

MONUMENT ROCK LOOP

To Get There: Take Monument Exit 161 off Interstate 25 and drive west for a half-mile on Second Street until it ends at Mitchell Avenue. Turn left and drive 0.6 mile to Mount Herman Road. Turn right and drive .75 mile to a Forest Service parking lot on the left.

The Hike: Take the trail at the northwest corner of the parking lot. A path climbs imperceptibly through the woods, closely paralleling Mount Herman Road. In a half-mile, it reaches a graded dirt road. The trail continues on the other side of the road. Soon the trail drops into an open meadow where the spire of Monument Rock juts up over the scrub oak. A stock pond at its base acts as a reflecting pool. This is the halfway point.

Follow the trail to the foot of Monument Rock and look at the bits of quartz and feldspar pressed together to form the rock. Take a trail directly southeast of the rock. It crosses a dirt road in less than a quarter-mile and continues straight until it runs up against a fence and turns left.

Follow the trail down a gradual valley for more than a mile, ignoring paths cutting off to the left or right. The path passes ruins of a stone root cellar on the right. Eventually it runs up against another dirt road, swings left and parallels the road back to the trailhead.