

## "You Call Yourself a Thief?" - 5.10a - Turtle Rock - rock climbing by Dave Cooper

The Arkansas Valley provides a study in contrasts. While the west side rises dramatically towards the Collegiate Peaks, the eastern border of the valley offers a semi-arid landscape of granite domes and sandy soil populated by pinon and juniper.

For much of the year the eastern side of the valley, sometimes referred to as the Banana Belt, allows rock climbers an escape from otherwise inclement weather. Whether the Collegiate Peaks are covered with a mantle of snow in the winter or threatened by summer thunderstorms, the rock domes on the eastern edge of the valley often experience mild conditions.

**Getting to the Trailhead:** Drive to the town of Buena Vista. From the traffic light on US Highway 24, turn east onto Main Street. After 0.2 miles turn north (left) onto Colorado Avenue (Chaffee County Road 371). The road becomes dirt after a total of 2.2 miles. At 2.7 miles turn east (right) on Chaffee County Road 375. Drive on this road for 0.8 miles to the entrance (on the left) to a primitive campground (no facilities). Drive a short distance through the campground to the day use parking area, at the base of Turtle Rock.

**Gear:** For "You Call Yourself a Thief", there are 4 bolts plus anchor bolts, but you will need a small trad. rack to supplement these. A single 60 meter rope is adequate for this route.

**Amenities:** Primitive camping is available on the east side of Turtle Rock - no fee.

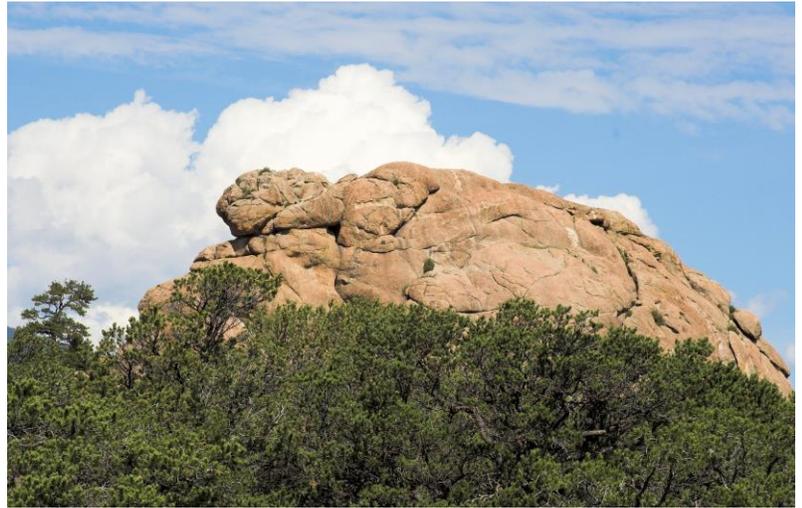
The comprehensive guidebook to the area - "Arkansas Valley Climbing, including Camp Hale", by Tom Perkins, is available at "The Trailhead", the local outdoor store in Buena Vista, located at 707 Hwy 24 N.



*The Arkansas Valley - a study in contrasts*

Typically the climbs are single pitch and either sport or traditional. Representative of the area is Turtle Rock, located a few miles outside Buena Vista. One of my favorite lines is a climb on the east face called "You Call Yourself a Thief?", rated 5.10a, though for a tall climber it's probably a bit easier. This is a mixed climb, with four bolts supplemented with your own pro.

The climb ascends a rock rib split by a discontinuous crack. The recent addition of a bolt at the start has taken a little of the spiciness out of the first move, but if you prefer you can still protect the start via the crack just left of the bolt.

