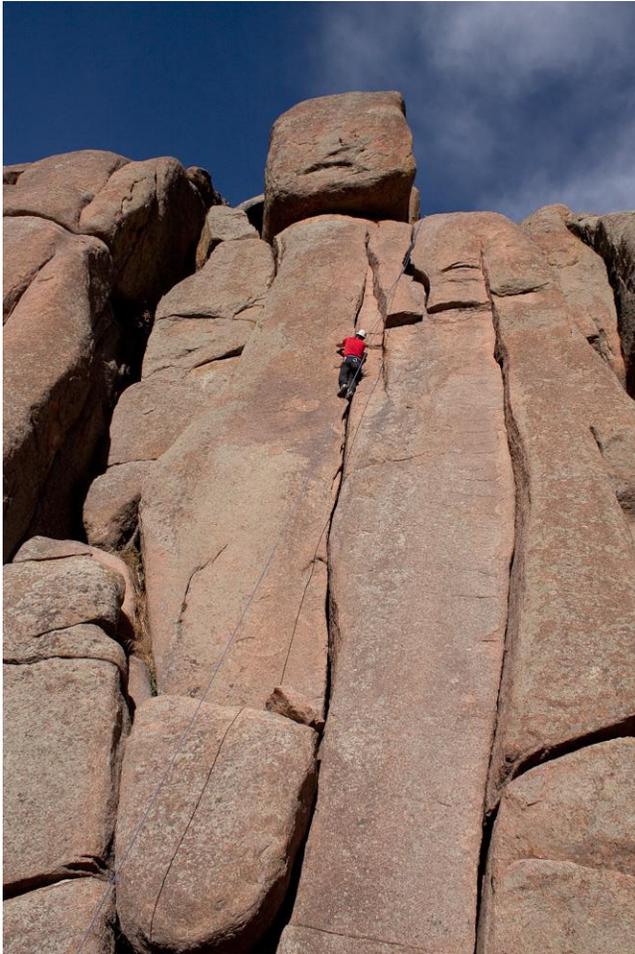


Turkey Perch

by Dave Cooper



Climber on a classic 5.7 near the right end of Turkey Perch-6897.jpg

Approach

From the parking area, head south up the switchbacked trail to reach a saddle in two tenths of a mile. Look for a trail heading left (east) from the saddle and reach the base of the Turkey Perch wall (south face) after another one tenth of a mile.

Scattered throughout the foothills area drained by the South Platte River are an abundance of granite domes and cliffs. These rock formations offer some of the best crack and face climbs in the State, and compare well to Joshua Tree (California) or City of Rocks (Idaho), though the climbs in the South Platte are not as concentrated as in these other areas.

For many years we have made at least one trip a year to an area known as Turkey Rock. With a southern exposure, the climbs may be too hot during the summer months, so the prime time of year for these climbs is during spring and autumn. A cool September day can be very pleasant, but we've been snowed on several times in early October and have baked in November, so choose the day carefully with an eye to the weather. Thunderstorms can also be unpleasant here.

The various rock formations are named with the turkey theme in mind, such as Turkey Tail, Leftovers (and Rightovers), and Turkey Perch. Some climbs are up to 3 pitches in length, many single pitch. Probably the most popular wall is on the south face of Turkey Perch. Single pitch routes here offer mainly crack climbs in the range 5.7 to 5.9. Many of the climbs can be top-roped, but be prepared to construct your own anchor - no bolt anchors here. The climbs are mainly in the hands to off-width range (referring to the width of the crack), and I prefer to tape up my hands to protect them from the sometimes-sharp granite.

Getting to the Trailhead: If approaching from the Denver area, take Highway 285 South to Pine Junction. Turn south on Highway 126 and drive 24 miles to the town of Deckers. Continue south on Highway 67 for 8.7 miles to the Westcreek Exit. Measure mileage from this point.

Turn right on the Westcreek Road. Turn left (south) at the stop sign (mile 0.3) and drive to an intersection with W. Stump Road (mile 0.7). Turn right onto W. Stump Road (aka County Road 68). At mile 3.2 keep right (west) and continue on County Road 51.

