**Sturgill Peak**

Route Type: 4wd road

Route:

From Highway 95, turn onto Mann Creek Rd. This road starts out paved, and then becomes a well-grated gravel road for the first 15 miles. Once you pass Spring Creek Campground, the road starts to degrade, but is still doable in a sedan until a hairpin turn around 4 miles after that (note: the road is often referred to as FR 009 past this point, but it is the same road nonetheless). At this point, if your vehicle does not have high clearance, I would advise against proceeding further and instead hiking or biking the 7 mile, 1700ft elevation gain hike along the rest of the road. If your vehicle has high clearance, you can carefully proceed another 3 miles to the point where 4wd becomes necessary just shy of the summit. From here, this would be a 1 mile, 400ft elevation gain hike along the road, although the steep grade makes biking this section challenging. If your vehicle has 4wd, you’ll be able to make it up to the summit, where a fire tower is manned during the summer months. On a clear day, one can see the Blue Mountains to the west, the Rockies to the east, and the Wallowas to the North, although the most immediate view is of Cuddy Mountain to the northeast.

My experience:

After camping just off of the Mann Reservoir, I drove my van all the way to the hairpin turn and then cautiously proceeded for just over a mile or so before calling it quits and biking the rest of the way. In truth, I could have gone farther, but the anxiety of getting your car stuck in a ditch or rolled of the side of the mountain is a lot more intense when it’s also your home. So, I got out my bike, and went up, freezing my fingers as this was the first cool day of the fall for me and I was not dressed for the occasion. After spending a few weeks hiking in thicker wildfire smoke in Oregon, I was blown away by the views afforded on Sturgill for the last mile and a half of the ascent. At the summit I marveled as long as my body allowed me to. The fire tower was manned and the guy came out and chatted with me for a bit. He was very friendly but I was by this point both cold and hungry, and I thus had to be on my way back down. Thankfully, I was able to navigate the rocky road back down to Mann Creek, and had a delightful afternoon catching up with friends on the phone

**Cuddy Mountain**

Route:

Cuddy mountain offers two very different experiences for getting to its grassy knob at the top. The first is a hike along Trail 258 from just off of SR 71. This hike is around 8 miles and 3100ft of elevation gain, and takes you through several different forested biospheres before opening up into wide grassy meadows near the summit. The other option is to approach from Council Cuprum Rd along FR 055, which is a well-grated dirt road for the first 3 miles or so. Past this point, the road gets narrower and the tread softer, but still otherwise doable in a sedan if not for a stream crossing right at the start which will scratch the underside of one’s bumpers in a low-clearance vehicle. The next 6.5 miles of the road is like this, with most of the traffic being ATVs and dirt bikes but still being a reasonable drive for a passenger car so long as conditions are dry. After the intersection FR 234, the road becomes accessible only to capable, high-clearance, 4wd vehicles. From here, a round trip of 8 miles and 700ft of elevation gain is required, and a bike would make the experience far quicker. Either way you take to the summit, you’ll be treated with breaktaking views of the Wallowas as well as the mile-long drop into Hells Canyon, with parts of the snake river visible from the summit.

My experience:

Having undiagnosed asthma at the time, I was in no shape for a hike of that difficulty, and so I took the driving/biking route up the summit. This nearly ended in disaster when my bike had partially-fallen off of the motorcycle rack I kept it on in the back of my van, for when I put it in reverse I bent the pedal wheel and destroyed the shifter, thereby making the bike unusable. Luckily for me, the bike was electric and came with a throttle, so I was able to throttle my way along to the summit, continuing to freeze my fingers as I had not learned my lesson from Sturgill Peak the day before to bring warmer clothing. Anyhow, the views were breathtaking and the only downside of the experience aside from my bike being damaged was nearly getting arrested for using an outdoor outlet in a grocery store parking lot in Council afterward. Evidently the owner didn’t like that I had plugged in my e bike charger to his port, but instead of asking me to stop, pay, or leave, any of which I would have happily done, he immediately decided to call the police on me, who then accused me of trespassing. Luckily, I was able to get out of that situation, but it left me with a very sour feeling, as I had later calculated that the maximum possible cost of power I had used amounted to 12 cents – or about a minute of minimum-wage labor. I was almost arrested over an amount of money so small that you could have earned it working our criminally-low minimum wage for the time it took you to read this paragraph. Suffice to say, stay safe out there

**Cottonwood Butte**

Route:

From Highway 95, turn onto the paved Cottonwood Butte Rd and follow it for 4.5 miles. After this, turn onto Radar Rd, which starts out as a dirt road but becomes a low-quality paved road that takes you all the way to within 0.1 miles of the summit. Parking here and walking to the summit reveals expansive views of the Columbia Plateau as well as the jagged summits of the Rockies to the east. During winter, one could hike or ski up this road and then take a couple of the ski trails down the local ski area on the east side of the Butte.

My experience:

After trying to ascend Pilot Knob earlier in the day and failing due to rainy conditions making a narrow dirt road a bad idea in an underpowered, heavy vehicle such as my van, I decided to drive over to Cottonwood on my way to Lewiston. It was a delightful drive up and the views were fantastic up top – I had not had an ascent that easy for weeks, and I thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

**Moscow Mountain**

Route:

My experience:

**Bald Mountain**

Route:

My experience:

**Hoodoo Mountain**

Route:

My experience:

**Long Mountain**

Route:

My experience: