

Waldo Canyon Loop

by Dave Cooper



Good views of Pikes Peak along the trail-compressed.jpg

This week we head to a trail well known to residents of Colorado Springs.

Located just off US24, west of Manitou Springs, the relatively low elevation of this hike and proximity to the Front Range makes it a good choice during cooler weather and when you just need a quick hiking or trail running fix.

Don't expect a wilderness experience on this trail. With good views of Pikes Peak and interesting geologic exhibits the trail is justifiably popular.

Getting to the Trailhead: From Colorado Springs drive west on US24 to the town of Manitou Springs. Continue west and measure 2.1 miles from the Cave of the Winds exit. The trailhead parking area is on the right (north) side of the highway.

Hike Statistics: 1920 feet of total elevation gain in 6.0 miles round trip.

Difficulty: A moderate trail hike.

USGS Quad: Cascade, CO

Hike Description

The trail contours east from the parking area for a short distance before turning north into Waldo Canyon. At mile 1.5 you will reach a signed trail junction. This is the start of the loop, so you can head either way around this. We chose to turn right (east) on the trail that climbs out of the Canyon and into an open area which affords views of Pikes Peak to the southwest. The trail crosses the heads of several drainages as it

heads to the high point (8180 feet) of the loop at mile 3.0. From here continue northwest as the trail drops down into Waldo Canyon.

Investigating one of the interesting geologic exhibits along the loop-compressed.jpg

The trail descends along the canyon, my favorite part of the hike, the trees providing shade and the sound of the stream a constant companion. After 4.5 miles you will return to the start of the loop. From here head back to the trailhead after a pleasant six mile outing.



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