

Mt. Antero – West Slopes via Baldwin Gulch

August 8, 2011

Difficulty: Class 2+

Summit: 14,269'

Gain: 2850' from 11,500' just below tree-line;

Round Trip: 8 miles

Climbers: Rick Crandall and Rick Peckham and Emme the Australian Terrier

Mount Antero, located in the “Collegiates” range, is the eleventh highest peak in Colorado, with an elevation of 14,276 feet. It is named for Chief “Graceful Walker” Antero of the Uintah band of Utes. The mountain itself is prized for its gemstone deposits and has one of the highest concentrations of aquamarines and topaz in the country.



Emme and Rick Peckham in the cold dawn of pre-sunrise.

We drove 2 hours to Buena Vista and overnighted there for an early start the next morning. The mountain itself is fun and not overly difficult, but the road approach was reputed to be long and very rough, so we wanted to leave plenty of time for the off-roading. The road more than lived up to its reputation.

This was to be Emme’s 16th fourteener and my 20th. Her climbing skills continue to amaze other climbers we run into – especially on the steeper summit approaches.

We were on the road by 5:30 am. The first 15 miles were uneventful, and then we headed uphill on an old mining “jeep road” that was neck-wrenching rough. It took us 1hr 15 minutes to go the final four miles. We could have gone further as this mountain is riddled with jeep trails due to the extensive mining, but we wanted to make a real climb of it, and we were beaten up by the road, so we stopped at 11,500' just below tree-line

and started hiking at 7:30am in the pre-sun cold.

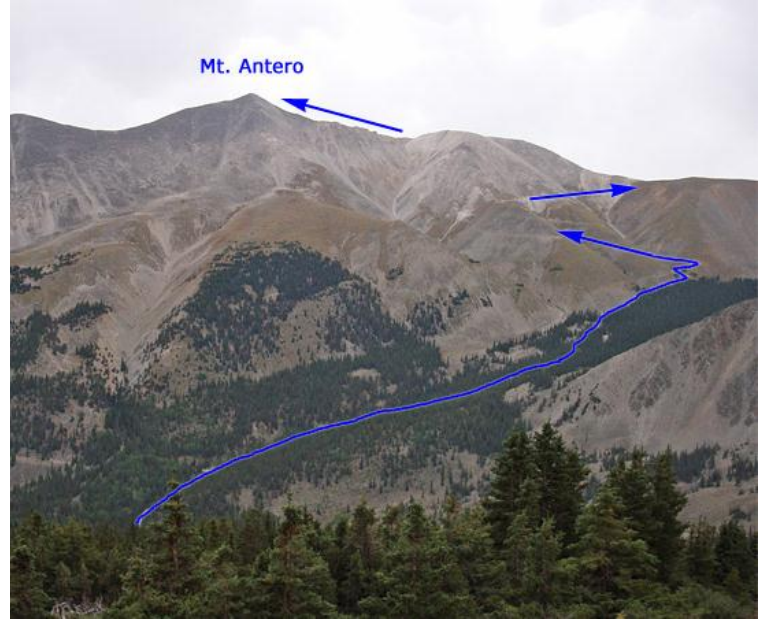
We hiked a few miles gaining elevation on the remaining jeep road switchbacks and finally met the warming sun line as it descended the mountain to meet us.

Rick was soon able to take his gloves off.

