

## Black Ridge Trail - Colorado National Monument by Dave Cooper



*Spectacular canyon views from the Black Ridge Trail*

On previous visits to the Colorado National Monument we have explored some of its deep canyons. This week's hike takes us across the top of the Monument and provides spectacular views from a different perspective. This area offers a pleasant escape at this time of year to a drier, warmer climate, especially when the Front Range is wet and dreary.

**Getting to the Trailhead:** From Exit 19 on I-70 (Fruita), head south on SH340 for 2.4 miles to an intersection, the right fork signed to the Colorado National Monument (West Entrance).

To reach the upper parking area, from this intersection, turn right towards the West Entrance to the Monument (Monument Road) and drive 4.7 miles on this road to the Upper Trailhead, located at the Monument Headquarters. If you are arranging a car shuttle, leave a second car at the Liberty Cap Trailhead Parking area, 11.4 miles from SH340. The Monument is a US Fee Area.

The trail passes out of the Monument for a part of the hike and travels along the edge of the Black Ridge Wilderness, part of the McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area.

To hike the trail in one direction you will need a car shuttle. The trail can be hiked in either direction.

**Hike Statistics:** The trail gains 940 feet and loses 220 feet in 5.5 miles one way.

**Difficulty:** An easy trail hike.

**USGS Quad:** Colorado National Monument, CO

### Hike Description

From the parking area at the Monument Headquarters, cross over the road and start up the Black Ridge Trail. Initially climbing quite steeply, the excellent trail quickly flattens out and travels along a bench, then climbs again briefly before passing out of the Monument onto BLM land.

#### *The bench area near the start of the Black Ridge Trail*

The trail climbs gradually after this point, and offers good views of some of the canyons as well as of the Grand Valley. The trees are mainly Pinon and Juniper.



*Walking across the causeway*

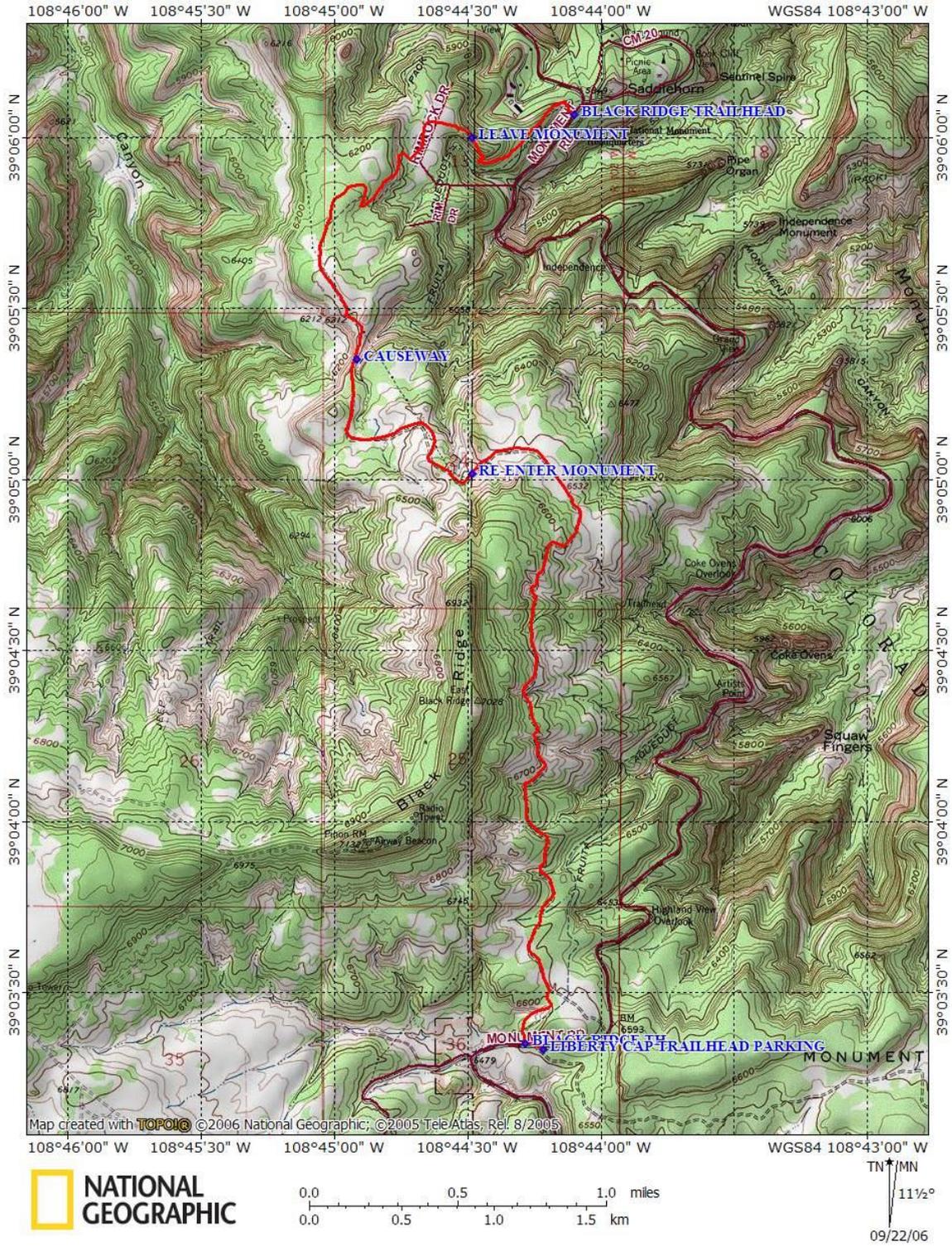
After 1.9 miles the trail crosses a causeway; quite an interesting feature.

At 2.8 miles the trail re-enters the National Monument and continues to undulate through scenic terrain before reaching the road at 5.4 miles.

*Hikers on the Black Ridge Trail*



If you have left a car at this end of the trail, turn left on the road and walk 50 yards east to the Liberty Cap Trailhead Parking area.



GPS Latitude / Longitude NAD83 (Deg., Min., Sec.)  
 TOPO! GPS Data Format DegMinSec NAD83 ElevFeet Local-Time  
 LEAVE MONUMENT,39,6,0,-108,44,29,6050,11/29/2005,16:22:38,  
 BLACK RIDGE TH,39,3,21,-108,44,17,6542,11/29/2005,16:22:39,  
 LIBERTY CAP TRAILHEAD PARKING,39,3,20,-108,44,13,6529,11/29/2005,16:22:39,  
 RE-ENTER MONUMENT,39,5,1,-108,44,29,6529,11/29/2005,16:22:39,  
 CAUSEWAY,39,5,21,-  
 108,44