At mile 4.8 stay right where the road to the Big Turkey Campground heads left. From this point the dirt road becomes rougher, with waterbars and washed-out areas as you proceed. At mile 5.6, turn left onto a side road and drive to the parking area at the end of this rough road (mile 6.1).

I'd recommend at least an All-Wheel Drive vehicle to reach the end of the road, plus a few washed-out spots require careful negotiation.

By the way, there is no legal access from the south to Turkey Rock. This is private property.

Warning:

Remember, climbing is an inherently dangerous activity and you should always climb within your ability after carefully judging the safety of the route. We write about it, you take all the risks.

Climb Description

If you don't care for off-width climbing, head to the right end of the wall and check out the two obvious lines there - a nice 5.7 (HJAC) that starts on a large boulder and heads up towards another large boulder, finishing with an easy friction traverse to the right. Just to the right is a shallow left-facing 5.8 corner (LHJ). Finish this by stepping left below a small roof, then pulling over this roof (crux) into a wide hole which narrows as it continues to the top of the wall.

If you're interested in trying wider cracks, the best two climbs on the wall are towards the center - Gobble

Up (5.8) and Steppenwolf (5.9). For those not used to climbing wider cracks, these two can be very strenuous. If you're top-roping, it might be better to belay these two climbs from the top.

Kevin leading the classic 5.8 at the right end of Turkey Perch-small-6901.jpg

Walk off either to the left or right end of the wall.

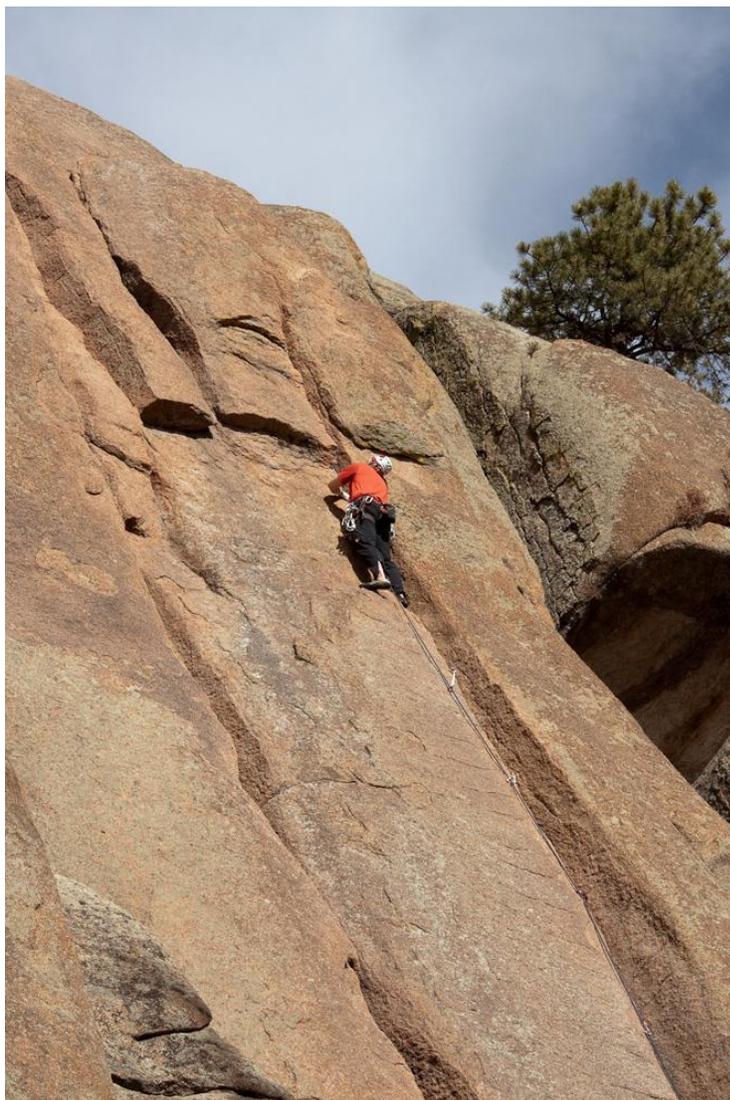
Statistics: The approach gains 250 feet in 0.3 miles.

