

## St. Charles Peak from Ophir Creek Road

**Direction to trailhead:** From Florence, take Colorado 67 southwest to Colorado 96. Take a right (west) on Colorado 96 and continue to the junction with Colorado 165. Take Colorado 165 south to Ophir Creek Road (County 360). County 360 is just north of Bishop's Castle. Turn onto County 360 and follow it for 8.1 miles, then turn left onto County 369 for about 2 miles to the St. Charles Peak trail head parking area (Figure 1). About 52 miles one way from Canon City.

**Length of hike:** About 7.78 miles (round trip)

**Beginning elevation:** 11,203 feet

**Elevation Gain:** 585

**Difficulty:** Moderate

**Description:** A dirt road (Forest road 335), probably an old logging road, starts at the parking area at the left (northwest) side of the parking area. Walk up this road approximately 300 feet to a wire gate. Please close after passing through. Follow the road as it climbs and winds up the side of St. Charles peak for about 2.88 miles.

This a very pretty trail with a forest of large Engelmann spruce on both sides of most of the trail. Near the top, lodge pole pines appear with their interesting contorted shapes. There are scenic mountain meadows some close and some distant as you walk up the trail. After about 2.1 miles, you will come to a wooden sign indicating you have reached the St. Charles Trail (WP1). Take the trail to the left (northeast). After another 0.15 miles you will reach a second wooden sign (WP2). At this point take the St. Charles trail as it makes a sharp left turn to the left (north). Continue on the trail for about 0.5 miles as it goes up and around the side of St. Charles Peak. At this point you will see a wooden hitching post on the left side of the trail (WP3). This is a good location to bushwhack up the side of the mountain for about 0.16 miles to the peak.

As you climb up to the summit during late summer you will see an abundance of wildflowers growing in the meadow that covers the upper sides and top of St. Charles peak (Figure 3). When you reach the top, you will see a communication antenna at the top with a rock cairn nearby. A plastic bottle is located in the cairn is provided so you can leave your name. The panoramic views at the summit are fabulous (Figures 3 and 4).



Figure 1. Map of Trail to St. Charles Peak



Figure 2. Wild flowers growing on the top of St, Charles Peak



Figure 3. Mountain view from the top of St. Charles peak



Figure 4. Mountain view from the top of St. Charles Peak