

COLORADO TRAIL (SECTION NORTHWEST OF LITTLE MOLAS LAKE), SILVERTON, COLORADO

Segment 25 of the Colorado Trail starts at Little Molas Lake. Hikers (and mountain bikers) can also do day-trips on this part of the trail by starting from the Little Molas Lake parking area and heading northwest. The first part of this section of the Colorado Trail passes beneath Sultan Mountain and the Grand Turk. The views from this trail are spectacular, although the wildflowers aren't quite as nice as they were on the other two hikes we did in this area after this one (Coal Bank Pass and Snowdon Meadows). We had hoped to continue further along the trail than we did, but we were not yet aware how early in the afternoon thunderstorms can appear in this area (and the trail goes along an exposed ridge).

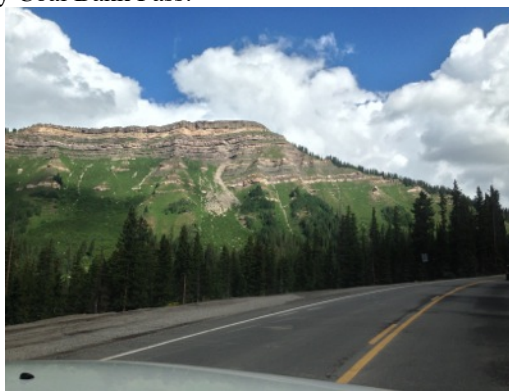
Driving by the Hermosa Cliffs on our way north along the San Juan Skyway from Durango.



Engineer Mountain is visible for some distance on this drive.



This is the southwestern part of the ridge by Coal Bank Pass.



Looking southeast at what I think must be North Twilight Peak. Crater Lake should be in the small valley just to the left of the peak.



Looking north towards the North Lime Creek valley, which is just west of Sultan Mountain and the Grand Turk (which are two peaks visible in all three of my July 2017 trip reports from this area).



Looking north again, towards Molas Pass (right of center).



Looking northeast, with Snowdon Peak to the left in this photo (I am not sure what the peaks to the right of center and which are just barely visible in the background are called).



Between Coal Bank Pass and Little Molas Pass, there are three trails which go up creeks to the west of the San Juan Skyway: Coal Creek Trail, Deer Creek Trail, and West Lime Creek Trail. (I think this is the West Lime Creek Trail, but I can't recall where I took this photo.) The West Lime Creek Trail is the only trail which does not connect with another trail at its end.



Here we are heading up the nicely graded dirt road to the Little Molas Lake Campground and trailhead parking area.



This is where visitors can park if they are just going to the lake. Snowdon Peak is prominently visible in the background center of this photo.



Hikers can continue on to the parking area for day-hiking the Colorado Trail. Here we have started out on the trail and are looking south down the valley towards Durango.



Looking east at the clouds above Snowdon Peak.



There was a small patch of blooming Colorado False Hellebore (right of center) early on along the trail.



The trail soon leaves the trees, and we see the small peaks south of the Grand Turk in the distance.



The trail switchbacks once, and we start to get better views of the surrounding mountains.



Looking south again, down the Lime Creek Valley. To the left of center is North Twilight Peak. I think the small bump to the right of the valley is Potato Hill. (It would be very interesting to see the views from the top of Potato Hill.)



Looking east up the valley where Segment 24 of the Colorado Trail came from.



Small fuzzy pink flowers we spotted near the trail (I'm not sure what they are called).



Near a small stream, we encountered a small patch of wildflowers, including Indian Paintbrush, and a few others I couldn't identify.



Looking up this small stream. There appears to be a use trail which goes up this stream, perhaps to a nice picnic spot, or perhaps to a route up one of the nearby small peaks.



More small flowers near this stream.



These white flowers with pink veins were very nice, but I haven't been able to identify them.



The trail begins to follow the side of the ridge-line which extends from the small peaks southwest of the Grand Turk. Here is a panorama looking east (left) and south (right), with Snowdon Peak in the center.



Another panorama with Sultan Mountain and the Grand Turk visible to the far left, Snowdon Peak to the right of center, and Potato Hill just barely visible to the far right.



We round a switchback and start to get views to the southwest. To the far left in this photo, Engineer Mountain is just barely visible.



I'm not sure if this is Nodding Sunflower or Orange Sneezeweed.



To the left in this photo is Potato Hill, and to the right is Engineer Mountain. Notice that the meadow is greener and we are starting to see more flowers.



Looking back north at Sultan Mountain and the Grand Turk.



Looking south through some flowers at Potato Hill and Engineer Mountain again.



These greenish flowers were the most common flowers here; I have not been able to determine what they are called.



We are getting increasingly good views of Snowdon Peak and the nearby ridges from here.



Looking north towards Sultan Mountain and the Grand Turk again.



Looking south down the Lime Creek valley, with Potato Hill just left of center, and Engineer Mountain to the far right in this photo.



We can now see many more peaks. The small peak (11,916 feet) just above Coal Bank Pass is to the left of Engineer Mountain. I think Jura Knob is the mountain to the far right in this photo.



Panorama from a scenic bend in the trail.



Thunderclouds are starting to gather near Snowdon Peak and in the valley through which Segment 24 of the Colorado Trail goes.



There are two different kinds of tall white flowers in this photo; I'm not sure what either is called.



Panorama looking north (left) towards Sultan Mountain and the Grand Turk. In the center is the valley through which Segment 24 of the Colorado Trail goes (to the left of it is Whitehead Peak), and to the right of center is Snowdon Peak. North Twilight Peak is to the right, and Potato Hill is just barely visible to the far right.



The trail is now heading directly towards the smaller peaks just south of the Grand Turk.



We finally were able to get a good view over the small ridges to the west of the trail, which had been preventing us from seeing where this trail will eventually go. North Twilight Peak is the peak to the far left in this photo, and Potato Hill is the small bump just to the right of it. Engineer Mountain is the next peak to the right, and it is noticeably sunny there. To the right of it is Jura Knob, and Rolling Mountain is visible in the background to the right of it. Then there are the Twin Sisters, and to the right of that is an unnamed peak which the trail goes just beneath. Finally, to the far right (and partially blocked behind the tree) is Bear Mountain.



Taking a closer look at Engineer Mountain, Jura Knob, and Rolling Mountain (left to right).



Now we are looking over at the Twin Sisters.



The trail drops into the upper part of North Lime Creek, then ascends briefly to cross below the peak seen in the center of this photo.



Panorama looking north (left), east (center), and south (right).



Looking back down the trail towards Durango, with Potato Hill to the left of center and Engineer Mountain to the right of center.