Difficulty: Turkey Perch offers mainly trad climbs in the 5.7 to 5.9 range.

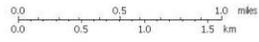
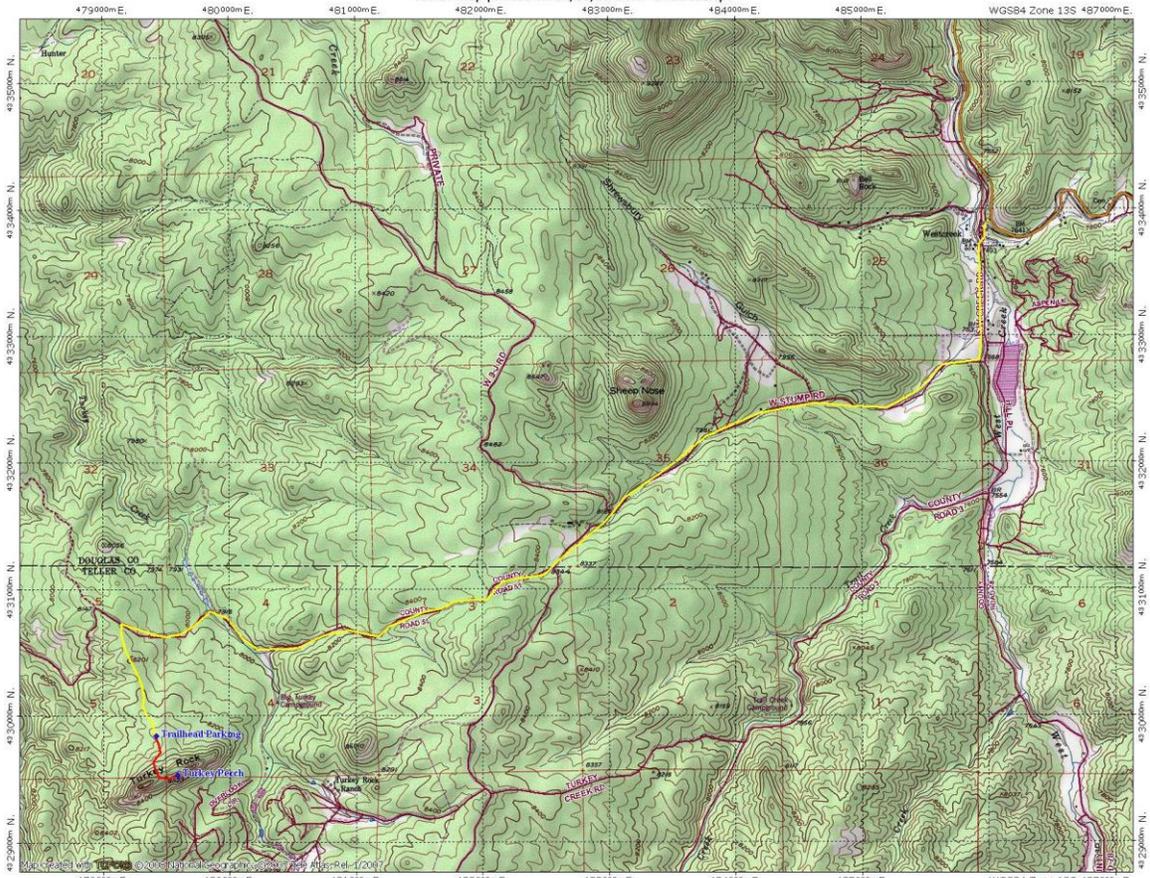
Gear: A standard rack works for most of the climbs. For some of the wider cracks, bring along extra pro up to #4 Camalots. If top-roping, you'll need plenty of anchor material to avoid rope-drag over the rounded edges. A 70 meter rope would be useful if top-roping the longer climbs from the base of the route.

Resources: I use the guidebook "South Platte Rock Climbing and The Garden of the Gods" by Peter Hubbel and Mark Rolofson, Chockstone Press, 1988. Hubbel also has an updated version.

USGS Quad: Signal Butte, CO.



TOPO! map printed on 07/08/09 from "Untitled2.tpo"



07/08/09

