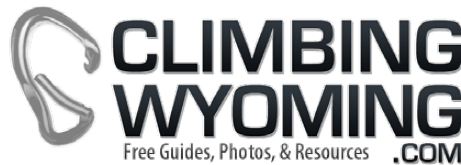


# Boulder Lake Domes Boulder, Wyoming

A FREE MINI-GUIDE FROM



by  
**Wesley Gooch**  
All Uncredited Photos by Wesley Gooch

## Special Thanks To

Jason Burton (beta, photos, editing) & Josh Hattan (beta, photos, editing)

For guide updates, corrections, extra photos, & other resources visit  
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Version 1.5 (10/07/2011)

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# Boulder Lake Domes

Elevation: 7,500 - 7,800 feet

Approach Time: 45 minutes to 1 hour

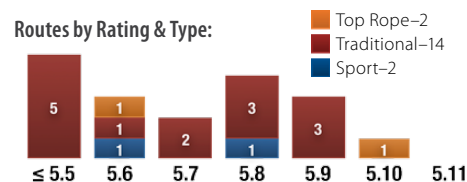
Primary Aspect: All Aspects (*early morning shade*)

Number of Routes: 18+ (*good first ascent potential*)

Above the Boulder Lake trailhead and summer homes, near the edge of the Wilderness Boundary, is a cluster of large granite domes nicknamed "The Ranch." Although these rock formations have always had obvious climbing potential, they remained relatively unexplored until the summer of 2010, when all but a handful of the routes listed herein were established.

At the time of this writing (2011), the majority of the route's at Boulder Lake are easy (5.4-5.10) but there is good potential for harder climbing on the steeper domes (see page 11). Until harder routes are established, Boulder Lake could be considered a suitable training ground for beginning traditional climbers that are not afraid of exploring or adventure climbing.

Routes by Rating & Type:



Keep in mind that this area is new to climbing. Many of the of routes have only seen a few ascents – be prepared for loose rock and dirty cracks. Wear a helmet.

## Recommended Equipment

Bring a standard rack up to 3 inches, a set and a half of stoppers, long trad draws, and a handful of sport draws. A large cam or two is necessary for a few routes. Use a 60-meter rope.

## Driving Directions

Follow U.S. Highway 191 south from Pinedale for 12 miles to Boulder. Turn left (east) on Highway 353 (the only paved turnout at Boulder). Continue on Highway 353 for about 4 miles and turn left again (north) on Boulder Lake Road. Continue to the end of Boulder Lake Road and park in the trailhead lot. From Pinedale, the drive is nearly 25 miles long and takes approximately 40 minutes.

## Approach

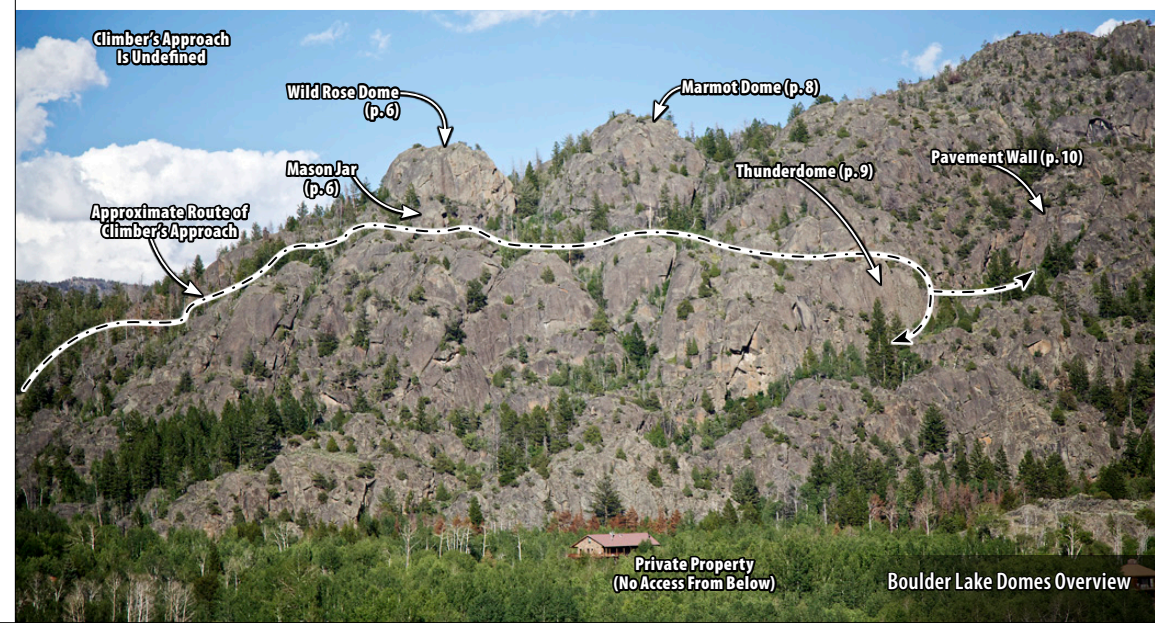
There is not a defined climber's trail. The following description is a recommended approach route that avoids trespassing on private property. From the trailhead, walk east down a dirt road that leads to a Forest Service campground. Soon after crossing a bridge over Boulder Creek and just before the campground, linkup with a well maintained Forest Service trail on the east (right) side of the road. Follow this trail for about a mile. The climber's approach route breaks off the main trail to the south (right), just before the Wilderness Boundary sign. Try to aim for the Wild Rose Dome or Mason Jar formation. The line of least resistance is labeled in both photos on the facing page.



