
Warbonnet Peak

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Mountain/Rock

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Page Type: Mountain/Rock
Location: Wyoming, United States, North America
Lat/Lon: [42.76110°N](#) / [109.2144°W](#)
Object Title: Warbonnet Peak
Activities: Mountaineering
Elevation: 12369 ft / 3770 m

Page By: [rpc](#)
Created/Edited: Aug 11, 2004 / Feb 28, 2009
Object ID: 152922
Hits: 19702
Page Score: 91.14% - [34](#)
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Overview



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Warbonnet is a prominent tower guarding the southern entrance to the [Cirque Of The Towers](#) area within Wyoming's Wind River Range. The peak with its steep and impressive east and north faces overlooks [Jackass Pass](#) (immediately to its northeast) - the most popular gateway for those hiking into [Cirque Of The Towers](#). The name of the peak most likely derives from its resemblance to an Indian chief's head dress - the various subsummit formations looking very much like wind-swept feathers from below. Despite its status as one of the principle peaks of The Cirque, the peak sees relatively few ascents (esp. via its technical routes) as most of the climbing traffic is absorbed by the nearby classics (predominantly [Wolfs Head](#) and [Pingora](#)). Adding to reasons behind the relative obscurity of the peak is the fact that none of its technical routes currently have published topos - a fact that adds a degree of adventure to such climbs. The tower is composed of granite, much of it (esp. on the lower 2/3rds) is of relatively low ("decomposed granite") quality. Its immediate neighbors include Warrior 1 Peak to the northwest and [Mitchell Peak](#) across [Jackass Pass](#) to the northeast. Additionally, Sundance Pinnacle (nothing more than a "bump" on Warbonnet's southern flank) lies to its immediate south (this is the first "tower" you see on your approach via Jackass Pass). The Plume is a minor tower (though apparently host to a few III 5.9 routes itself acc. to Kelsey's book) attached to Warbonnet near its northeast face.

Warbonnet offers a wide range of difficulty among its established routes. From a class 3 "descent" route on its south side, through two 5.7 routes on its northeast face, all the way up to a 5.10 route and the Cirque's most difficult route, Black Elk a 5.11a on Warbonnet's east face.

Note that this is the second "Warbonnet Peak" we've had the privilege of climbing. The present peak is not to be confused with its counterpart in the Sawtooth Mountains of Idaho: [Warbonnet Peak](#). It is also not to be confused with the other Warbonnet Peak in Wyoming: [here](#). Thanks to [jimmyjay](#) for pointing this one out.

Getting There

[Alan Ellis](#) has done an excellent job of describing the "normal" (as in the shortest and the most popular) approach to The Cirque on his [Cirque Of The Towers](#) page. Directions to trailhead as well as hiking directions are included in great detail. We have used these (exclusively) and had no issues.

One additional point is that should Warbonnet Peak be your primary climbing destination, you might consider camping before you descend into The Cirque (depending on your choice route). The class 3 descent brings you back to just below the pass between North and Arrowhead Lakes.

Red Tape

There are no permits to park at the trailhead and no permits required for overnight stays in the Cirque (or Wind Rivers in general). However, due to its overuse ("contamination with

human fecal matter"), camping within 0.25 miles of Lonesome Lake is now prohibited. Additionally, stay 200 feet away from water sources when picking your campsite.

As a bonus, you might consider packing up and taking out (home or work?) your solid waste. It's really not a big deal and you'll feel like a hero for doing your part to clean up The Cirque. The fact that grazing at large seems to be allowed in the area offers a counter-argument to this point. It's your call.

When To Climb

Standard "apline season" for western US applies: June - September are optimal. Outside this frame, extra time/effort/commitment might be required to access and climb in The Cirque.

Note that "afternoon" thunderstorms are the norm here. "Afternoon" varies from about 2pm to about 7pm (to about never on some days I suppose). During our 5 day stay in August, we got hosed on a regular basis every day (and on few lucky days twice a day!).

Mountain Conditions

Cirque Of The Towers is located within the Bridger Wilderness of the Bridger-Teton National Forest. The relevant administrative office is located in Pinedale, WY:

Bridger Teton National Forest
Pinedale Ranger District
29 East Fremont Lake Road
PO Box 220
Pinedale, WY 82941
307-367-4326

Camping

See "Red Tape" section above. No permits required. Don't camp within 0.25 miles of Lonesome Lake. Otherwise, keep more than 200 feet away from other water sources. Practice low impact back country behavior. The area (Cirque) is reputed to have bears. There are certainly marmots and rodents. In the least you should hang your food off the ground - might consider brining a bear canister (think of it as a good additional work out on your way in/out :)

Car camping is available at the Big Sandy trailhead campground for \$8.00/night from June 20 to September 10. There is no fee before or after those dates. There are 12 sites with pit toilets, no water and no showers. Check [here](#) for other Forest Service campgrounds in the area. This information was copied from [Alan Ellis' Cirque Of The Towers](#) page.

"I have a wide stance when going to the bathroom." --Idaho Republican Sen. Larry Craig

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