

Five Points Gulch – U.S 50 W

Direction to trailhead: Drive west of Canon City on US 50 for about 20 miles. The entrance to Five-Point trail is about 520 feet before highway marker 257 (Figure 1). Continue driving past the mile marker for approximately ½ mile around the wide curve. Then carefully make a U-turn using the wide area on the east side of the highway (Figure 1). Be careful because highway traffic can be heavy. Drive back to mile marker 256 and continue for about 520 feet to the second opening in the canyon wall (WP2). (The first opening leads into a much steeper and a very short gulch.) Park on the shoulder of US 50 just beyond the opening to 5-Points Gulch then walk back to the opening and down into the gulch for about 200 feet where you will reach a wire gate. The trail head is on the other side of the gate. Be sure to close the gate after you pass through. About 26.8 miles one way from Canon City.

Length of hike: 3.4 miles (round trip)

Beginning elevation: 6075

Elevation change: 390 feet

Difficulty: Easy - Moderate

Description: The trail follows the stream bed as it slowly gains in elevation. For most of the hike, the stream bed is relatively easy to follow. In places the trail is obscured by small groves of willows or an invasive introduced small tree called salt cedar or tamarisk. There also are junipers scattered along the trail. It passes through large open meadows (Figure 2) with a variety of wildflowers during the growing season. In a few locations the trail is blocked by piles of large boulders (Figure 3). You will have to climb over or around these obstacles. You also will have to cross the stream bed several times and can expect to have wet feet during the rainy season, unless you wear appropriate footwear or cross barefoot.

Scattered along the trail and along the walls of the gulch are small to large flat black rocks called schist that sparkle in the sunshine due to embedded mica. You may also see serpentine, horizontal and/or vertical seams of quartz embedded in the pink granite or schist rocks along the canyon walls (Figure 4), or scattered along the floor of the gulch. The trail has no actual end point although this hike was 3.86 miles round trip. If you continue, the trail becomes less overgrown, hence easier to hike.



Figure 1. Map of 5-Points Hiking Trail



Figure 2. View of Five points trail



Figure 3. Boulders blocking Trail



Figure 4. Pink quartz embedded in schist rock