Chase Milam on *Slurp N' Shine*—5.8 (p. 6).  
Mason Jar formation. Photo: Jason Burton.



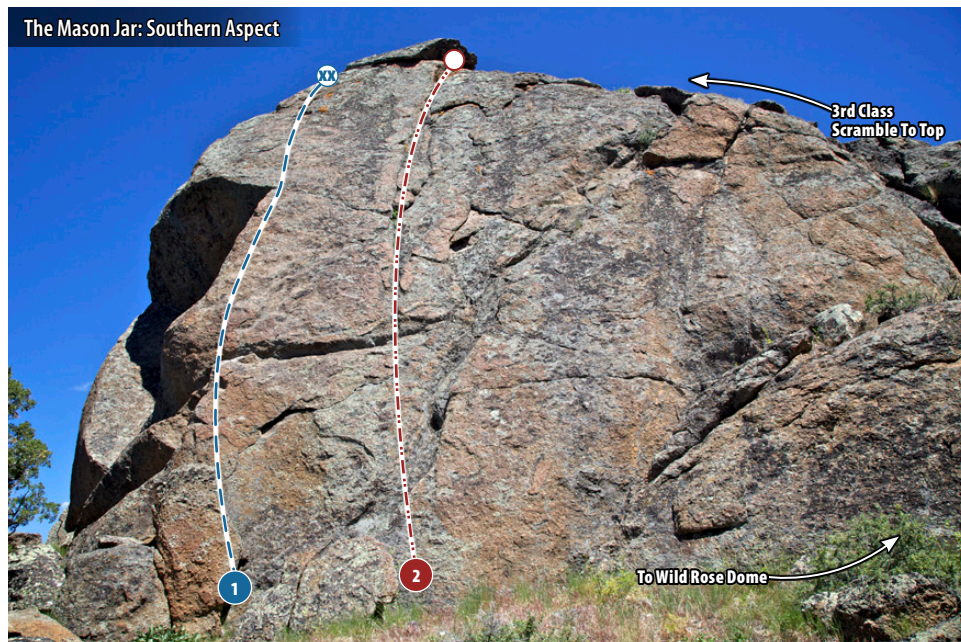
Boulder Lake Domes Approach & Overview



Boulder Lake Domes Overview



The Mason Jar: Southern Aspect



## The Mason Jar

If you managed to follow the recommended climber's approach route, then the Mason Jar will be the first good rock formation you will come across. There are two routes on the Mason Jar's south face and there is potential for a few more. If you are not interested in leading, scramble up the backside and set up a top rope.

### 1 Slurp N' Shine ★ 5.8

A fun moderate sport route that follows the right edge of the Mason Jar's southwest arête. Stay to the left on the top half. There is a bolted anchor on top but no rappel chains (mandatory walk-off).

### 2 Loose Lid 5.8

To the right of *Slurp N' Shine* is a thin crack and seam named *Loose Lid*. As the name sarcastically implies, expect some loose rock and a dirty crack – use caution.

