

Boundary Peak, NV, 13,140 ft. – October 6, 2014, HP #17: No Easy Ridgeline

October 5th, I left Provo UT at 6:15 a.m. and drove to the Nevada/California border, mostly via Highway 6, to the Queens Mine trailhead of Boundary Peak. It took about nine hours to get there, and since my plan was to climb the Boundary Peak the next day, I had plenty of time on my hands. Having sat for those many hours my back was sore. I decided a walk might loosen it up, so I wandered up the trail for about 50 minutes to just shy of where the Trail Canyon route joins the Queens Mine route. In so doing I obtained a feel for what I would be up against the next morning. I did not see anyone else on the trail, but I thought I might as there was a van parked one switch back down from the trailhead.



When I got back to my vehicle, I moved it to a flatter spot as I planned to sleep in it. As I finished, a pick-up with two brothers pulled up. The clock in my SUV read 5:45 p.m., and they talked as though they were going to climb the peak that evening, and then drive to the Mount Whitney trailhead to hike the John Muir Trail to its peak the next day. As they prepared to start up a couple other hikers could be seen coming down. Soon after the brothers set off, the other hikers arrived at my camp. One gave me his card explaining he had lost his phone and asking me to contact him should I find it. They then wandered down to the van.

Before dark, the brothers returned admitting the peak was out of reach so late in the day. Soon they drove off leaving me alone again as I finished preparing my dinner. By the time darkness arrived the early start to the day had caught up with me, and I retired to the back of my SUV. As I set an alarm set for 5:10 a.m. I realized I was no longer in the Mountain Time Zone meaning the current time was actually only 7:30 p.m. Nevertheless, I was soon asleep. Throughout the night sleep came and went as I tossed and turned eventually getting up before my alarm sounded.

The next morning thanks to being on Pacific Time, I was able to turn off my headlamp at 6:15 a.m. as I left camp.

The hike to Boundary Peak consists of three sections. Section one leads from the trailhead to the ridge where the Trail Canyon path and the Queens Mine trail intersect; this took 65 minutes to cover. Next is a steep section up loose scree to the top of a false summit. This section was dusted with snow and also required about one hour of time. The final section is from the false summit to the true summit. Here the going became even steeper with just enough snow on it to make it dangerous. One and a half hours elapsed as I negotiated section three. Overall, the

one-way trip from the trailhead covered approximately three and a half miles while gaining close to 3,500 feet.

At the top of Nevada, tucked inside the summit register I found a paper with "Boundary Peak" print on it along with its elevation and a date of July 6, 2014 exactly three month prior. I set up my mini tripod and photographed myself holding the sign. The sky was clear, and the weather was calm. Even at over 13,000 feet the temperature was pleasant, especially for October. The view of the desert below was expansive. Stretching from the south to the northwest the Sierra Nevada Range was visible, with Mount Whitney (the tallest US mountain outside of Alaska) being just 88 miles away.

Off to the south, about a mile away and 300 feet higher stood Montgomery Peak in California. The ridge between the two peaks did not look difficult, and I was doing great on time, so I decided to make the trip over to it. The traverse was tougher than I had anticipated, with a lot of loose rock and rock pinnacles to down climb and skirt around. In the end it took an hour to cross the ridge. Along the way, with all the ups and downs, I had to gain close to 1,000 vertical feet to reach 13,441-foot Montgomery Peak.

On the return trip I decided to stay lower than the summit of Boundary Peak in hopes of easier terrain. In so doing I down climbed too far, forcing me to regain the lost elevation which added a half hour to my return time.

As I descended Boundary Peak, between the true summit and the lower false summit I noticed a solo hiker approaching, though our routes never intersected. Within a mile of the trailhead, I encountered a herd of mule deer just as I had on both of my hike up this section. By 4:00 p.m. I found myself back at my vehicle with another highpoint hike completed.

From the Queens Mine trailhead, I made my way back to Highway 6 and from there to Lee Vining CA. The next day I travelled to Yosemite Valley National Park to enjoy a few days of rock climbing.

Photo Album: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/wkdqQgRDwX1LLGzeA>