slide during the storm were destined to shed the new snow shortly after the sun hit them. Luckily we live in an area offering plenty of choices, so we headed up the Mosquito Pass Road to see what we could find.

The Mosquito Pass Road had been closed by Park County for much of the late winter/early spring due to a massive avalanche which had crossed the road. As we drove higher we reached the spot, still obvious due to the large debris piles plowed to the sides of the road. We were able to drive a little further along the road to the winter closure and parking area. During the summer months most passenger cars can drive to a road junction 1.2 miles further up the

Getting to the Trailhead: Drive on Highway 9 to the junction with County Road 12, one mile south of the town of Alma or 4 miles north of Fairplay. Turn west onto CR12 and drive 4.6 miles to a road junction. Turn right onto the road signed to Mosquito Pass and drive one more mile to the winter road closure. During the summer it is possible for most vehicles to carefully drive to the summer trailhead, 1.2 miles beyond the winter closure, even though a sign at the start of the road indicates that the road is suitable only for 4 wheel drive vehicles.

GPS coordinates for winter trailhead (NAD83): 39°17'7"N, 106° 8'29"W, 11,240 feet.

Statistics: From the winter road closure to Mount Tweto you will gain 2400 feet in 6.5 miles round trip.

Difficulty: Moderate snowshoeing at high altitude, with some easy scrambling on loose talus for the final few hundred feet.

Gear: Snow shoes or skis and ice ax in the spring.

valley, the normal starting point for a hike either up the rough Mosquito Pass Road, or for our choice on this day, a hike up Mount Tweto.

Located at the head of the broad valley drained by Mosquito Creek, Mount Tweto is shown on topographic maps as USLM Divide and was named relatively recently after a prominent Colorado geologist. A plaque on the summit is dedicated to Ogden Tweto. At 13,672 feet, the peak is ranked as one of Colorado's highest 200, and is often climbed in the summer in combination with Mount Arkansas.

In the spring, the valley still holds plenty of snow and its gentle terrain is ideal for snowshoeing and ski touring. Mount Tweto itself is a good objective at this time of year, providing easy snow climbing and talus hopping. We used snowshoes to within about 200 feet of the summit, and were able to avoid steeper slopes loaded with the recent snowfall.

Hike Description

Snowshoeing in the Mosquito Creek drainage-small.jpg

From the winter trailhead, walk northwest along the road to a trail junction at mile 1.2. This is the point where the Mosquito Pass Road turns to the left, crosses the creek and heads steeply uphill. An unmarked jeep road continues straight. This is the summer trailhead. If you are able to drive to this point, park here, being careful not to block either road.



From this junction, continue northwest on the unmarked jeep road, passing a prominent rocky outcropping on your left and the long ridge of Loveland Mountain on your right. When the road ends, continue northwest up the broad valley on gentle slopes, aiming generally for the southwest slopes of Tweto. Snow conditions will dictate your precise route. Avoid the old mines in the area, which can harbor hidden hazards.

After the snow has melted, a faint climbers' trail will be visible on the upper slopes, marked with occasional cairns, but in the springtime this trail will be mostly snow-covered, possibly a good thing since the snow covers the sometimes loose talus. Reach the summit 3.2 miles from the winter trailhead.

Enjoy the views from the summit. See if you can locate Mount of the Holy Cross in the distance. There are several ways to extend this hike during the summer months, since Tweto connects to its neighbors via three prominent ridges; Mount Arkansas to the northwest, Mount Buckskin to the east and Treasurevault Mountain to the southwest. The ridges to Arkansas and Buckskin require some scrambling skills and may not be suitable for inexperienced climbers.

Approaching Mount Tweto, with Buckskin Mountain behind-small.jpg



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