## Wild Rose Dome

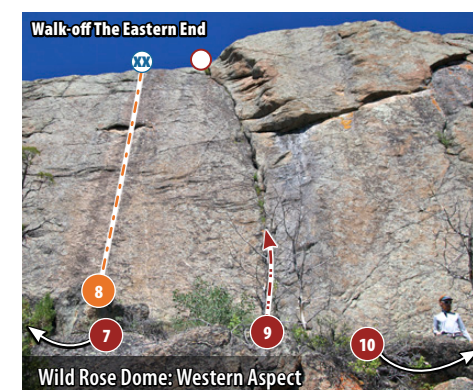
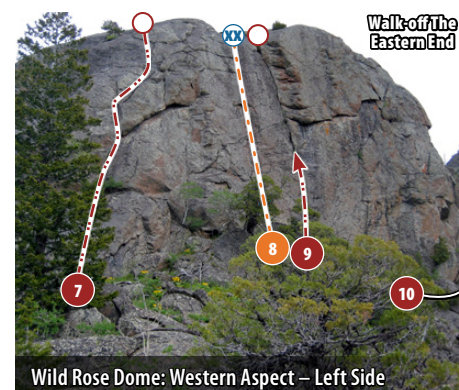
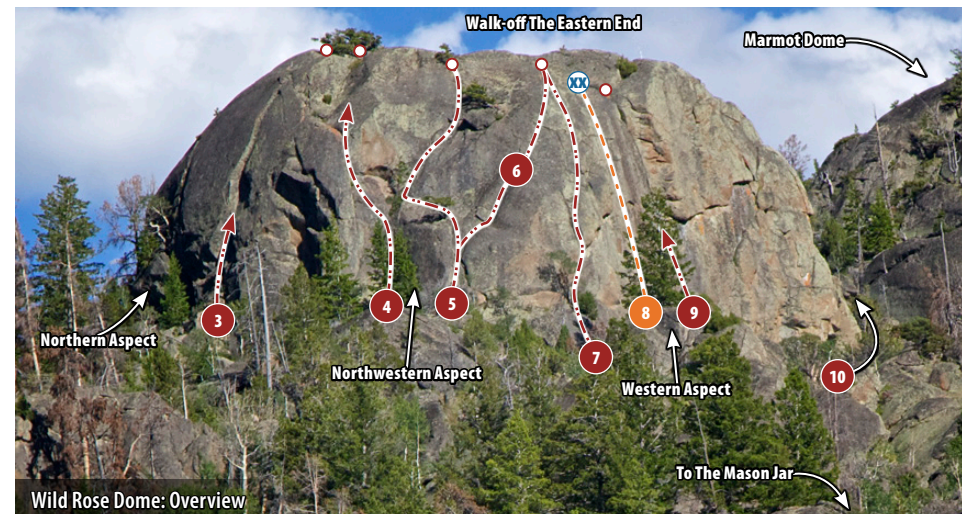
The Wild Rose Dome is the area's most obvious formation and has the largest concentration of routes, however, the dome's new route potential has yet to be tapped out.

### 3 Cinder Block 5.8

Left angling crack to a small roof, then up a dihedral to a tree belay. (30m)

### 4 Tiller 5.7

Climb through a steep step up and left onto an easy slab to the top.

Josh Hattan on *Tiller*. Photo: Jason Burton.

### 5 Garden Party 5.5

Not recommended. Easy climbing on dirty cracks. Watch for loose rock. (22 meters)

### 6 Columbine ★ 5.6

*Columbine* is the crack system to the left of *Paintbrush*. Head up a groove to a low angle crack. Then traverse right to linkup with the top of *Paintbrush*. (22 meters)

### 7 Paintbrush ★★ 5.7

Climb a short slab to a funky 5.7 move getting into the crack. Follow this crack that seams out near the top. Setup a gear/tree belay on the summit. Bring small stoppers. (22 meters)

### 8 Unfinished Project ★★★ 5.10?

No lead bolts, top rope anchors only.

### 9 Wild Rose ★★★ 5.7

*Wild Rose* is the obvious crack up the center of the formation's western aspect and the first known route established on the dome in 2007. Expect some avoidable vegetation growing in the crack's lower half. Bring gear to 3 inches. (24 meters)

### 10 Sky Pilot ★★★ 5.9

A mixed route up to a fun dihedral with a high crux. Climb 24 meters to a set of rap anchors or keep going to the top and walk-off. To supplement two bolts, bring a standard rack ranging from hand-sized gear and down.



