

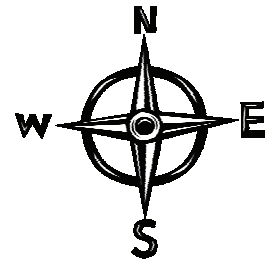
## Sentinel Point (12,527) (10)

Difficulty: Class 3

Distance: 8 miles

Elevation Gain: 2600 ft.

Time: 110 RP



### Introduction:

Sentinel Point is our favorite camp hike, the variety of routes and relative solitude make this a worthwhile journey. This area is home to many bighorn sheep and is your best chance to see them on the peak. Please do not confuse bighorns with mountain goats. There are no mountain goats on Pikes Peak. Another interesting note about Sentinel is that it is 3 feet shy of being a ranked peak.

### Description:

Start at the end of the road past camp. Either follow the Ring the Peak trail around Putney Gulch or jump the fence and head up an old road through Harvey's land. The two routes will merge at a creek crossing. This crossing can be difficult if spring runoff is high. Once past the stream follow the Ring the Peak trail up past some switchbacks and down into Horsethief Park. Follow the trail marked 704C, it will be a left turn. This trail will ascend steeply to the boulder field, there are hundreds of cairns marking the trail. Once at the boulder field there are many options to reach the top. The now faint trail heads up the valley to the north of Sentinel before disappearing completely on the ridge. The route I will describe follows the path of least resistance through the boulders. Once you get past most of the trees turn right and scamper up a few boulders (class 2+) to a grassy finger which leads down from the ridge. This is the first crux of Sentinel climb the 400 ft to the ridge. It is steep on good footing. Once on the ridge (12230 ft) it is a short 300 ft climb to the summit. Again follow the path of least resistance up the boulders. There are too many routes to the summit to describe them all. If care is taken the route can be kept at class 2 until 30 feet below the summit. The last 30 feet is easy class 3 climbing. Admire the view from the top, if you are lucky you will see bighorn sheep.

### Variation 1: (Jackrabbits shortcut)

After crossing the stream head straight up the ridge to 10,600. Cross the stream and meet up with the cairned trail. This will cut one mile off a one-way trip.

### Variation 2: (Ice Falls)

Right before the Ring the Peak trail switchbacks up the ridge there is a good trail which goes up a valley. This trail climbs up past Ice Falls and disappears. Follow the valley to its terminus at 10,500 ft. Pick up a faint trail which meets up with the cairned trail to Sentinel at a very large cairn. This route cuts off .5 miles one way.

### Variation 3: (South Slopes)

For more adventure and bushwhacking try the south slopes. This is a good route in spring when the north route is covered in snow. Follow the Ring the Peak trail to the Horsethief Falls trail. There may be some high water in the creek after spring runoff. Follow the trail to the falls. Cross the creek and head up the steep slopes towards Sentinel. The vegetation is not very thick and the footing is generally good. Reach treeline at 11,800 feet. Look for a notch in the south ridge which will provide

easy access to the standard route. There may be an easy snowfield right below the notch. Cross over the notch(class 2+) and join the standard route. This route adds 1.5 miles one-way.

**Extra Credit 1:** Ridge Point Fun. Class 2 2-4 miles 150-400 ft. 40-60 RP

Anyone who has been to Sentinel will notice that there is a whole ridge of little summits to the southwest of Sentinel. Follow your route back to the 12230 foot saddle. Head east over Point 12,586 and on towards point 12,492 and 12,499 (class 2). At Point 12,499 there is a dramatic cliff which marks the terminus of the ridge, admire the West Fork Valley. Look for an old trail which climbs Pikes Peak. This is a wild area, if you wish to view Bighorn Sheep this is your place.

**Pancake Rocks (11,050)**

Difficulty: Class 1

Distance: 10.7 miles

Elevation Gain: 2500 ft.

Time: 150 RP

**Introduction:**

Pancake Rocks was at one time a camp hike, now it is just an obscure point not many people who visit RMMC know about. This should change, Pancake Rocks is a worthy all day hike through meadows and beaver ponds to a fun rock outcropping with an outstanding view.

**Description:**

From the same trailhead as Sentinel follow the Ring the Peak trail. This trail climbs up and over two ridges before descending into Horsethief Park. Cross the creek and join the Horsethief Falls trail heading east. Look for a sign for the Ring the Peak trail and Pancake Rocks. Head up this trail. The lower portions may be wet or snow-covered early in the season. Climb up the many switchbacks to the ridge. This is not the end. Descend 200 feet before climbing the final 200 feet to the rocks. This section of the trail can hold snow into June. The Ring the Peak trail ends here for now. Plans are to construct a trail south to the town of Gillette. On Pancake Rocks enjoy the views to the west and south towards the mining towns of Cripple Creek and Victor.

