

North Walton Peak

by Dave Cooper



North Walton Peak offers the perfect spot to practice those telemark turns - small.JPG

With miles of cross-country ski trails, gentle terrain and more than its fair share of snowfall, Rabbit Ears Pass is one of the best places in Colorado for ski touring. Add the fact that the Forest Service has attempted to segregate the snowmobiling areas from the areas where the human-powered trails are located and the appeal of the Pass becomes overwhelming. So it should be no surprise that on a recent trip to Steamboat Springs for a speaking engagement we set aside sufficient time to sneak in a quick tour.

We chose an old favorite that combines pleasant touring through forested glades with the chance to yo-yo a nice little ski hill that usually holds great powder. In fact, the east face of North Walton Peak is where I learned to telemark several decades ago, so it holds a special meaning for me.

We drove up to the Pass from Steamboat just as a storm was clearing, leaving several inches of new powder and clear blue skies - what could be better?

Hike Description

From the trailhead parking area, scramble up the snowbank to the information board. The trail drops down the hill to the right into an open area, then cuts left. Look for blue posts and blue diamonds. After a tenth of a mile you will come to a sign indicating a trail junction for the 3A loop. Take the left branch for the shortest approach to North Walton Peak, and

Getting to the Trailhead: The Walton Peak parking area is located on the south side of Highway 40 on Rabbit Ears Pass, 7.0 miles west of the intersection with Highway 14. This is 2.8 miles east of the West Summit parking area.

Hike Statistics: From the parking area to the summit of North Walton Peak (10,135 feet) you'll gain 740 feet in 3.1 miles one way.

Difficulty: A pleasant ski on trails and a road to a summit with a moderate descent offering excellent opportunities for practicing telemark turns.

USGS Quad: Walton Peak, CO; Mount Werner, CO.

follow the very well signed trail as it heads east along the north side of Walton Creek. At mile 0.7 you'll reach the point where the 3A loop continues to the right, angling uphill. Our trail, marked as 3C, heads left here, signed to North Walton Peak.

The point where the trail leaves the Walton Creek Loop and heads left towards North Walton Peak-small.JPG

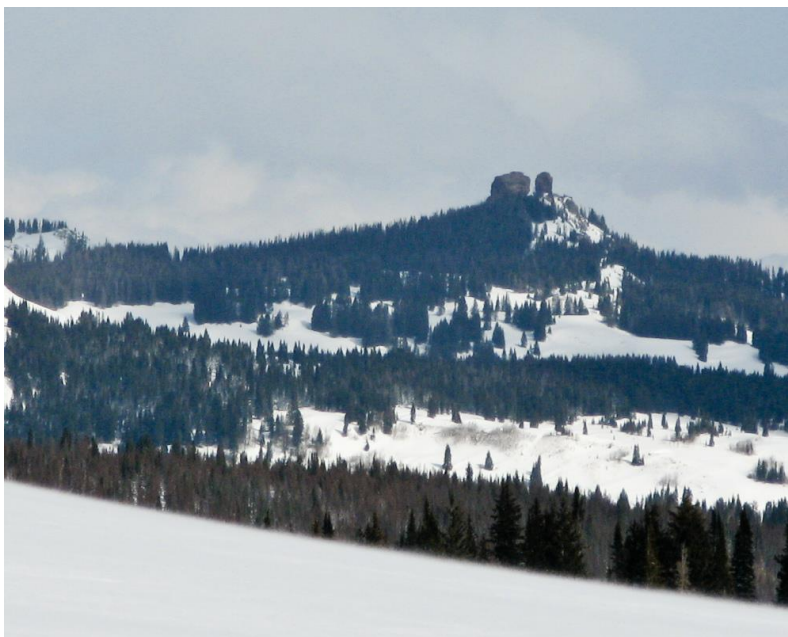
At mile 1.1 the trail joins a road. Turn right and follow the road south, contouring approximately 100 feet above the creek before making a turn to the west at mile 1.8. Immediately after this turn you'll reach a road junction. Take the right fork (the uphill branch), marked with green posts, and contour into a large open bowl below North Walton Peak.



Approaching North Walton Peak. The ski slopes can be seen on the front side of the mountain.jpg

Continue along the road, reaching the base of the east face of the peak at mile 2.7. This makes a good staging area for the upcoming fun. You'll want to make several trips up the peak from here if conditions are good, so head up the road as it climbs up to the left side of the mountain, spiraling to the top. Once on the flat summit, ski past the radio towers and buildings and head for the east face, directly above the staging area. Take a minute to enjoy a good view of the Rabbit Ears, then choose a line and enjoy these

moderate slopes.