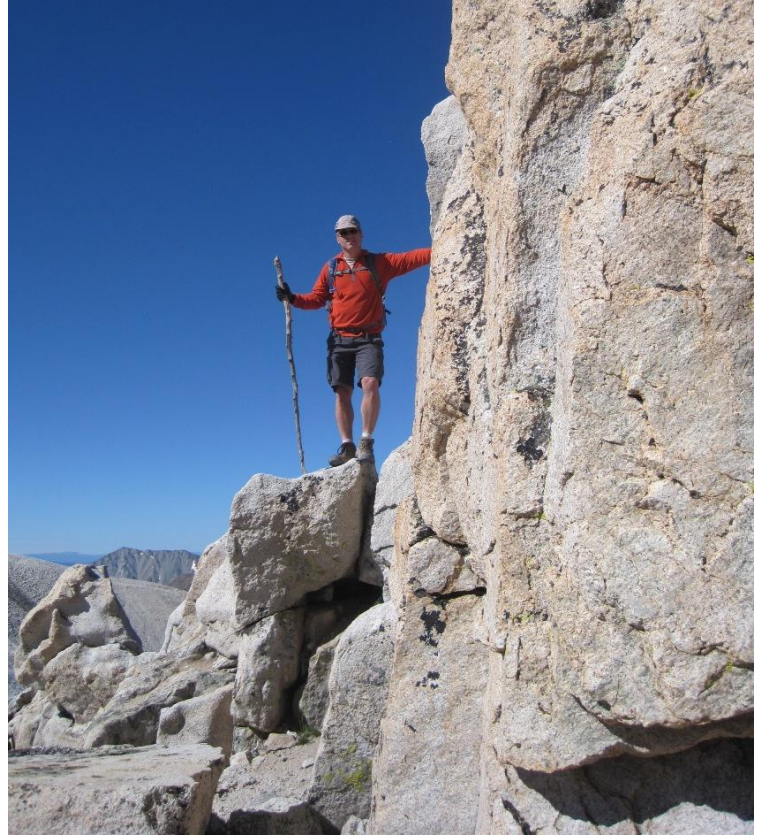




We left the jeep road somewhere around 12,800' and started into the ever-present rocks that the Collegiates are known for.



Around 13,200' the real fun started – a ridge leading to the approach to the summit – and we picked a route right along the top, with a bit of fun Class 3 climbing.



Rick P. having some Class 3 fun.



Not to be outdone, Emme got up on the highest rock she could find!

Blue skies, sun and a crisp breeze combined to perfect weather.

Behind Emme to the left is the remaining part of the rocky ridge we climbed leading to the approach ridge to the Antero summit shown upper-right. We were still about 800' of vertical and $\frac{3}{4}$ mile away.



We summited Antero at 10:30am.
That was 3 hours from the car.

The weather continued amazing,
blue sky ...

... and time for lunch.



I actually tried bringing a whole
tomato for the turkey sandwiches.
I sliced it on a flat rock which
worked great and avoided
sandwiches that are too mushy if
you put tomatoes on before the
climb.



Rick's new Spot that allows a custom message created on the iPhone, blue-toothed to the Spot device, sent up to a satellite, and emailed in real time to a friends list!



Looking down from the summit – the rocky ridge and you can see the winding jeep road below.



We headed down the summit approach from the at 11 am.

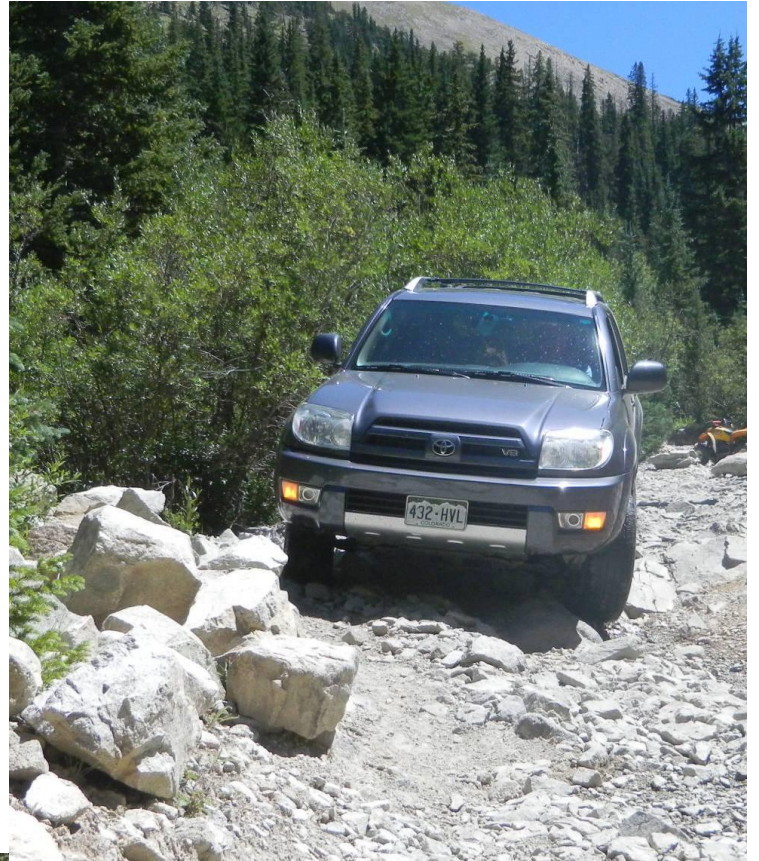


Back to the ridge and more rock fun.

