

## **Bear Mountain via Fay Overlook**

### **Bear Mountain/Doe Mountain Trailhead**

**5.65 mi**

**Cumulative Elevation Change: 2315 ft**

**4 h 32 min moving time**

**6 h 40 min total**

This challenging hike ascends the long mass known as Bear Mountain, which lies in the southeast to northwest direction. There are several false summits. As described here the hike ends on a bluff that affords views of the San Francisco Peaks and Mt. Williams to the north. You will know then that you have arrived. The easiest route to the top is the clearly marked Forest Service trail. Here a variation is described that begins on the FS trail but then departs from it by traversing the mountain's southeast ledges to an overlook into Fay Canyon. From here the west bluffs over Fay are climbed until the FS trail is joined. This double stemmed lollipop route provides excellent views of Fay Canyon and the Dry Creek drainage formations. Later in the hike the western views open up, revealing Black and Casner Mountains, Hartwell, and Loy Butte.

Start at the Bear Mountain/Doe Mountain trail head. Cross the road and follow the regular Bear Mountain trail through slot up to level of red buttes. When you reach the first bench of the mountain (at the level of the base of the red buttes), turn right almost immediately on a well-worn route **(1)**. There may be branches laid across the route to help obscure it. Take this basically level path along the base of the red buttes following the contours of the mountain. Eventually you will cross a wide rocky wash coming down from Bear Mt. and head toward the rim of Fay Canyon. Before the rim, head left across level ground in the direction of a large red butte that overlooks Fay Canyon.

At the base of this butte, on the left side, there is a small red rock beehive. Your trail heads up on the left side of this beehive, just over the small wash at its base **(2)**. Follow this steep trail up along the base of the beehive. At one point you will face a tree in the path. The trail turns right here and keeps climbing until you are at the base of a large open area of rock shelves. Head up the rock shelves as best you can and look for a trail near the left side that will continue through the vegetation. Eventually this trail will lead you into a wash that will take you up to the top of this bench of the mountain which is covered in manzanita. At this point you should be near the rim overlooking Fay Canyon. Check out the view! A trail leads through the manzanita first staying near the rim, then turning somewhat to the left to reach the top of the knoll. At the top of the knoll you can see the area of crosshatched rocks ahead of you where you will meet the main trail. Work your way across the open ledges and through the manzanita basically staying in the direction of the rim until finally you reach the FS trail under a tall ponderosa pine **(3)**.

At this point the trail is well marked with cairns over the crosshatched rocks and takes you up to a level area which is a great viewpoint. To continue to the top of Bear Mountain, go past the viewpoint and continue to climb the last 300 feet or so up the rise ahead of you. The trail will take you over to the other side of the top **(4)** where you can

enjoy the excellent view of the San Francisco Peaks in Flagstaff as well as Williams Mountain, Hartwell Canyon, Loy Butte, Casner Mt., Black Mt., and Sycamore Canyon. Return along the FS trail.