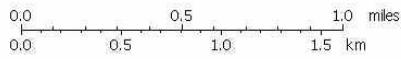
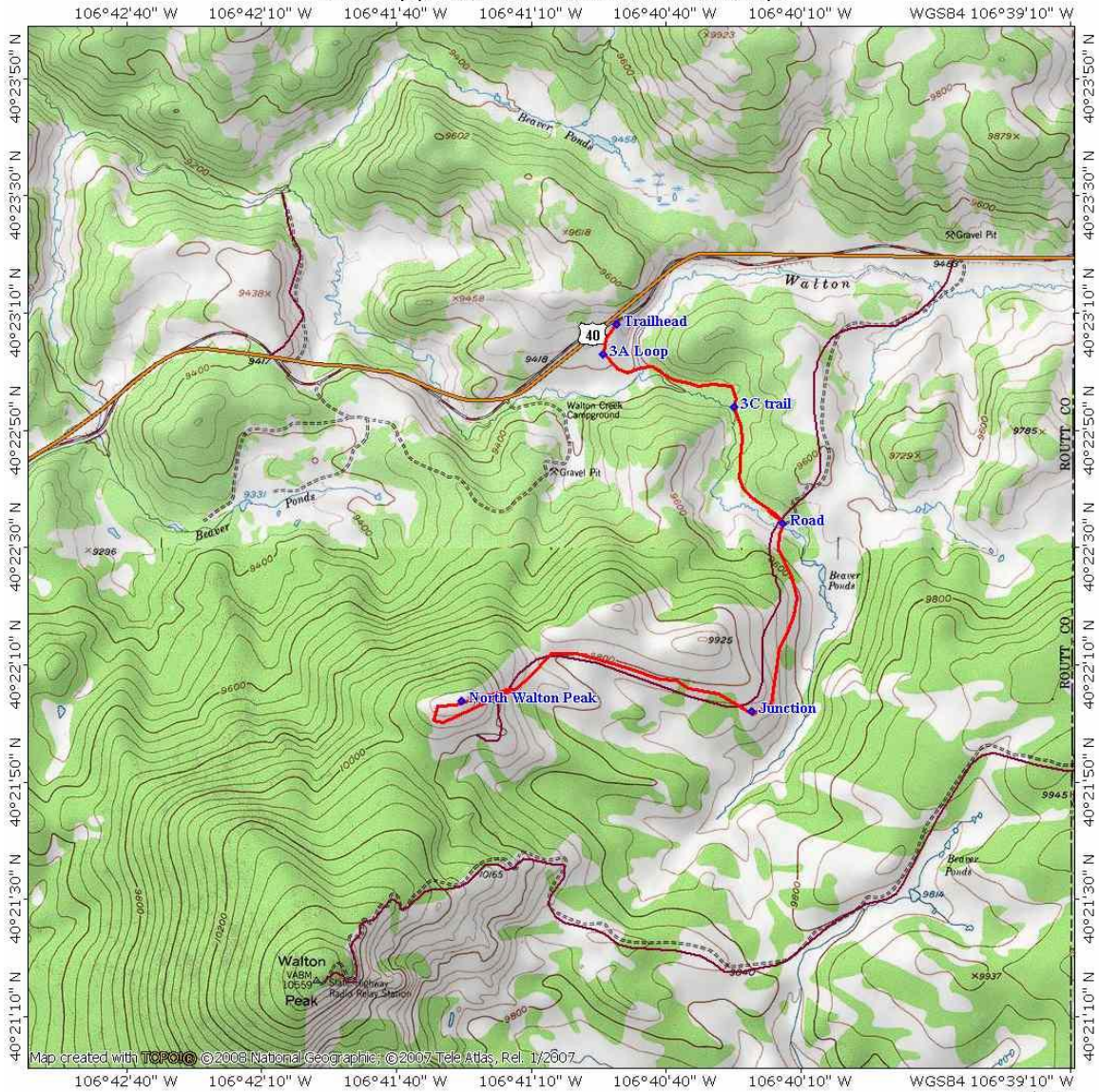


Good views of the Rabbit Ears from the summit of North Walton Mountain-small.JPG



The slopes of North Walton Peak are ideal for practicing telemark turns.jpg

TOPO! map printed on 03/10/09 from "Untitled2.tpo"



GPS Latitude / Longitude NAD83 (Deg., Min., Sec.)

- Trailhead, 40,23,8,-106,40,51,9511 feet
- 3A Loop, 40,23,3,-106,40,54,9449 feet
- 3C trail, 40,22,54,-106,40,25,9482 feet
- Road, 40,22,34,-106,40,14,9508 feet
- Junction, 40,22,2,-106,40,21,9760 feet
- North Walton Peak, 40,22,4,-106,41,26,10135 feet