Marmot Dome: Western Aspect

Jenn Burton on *Deep Right Field*. Photo: Jason Burton.Jenn Burton on *Prairie Smoke*. Photo: Jason Burton.

## Marmot Dome

To access the climbing, scramble up to the Lower Tier's base by bushwhacking across and below (south) of Wild Rose Dome. The last leg of the approach is 3rd class.

### 11 Crop Circles ★ 5.5

Face climb past two bolts on a slab up to a left leaning flake. Get some gear in and head up right to a tree anchor belay. *Crop Circles* is the best way to access the Upper Tier.

### 12 Marmot Crack 5.5

Climb a Lower Tier route or scramble up and left to gain a right-leaning crack above a dead tree. The pitch follows a right-trending crack.

### 13 Lopper 5.4

An easy hand crack in a shallow left facing dihedral. Belay at a tree. Scramble up and combine with *Deep Right Field* for a two pitch 5.5.

### 14 Deep Right Field 5.5

Starts on the Upper Tier. Move right until you're at the base of a big right facing dihedral. A little dirty at the bottom but the crack protects well and is a good beginner's lead.

### 15 Prairie Smoke ★★ 5.9

Not Shown. A mixed route with three bolts. Approach from the base of *Deep Right Field*.

Thunderdome: Western Aspect

Thunderdome Has Plenty Of First Ascent Potential, Highlighted Below Are The Most Obvious Potential Lines



## Thunderdome

Thunderdome has some good potential for several new mixed lines, but as of 2011, the dome's most obvious lines have yet to be explored. To access the main wall, approach from the Mason Jar formation and wrap around the southern end of the dome.

### 16 Beginner's Lead 5.6

Not Shown. An ideal route for someone's first lead but is otherwise lacking any memorable characteristic. The climbing is safe with good clipping holds. Located on the looker's left side of the dome's western aspect. Five bolts to a single-ring rappel anchor.

### 17 Thunderdud—Unfinished 5.6

As of 2011, *Thunderdud* is an unfinished sport route (missing lead bolts). Currently, there are only top anchors. If you wish to top rope *Thunderdud*, scramble to the top of the dome via the backside, build an anchor, and rappel down to a set of single-ring rappel anchors.



Thunderdome: Southwestern Aspect





Pavement Wall: Western Aspect

## Pavement Wall

Tucked away in a secluded nook, is a high-caliber granite cliff. The Pavement Wall has only one route, regardless, *Range Life* is likely the best trad line at Boulder Lake Domes, and the wall has potential for more routes. To access the base of *Range Life*, approach from Thunderdome's southern end. To descend, either rappel or walk-off to the north via a series of gradually descending ledges.

### 18 **Range Life** ★★★ 5.8

*Range Life* is a soaring, right-leaning finger crack that starts as a mere seam, but then progressively expands to a .75 inch crack at the top. Begin in a triangle crack system two meters to the right of the crack proper. Push up a series of physical moves, managing a shallow Red Alien or a bomber #8 offset nut, through to a horizontal hollow flake. Gingerly pass the flake to the right and step on to a small ledge. From the ledge, move back into the crack system proper, then climb splitter fingers to a small roof. A well protected (#.75 camalot) 5.8 move pulls you over the roof. Finish with easy scrambling to a bolted belay anchor. (30 meters)

The *Range Life* splitter. Photo: Josh Hattan.

## New Route Potential

In reality, only a small fraction of the domes above Boulder Lake have been explored. Few details are available, however, the largest formations have yet to be climbed and at least two walls hold promise for multi-pitch routes (two pitches). For those seeking greater challenges, there are at least four overhanging walls scattered about the uncharted territory south of Thunderdome. For those who choose to explore, the approaches may demand a rappel(s). There are rumors of a lofty alpine buttress found somewhere further up the main trail.

## Report First Ascents

Please share new routes with the climbing community! Beta for First Ascents can be submitted to the author through [ClimbingWyoming.com](http://ClimbingWyoming.com). New routes, with credits, will be added to this supplement mini-guide and made available as a free download on [ClimbingWyoming.com](http://ClimbingWyoming.com). To help identify routes, please take photos!

Josh Hattan starting up *Range Life*. Photo: Jenn Burton.

The unexplored territory south of Thunderdome. Refer to the Boulder Lake Domes Overview (p. 5).