

Parkview Mountain by Dave Cooper



Approaching the upper basin below Parkview's summit-small.jpg

Parkview Mountain is well-named, offering panoramic views of North Park and of the peaks of Rocky Mountain National Park. An added bonus on a hike up this peak is a visit to the historic Lookout House, located at the summit of the peak and constructed by the Forest Service in 1916. Although the structure is no longer used as a lookout, the Lookout House still serves an important function as a radio repeater station for firefighters.

This peak is located in one of Colorado's less-traveled areas at the southern end of North Park, close to Willow Creek Pass on highway 125. Defining the easternmost point of the Rabbit Ears Range, at 12,296 feet Parkview Mountain is the high point of the range.

There are several ways to climb Parkview. The Continental Divide Trail crosses Willow Creek Pass on its way to the summit, but we found this start to the hike to be a little confusing. I'll describe what I believe to be a more straightforward route, beginning at a small parking area just south of the Pass. The route uses a series of Forest Service roads to reach treeline. Above treeline a series of rock cairns mark the way. There are so many old roads in this area that it is important to note the intersections for your descent. Most of the trail markers (wooden posts) have either fallen down or have been knocked down by vandals. The fact that some of the signs left standing have been defaced leads me to believe the latter to be true.

Getting to the Trailhead: From the intersection of Highway 40 and Highway 125 (approximately 3 miles west of Granby), drive north on 125 for 21.5 miles. Look for a small parking area on the left side of the road. This parking area is 0.3 miles south of Willow Creek Pass, so if you reach the Pass you've gone too far.

Hike Statistics: From Willow Creek Pass to the summit of Parkview Mountain is 4.0 miles each way, with an elevation gain of 2800 feet.

Difficulty: An easy walk along old forestry roads and a moderately strenuous off-trail hike to a scenic summit.

USGS Quads: Parkview Mountain, CO; Radial Mountain, CO.

Hike Description

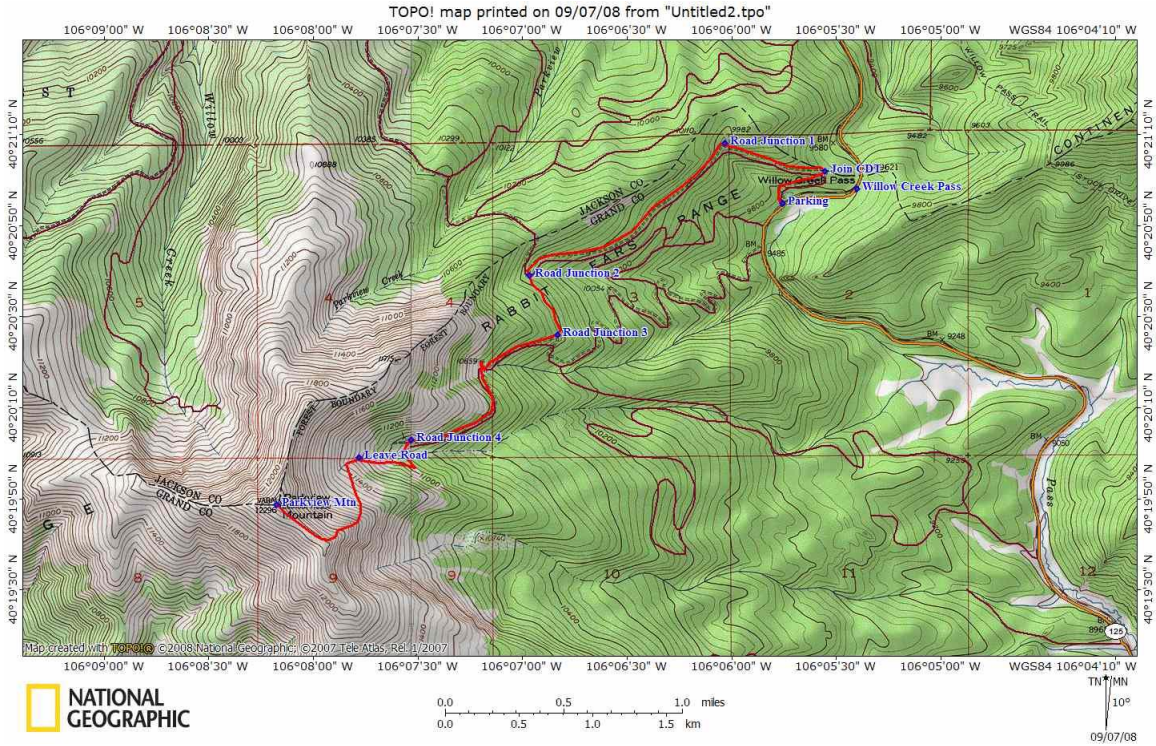
From the small parking area 0.3 mile south of the Pass, start hiking north on Forest Service Road 266.1H. The road soon curves to the east and at mile 0.3 the Continental Divide Trail joins the road at a switchback. Continue west on 266.1H as it climbs at a steady grade to a road junction (at an elevation of 9970 feet) at mile 0.7. Turn left (southwest) at this junction and follow the road as it continues to climb to a second road junction at mile 1.8. Turn left (south) at this junction and walk along this flat section of road to a third junction at mile 2.1, where you will join yet another road at a hairpin bend. Take the right hand fork in the road (heading uphill) and follow this road as it heads generally southwest into the broad basin below the summit. As you break out into the open area of the basin, look for the white building visible on the summit.

The fourth road junction (at an elevation of 10,900 feet) is reached in the basin at mile 3.1. Take the left fork as it drops slightly before heading back into trees and follow this road almost to its terminus high in the basin at mile 3.4. Just before the road ends by a stand of krumholtz - small, stunted trees, look for large cairns on either side of the road, marking the point where you leave the road and start heading towards the lefthand ridge. Follow the cairns, reaching the ridge at approximately 11,700 feet (mile 3.7). Head steeply up the ridge (southwest) on a hodgepodge of social trails. Join the southeast ridge at 12,150 feet (mile 4.0), turn right (northwest) and walk easily to the summit.

When we did the hike recently, this last section was exposed to cold winds, reminding us that the season will soon change.

Looking up the southeast ridge towards the summit-small.jpg





GPS Latitude / Longitude NAD83 (Deg., Min., Sec.)
 Willow Creek Pass: 40,20,58N / 106,5,24W, 9600 feet
 Join CDT: 40,21,2N / 106,5,33W, 9642 feet
 Parking: 40,20,55N / 106,5,45W, 9482 feet
 Road Junction 1: 40,21,8N / 106,6,2W, 9970 feet
 Road Junction 2: 40,20,39N / 106,6,58 W, 10314 feet
 Road Junction 3: 40,20,26N / 106,6,50W, 10387 feet
 Road Junction 4: 40,20,3N / 106,7,32W, 10951 feet
 Leave Road: 40,19,59N / 106,7,47W, 11214 feet
 Parkview Mtn: 40,19,49N / 106,8,10W, 12279 feet

