

Hike: Bridge Mountain — up and back

Trailhead: Red Rock Summit via Rocky Gap road

Distance: 6 to 16 miles —round trip (depending on your starting point.)

Elevation gain: 600 to 2,270 feet (depending on starting point.)

Elevation Peak: 6,940 feet

Time: 5 hours to all day (depending on starting point)

Difficulty: 4 or 5 (depending on starting point)

Danger level: 5

Class: 3

How easy to follow: 3

Children: no

Map and Waypoints: Blue Diamond, NEV - See Page 9

Fees: Red Rock Canyon Pass. \$7.00 per car; \$30 annually. Golden Eagle accepted.

Directions: From the Mirage on Las Vegas Boulevard (the Strip) go north three miles and turn left (west) onto Charleston Boulevard. Drive 16 miles on Charleston to Red Rock Canyon. The signed turnoff for Willow Springs is located 7.3 miles past the fee booth. It is 0.6 of a mile drive on the paved road to the gravel parking lot. The unsigned Rocky Gap road starts at the far end (west) of the gravel parking lot. At 2.6 miles the road divides; take the right fork. Continue another 2.4 miles (five miles total) to Red Rock Summit.

Note: A 4WD vehicle is needed.

Overview: Up Rocky Gap Road by vehicle or foot to Red Rock Summit. The **trail** starts at Red Rock Summit and proceeds east to the ridgeline. It makes a half circle south of Bridge Mountain and then the **route** heads NE down the shoulder and across the bench to the base of Bridge Mountain. From the base, it is a series of cracks and ramps to the arch, under the arch and up a steep ramp to the top of Bridge Mountain. Black arrows and cairns mark the route along the sandstone.

Comments: You will remember this hike for the rest of your life! With sheer drops of a 1,000 feet and Las Vegas in the background the view has to be seen in person. Hikers spend hours exploring the arch, the Hidden Forest, and admiring the view from the peak. People have come from all over the country to do this hike — they have not been disappointed!



Note: Wind gusts of 50 mph have been reported on Bridge Mountain.

The hike: The trail starts at the summit of Rocky Gap Road. See Photo 1. It heads SE with a slight incline, but soon levels.

In about 400 yards the

Photo 1

trail curves south and goes up a small hill. At the top of the hill you can see Rocky Gap Road, the



Photo 2



Photo 3

the trail nears the predominant north/south ridge. The trail stays a few feet below the ridge on the west side. As it heads south you pass a metal trail sign. Just after this point you get your first view of Bridge Mountain. What a contrast from the dull gray to the multi-colored sandstone. Two different worlds separated by the Keystone Thrust fault.

The trail heads south and stays along the top of the ridge, which affords great views of Bridge Mountain and, if clear, Las Vegas. You quickly pass a wooden trail sign. The views are soon obscured as the trail weaves behind a ridge. The trail curves to the east and the views out to the south rival the vista of Bridge Mountain. Juniper Peak, Rainbow Wall and Peak, and Mt. Wilson are seen from the trail. The vistas keep getting better as the trail curves to the north and Bridge comes back into view.

The trail starts to descend to the overlook. The deep canyon off to the right is Pine Creek Canyon. Follow the switchbacks down the red dirt and sandstone to the overlook. See Photo 2. You're looking down over 1,000 feet into Pine Creek. It's a great photo opportunity.

From the overlook, the idea is to climb down the shoulder to a bench. Begin by heading north

road you drove on to get to the trailhead. The incline becomes moderate as the trail heads NE and gains the next ridge. The trail passes outcrops as it stays on the crest of the ridge and heads east. After a few switchbacks,



Photo 4

down the wash 60 yards to where the terrain flattens. (See Photo 3.) Follow the cairns across the sandstone heading directly toward Bridge Mountain. You'll soon see a 20-foot pine; walk to it. Once past the pine descend the sandstone. Soon two tall ponderosa pines come into view. You want to walk between them as outlined in Photo 4.

As you pass the ponderosas, you cross a dry drainage. If you walk east (right) in the drainage you get a great view of Las Vegas. Once across the drainage, follow the cairns up the sandstone to the first of three chutes. It's about a 50 yard walk. A pine marks the start of the class 2 chute. See Photo 5. Waypoint 1.

At the bottom of the chute, turn left and follow a short path through the manzanita bushes. Once back on sandstone, cairns and black marks lead you to the second chute. You'll descend about 50 feet before you get to the second chute. Descend the class 3 chute. (See Photo 6.)