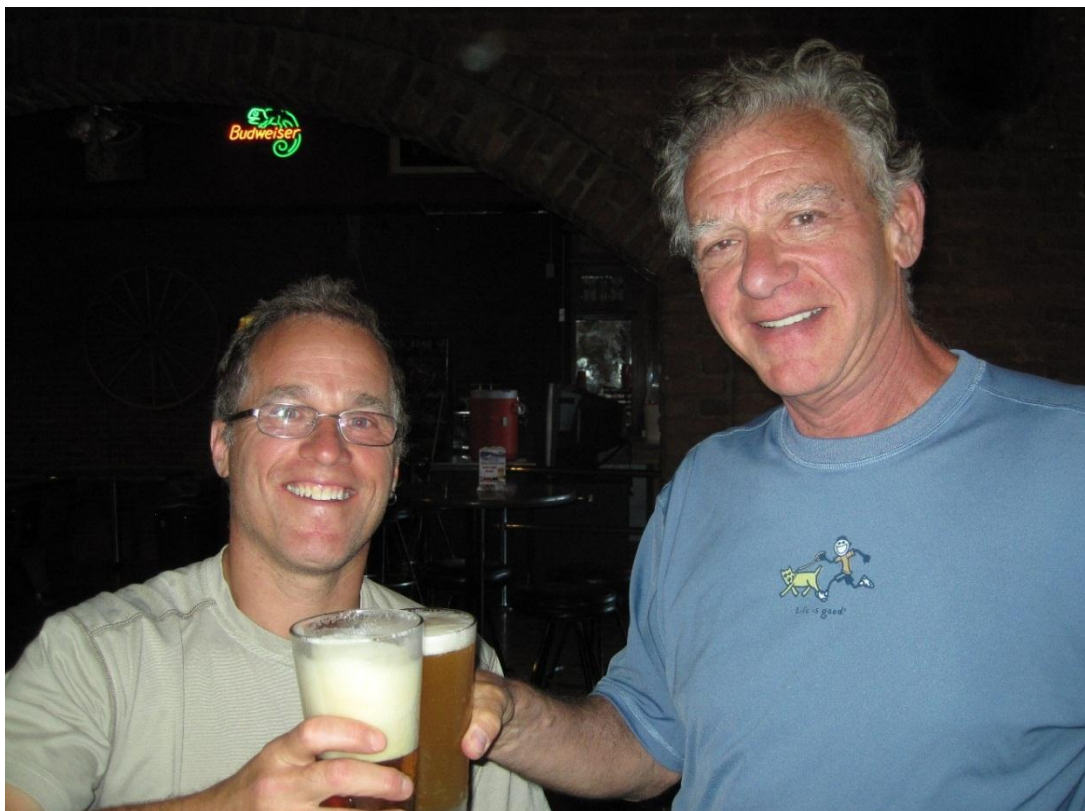
Once back to the jeep road we made great time getting back to the car by 1pm, just two hours down. However the day was not over ...

... we still had that rough road to navigate with the 4Runner. Every rock needs to be studied and either

passed if possible or you need to get at least one tire on top to raise the car and prevent bottoming. I was also concerned about vehicles coming up the road – fortunately only once did I have to back up this mess to let a jeep and a 4WD truck up (uphill vehicles, like climbers, have the right of way).



Oh yeah – I forgot to tell you about the stream – by then I figured if the trusty 4Runner could do what it just did – it could probably swim too!



After the hour and a half of rough-riding, we were back in Buena Vista celebrating a glorious day over a few beers. I was bushed – not so much from the hiking and climbing – but that road!!!