

## Republican Mountain (12,386 feet) by Dave Cooper

As you drive along I-70 by the town of Silver Plume, you may have noticed a large stone monolith perched high above the town, next to Brown Gulch. This is the rotten-looking gully just west of town, north of the highway, where a short piece of climbable ice can be seen (often used to introduce novices to the delights of ice climbing!).



there might be a story behind this (beyond the Geologic Survey providing equal access) I did a little research to see if I could uncover the reason for the paradox. While unable to find the reason for the bipartisan naming, I did unearth an interesting bit of trivia. Back in 2004 a Bill was introduced into the Colorado legislature which attempted to reverse the names of Mount Democrat (the fourteener) and Republican Mountain (a lowly twelve thousand foot peak). It appears that this attempt was unsuccessful!

**Getting to the Trailhead:** Drive on I-70 to the Silver Plume exit (Exit 226). Drive northwest to Main Street and turn right. Limited parking may be found along Main Street. Note that there is no parking on Silver Street.

### Hike Statistics:

Trailhead to the summit of Republican Mountain (12,386 feet): 3300 feet of total elevation gain in 3.3 miles (one way).

**Difficulty:** An easy hike on a mining road. Then hike/snowshoe on a social trail or on snow, depending on conditions. Snowshoes required.

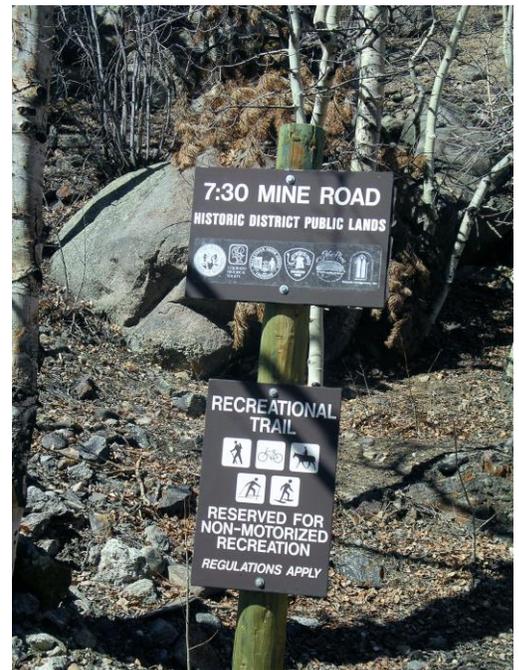
**USGS Quad:** Georgetown, CO

The monolith is actually a monument and gravesite for Clifford Griffin, one of the owners of the nearby 7:30 mine. Griffin passed away, according to the monument, in 1887. (Much more information about the mining history and area personalities can be found by searching on the web).

### *The Griffin gravesite*

This week's hike takes us by the monument on our way to Republican Mountain – don't worry, we don't use the ice-climbing route to get there. An easy mining road provides access both to the Griffin monument and the upper reaches of Brown Gulch.

On the USGS map the summit of Republican Mountain is named as such. However a benchmark at the summit is named Democrat. Thinking



*The start of the 7:30 Mine Road*

## Hike Description

From Main Street, walk north (uphill) on Silver Street. A sign indicates the start of the 7:30 Mine Road Recreation Trail. Hike up this road as it switchbacks up the hill, passing several old mine sites. After one mile the road crosses an obvious avalanche chute, still littered with many downed trees. Continuing on the road passes a spur trail leading to the Griffin Monument (definitely worth a visit on the way down). In places the road has deteriorated quite a bit, but still provides easy hiking. After a total distance of 2.0 miles the road/trail ends at the remains of the 7:30 Mine in Brown Gulch (named, apparently, because of the later-than-usual starting time). There are social trails heading up on both sides of the gulch, though as of early April the stream and trails were partially covered by snow and snowshoes were required. As we head into spring conditions the snow covering the streambed becomes more suspect, so it's better to stay on the



*A good spot to exit the gully*

trails, away from the streambed. Also, be careful if you decide to cross the stream when swollen by spring runoff. Follow the gulch north then northwest for 0.5 miles to treeline (a total of 2.5 miles from the trailhead). This is a good place to leave the drainage, avoiding some potential avalanche slopes. Later in the season these slopes look as if they would provide excellent skiing. Climb steeply to the northeast through

sparse trees, then more gently on a rising traverse. Either join the south ridge of Republican Mountain and cross several false summits, or stay to the left of the ridge until you are able to circle around and reach the summit from the west.