Once down, follow the cairns and black marks to the third chute, which is only 20 yards away. (See Photo 7.) After descending the chute, there's a 20-foot, class 3

Photo 5

wall you have to descend. It's only 15 yards from the bottom of the third chute. Follow the cairns down to the bench. You have descended the shoulder, now it's easy going 150 yards across the bench. Hike up a steep ramp of sandstone to the start of the crack. WP 2. See Photo 8. There's a large black arrow on the west (left) wall of the crack. Follow the black marks up the crack. If it is windy stay in the crack; otherwise follow the black arrows when they



Photo 6



Photo 7

wide arch. On the other side of the arch a giant ponderosa leans against the sandstone. This is a great area to take a break. Continue by going under the arch and friction climb along the left wall. A fallen log lies near the wall. At the top of the arch the dome-shape peak of Bridge Mountain can be seen. Go SE across the sandstone rim and around the Hidden Forest.

The final ascent heads NE along a steep ramp, which is well marked with cairns. (See Photo 10.) At the top of the ramp, the peak stands to the south. It's an easy 40-yard trek to the peak from this point. A large cairn with a sign-in book marks the peak. A natural shelter sits just below the peak. This is a good place to have lunch and escape the wind. The view from the peak has to be seen to be appreciated. It's awesome. Waypoint 3.

To Descend: Retrace your steps down the ramp, around the Hidden Forest, and through the arch. From this point, cairns and the black marks make the descent easy to follow.

point up and to the right. Climb out of the crack on the east (right) side and up the beehive sandstone. People who have a fear of heights should stay in the crack. The climb outside of the crack is exposed. Staying in the crack is more protected, but it is a harder climb.

As the crack passes a ledge, follow the black marks west (left) along a ledge for about 10 yards. You are now on the west (other) side of the crack. Climb the ramp as indicated by the marks. See Photo 9. It's a 50 yard climb to the 30-foot tall and 50-foot



Once on the trail, make sure to turn left (west) at the trail sign. Otherwise, the trail takes you to North peak.

Photo 8



Photo 9

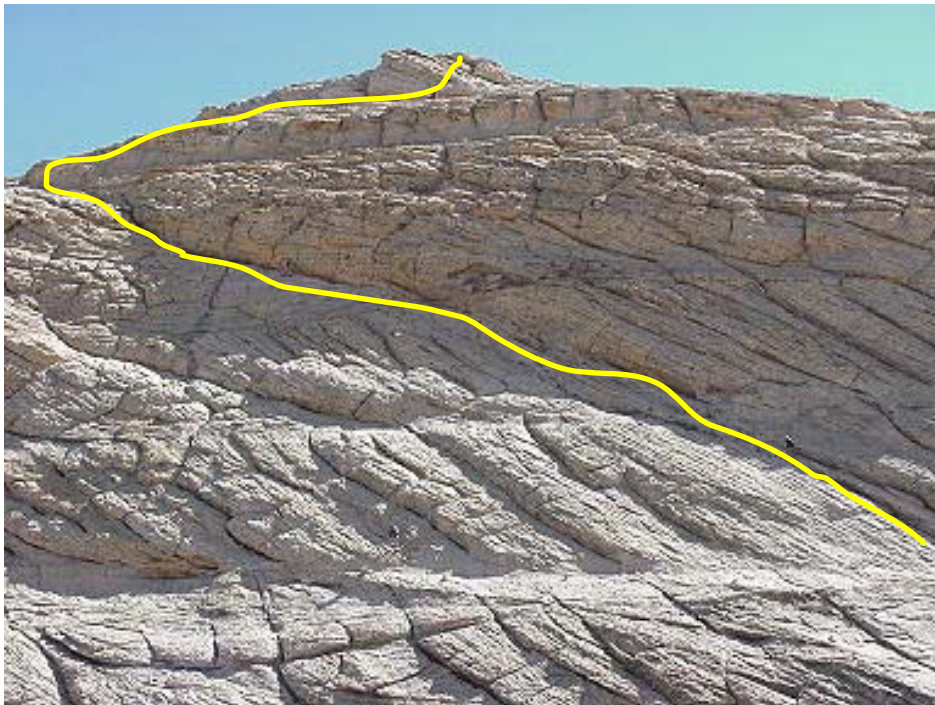


Photo 10

Waypoints:

1. 36.13084N 115.5093W
2. 36.13219N 115.50566W
3. 36.13188N 115.50163W