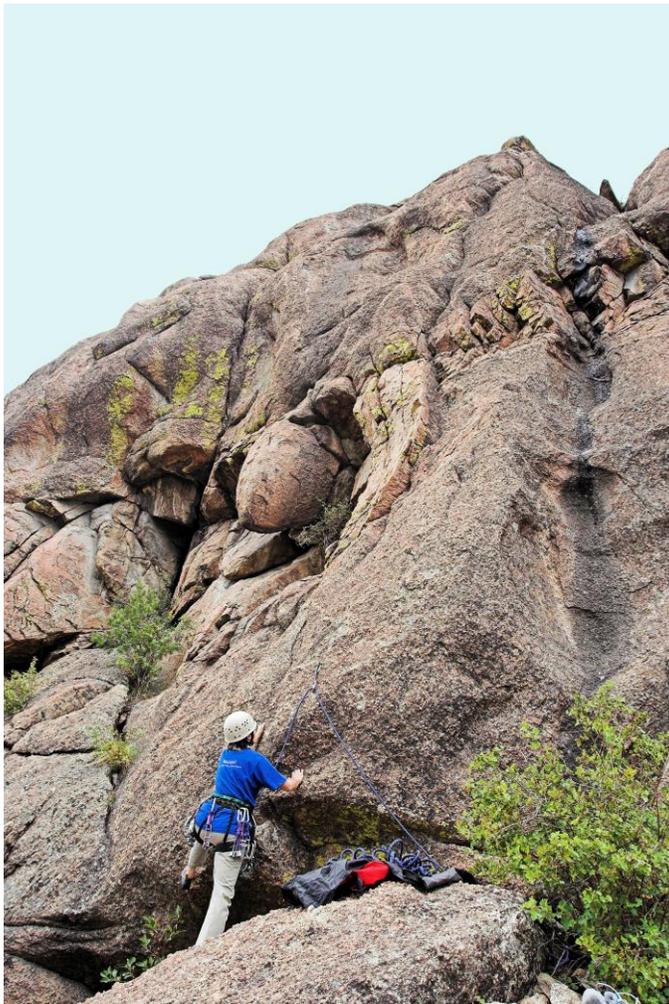


*Why do you think it's called "Turtle Rock"?*

## Approach

About 100 feet! From the day use parking area head up and right to the base of the rock rib on the left side of a small alcove. Look for the bolt in the center of the initial bulge.

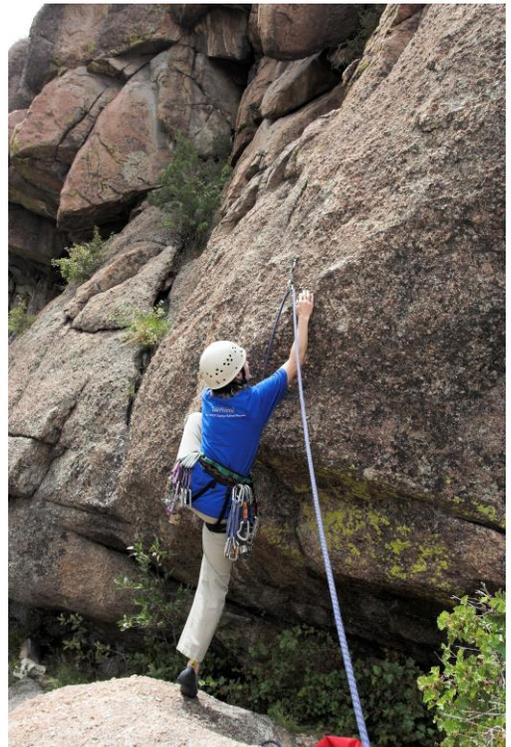
## The Climb



*"You Call Yourself a Thief?" - 5.10a - Turtle Rock*

Start with a strenuous move over the bulge, then head up on easier ground along a crack towards a broken area, with good protection. The climbing is varied, with face climbing on large crystals mixed in with crack climbing. Where the crack becomes too shallow for protection above the broken area, look for a line of three bolts to the left. Continue up to the two bolt anchor.

*A bit of a stretch for anyone under 6 feet*



Consider warming up on "Scalsamine", an easy, overbolted(?) 5.9 which follows the obvious water streak perhaps 50 feet left of "You Call Yourself a Thief". This will introduce you to the unique rock of the area - large crystals that can be pinched and stepped on. To the right of "Thief" is "Dare to be Bold", 5.10b, a much more difficult but high quality mixed route.