*Approaching the summit of Republican Mountain on the east side of the ridge*

On the way down you will be greeted with outstanding views of Grays and Torreys Peaks.

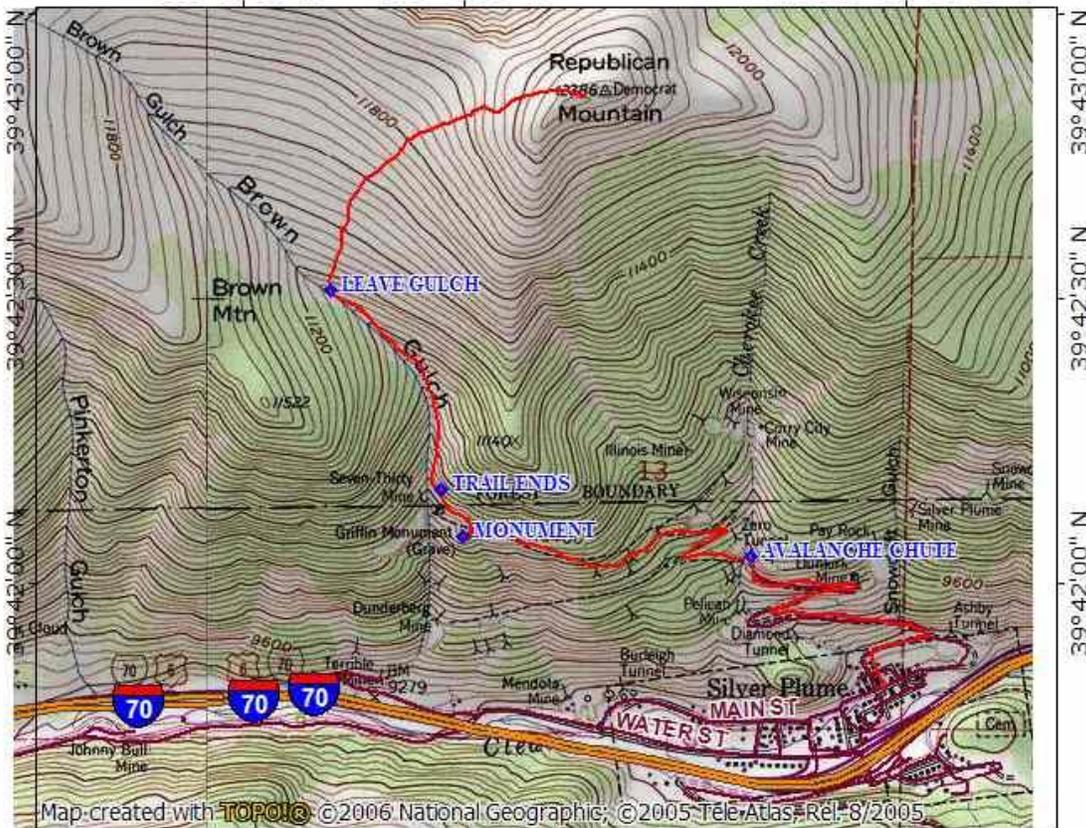


When you get back to Silver Plume, don't forget to visit the bakery on Main Street. The freshly baked bread is outstanding. Friends also recommend the Tea Room and café, also on Main Street.

*Good views of Grays and Torreys Peaks*

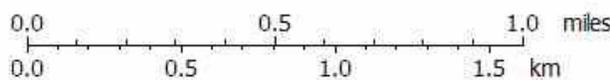
TOPO! map printed on 04/05/06 from "Untitled2.tpo"

105°45'00" W    105°44'30" W    WGS84 105°43'30" W



Map created with TOPO! ©2006 National Geographic, ©2005 TeleAtlas, Rel. 8/2005

105°45'00" W    105°44'30" W    WGS84 105°43'30" W



TN MN  
10 1/2  
04/05/06

GPS Latitude / Longitude NAD83 (Deg., Min., Sec.)  
**AVALANCHE CHUTE:** 39,42,3N / 105,43,48W, 9790 feet  
**MONUMENT:** 39,42,5N / 105,44,27W, 10390 feet  
**TRAIL ENDS:** 39,42,10N / 105,44,30W, 10476 feet  
**LEAVE GULCH:** 39,42,31N / 105,44,45W, 11178 feet

