


La Plata Peak – Northwest Ridge

Difficulty: Class 2
Exposure: 
Summit Elevation: 14,336 feet
Trailhead Elev.: 10,000 feet
Elevation Gain: 4,500 feet
Roundtrip: 9.5 miles
Trailhead: La Plata Peak

Climbers: Rick Crandall, Laura Welch

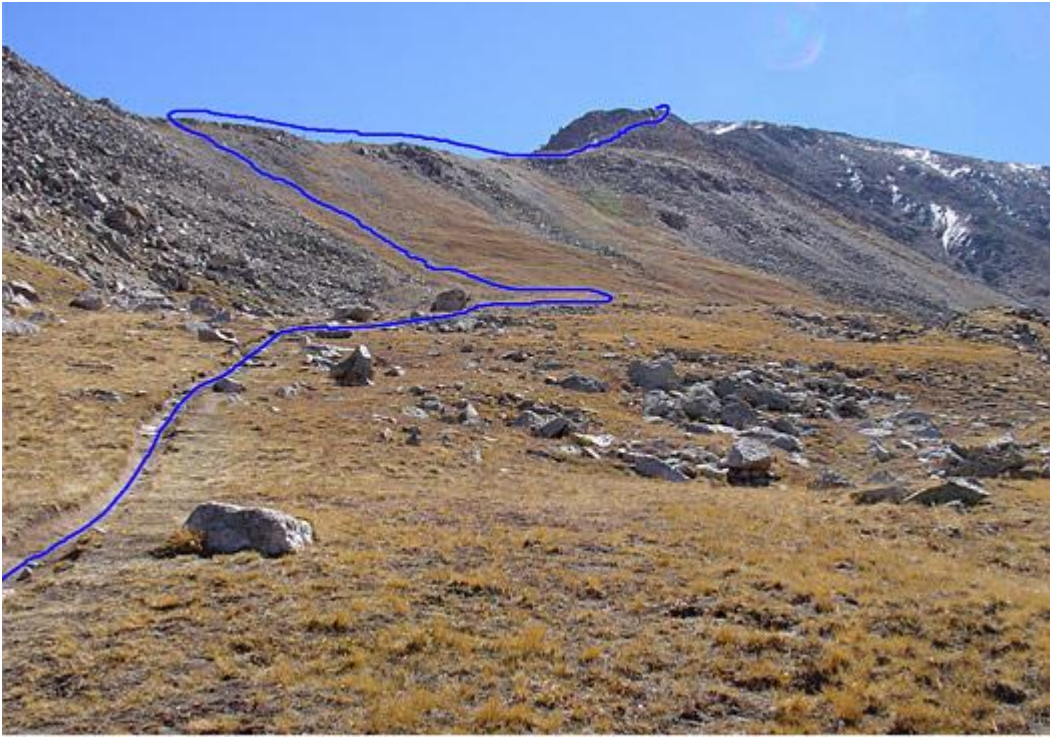
August 2, 2009



The whole route from trailhead is shown, through steep switchbacks to ridge, talus, boulders, snowfield, three false peaks and summit. La Plata is Colorado's fifth highest fourteener.

After a long walk thru trees, at 11,100', the trail begins to climb steeply from the gulch up a gully with a long series of switchbacks –





Then we climbed through an open area to 12,300' before turning left and climbing a steep pitch leading to the Northwest Ridge



Once on the ridge (12,750'), there's still 1.25 miles and 1500' vertical to the summit and the hiking becomes more difficult including boulder scrambling, snowfields and loose talus.



The blue line shows the most confusing part of the hike because the large talus makes route finding difficult. The trail eventually turns left and climbs back to the ridge at 13,500'. The summit is visible momentarily, but steep hiking remains



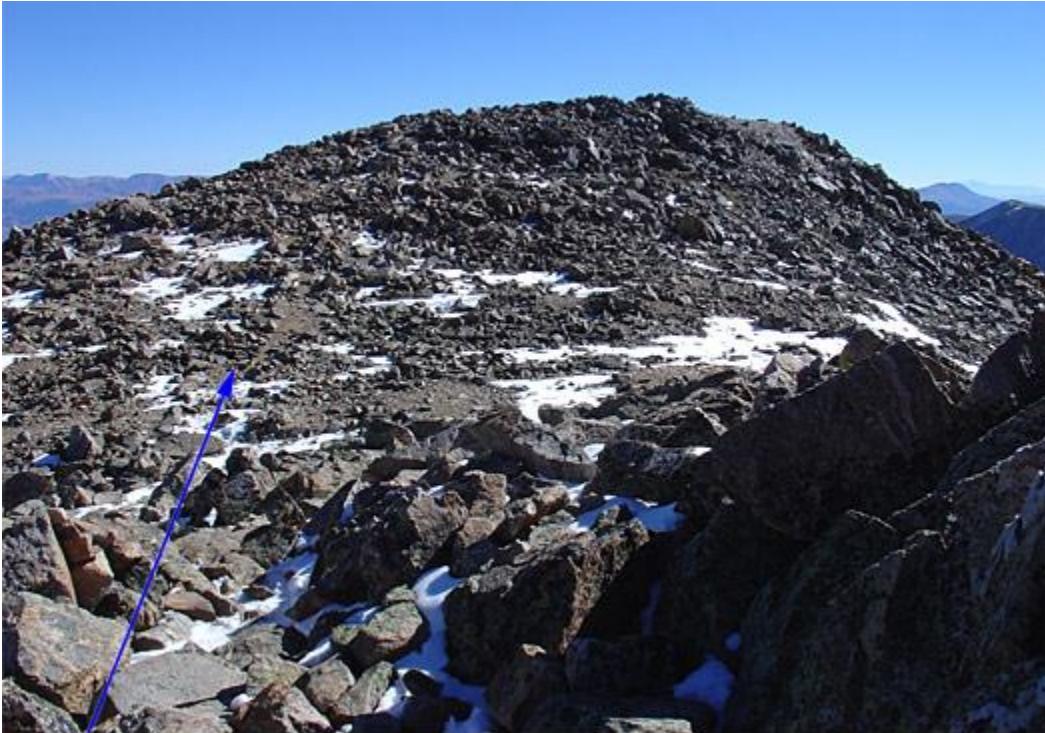
The upper terrain. There is a broken trail all the way to the summit.



Where possible on the way up we climbed in the snowfields which was actually easier than hopping the large boulders. On the way down the snow was already too warm, so we did the boulders.



Near 13,800', you think you're making progress, but that's just one of the false peaks.



Finally the trail to the summit at 14, 336'.



Rick summiting – thankful there's not yet another false peak.



Rick's "SPOT"
sending Peak
arrival (see
below)

Laura and Rick at the summit. Laura got there a lot sooner than Rick did!



It was Saturday – a regular party up there!



Rick's SPOT GPS emergency transmitter sending emails at points along the way.

A typical SPOT email is below (the one from the Peak with time stamp, as shown from the Google maps link):

Rick's SPOT Check. I
am OK probably
hiking. :-)
ESN:0-7477447
Latitude:39.0292
Longitude:-106.4735
Time:08/01/2009
18:36:31 (GMT)

