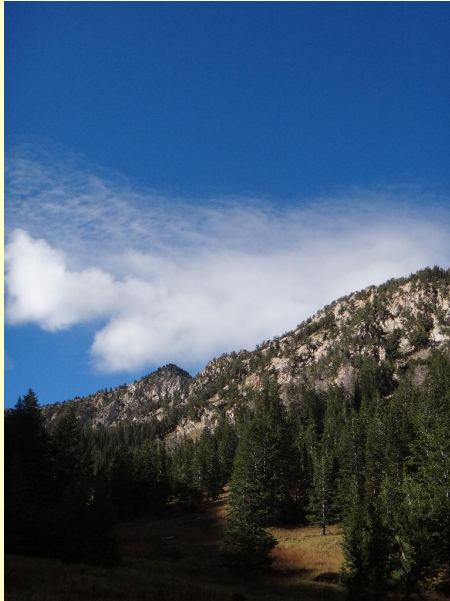




DESERET PEAK - TOOELE COUNTY HIGHPOINT



Rating: Moderate Hike

Length: 3-5 hours (6.5 miles)

Gear: Standard Hiking Gear

Maps: Deseret Peak East, UT; Deseret Peak West, UT

Water: None.

Season: Late Spring, Summer, Fall

Notes: Snow patches can last in upper Mill Fork until early summer.

Waypoints:

Trailhead	12T 363822mE 4482615mN N40° 28' 59" W112° 36' 24"
Junction	12T 363230mE 4481935mN N40° 28' 37" W112° 36' 49"
Deseret Peak	12T 362113mE 4480035mN N40° 27' 34" W112° 37' 35"

Hype

Tucked in the Stansbury Mountains, not an hour away from Salt Lake, Deseret Peak is the Tooele County highpoint. Unlike most areas directly along the Wasatch Front, the Stansbury Mountains are much less crowded and have a more open and remote feel. If I'm hiking near Salt Lake for a quick day trip, the Stansbury Mountains are at the top of my list. You're likely to see people, but not the hordes you'll find in Big Cottonwood or Little Cottonwood Canyons. There are a couple of small springs/stream en route, but bring all the water you will need, including extra for dogs if you are bringing them.

At 11,031, the peak is still in the range of many of the more popular Wasatch front peaks and is quite rugged. The upper areas are alpine, with fantastic open ridges and rocky slopes. For the hardcore, it is of note that Deseret Peak is one of only 57 in the lower 48 that have greater than 5000' prominence. Like all peaks, afternoon thunderstorms are a real danger, especially on the exposed upper ridges. My pictures are from a late fall trip where a storm passed through mid-morning blanketing the area in clouds.

Why the name Deseret Peak? Before becoming the state of Utah, the Mormon state was called Deseret. The term Deseret comes from the Book of Mormon, where it means "honeybee". This name was chosen to represent the symbol of industry, and the productive and self-sufficient nature the Mormons were to possess in the new state.

Note: There are two common routes up Deseret, South Willow Creek and Pockets Fork-Dry Lake Fork. This description uses the South Willow. It is the most commonly used, and a little shorter than Pockets Fork-Dry Lake Fork. You can descend from the summit via Pockets Fork-Dry Lake Fork if looking for a loop and slightly longer hike.

Tags: county highpoint, peak, hike, wildflowers, fall colors, dog friendly, access: 2wd

Trailhead

From Salt Lake City, travel west on I-80 toward Wendover.

- Take exit 99 (Grantsville/Tooele).
- Drive 3.0 miles to the junction with Utah Highway 138.
- Go right toward Grantsville.
- 9.8 miles from the junction, in the town of Grantsville, go left on the signed Wasatch National Forest road. (West St, which becomes Mormon Trail on the outskirts of town.)
- 5.1 miles after turning on the National Forest road, turn right onto the signed road to South Willow Canyon
- 3.0 miles after turning up S. Willow Canyon, the road turns to dirt. Keep going for 4.1 more miles to the roads end and trailhead.

Note: There is a campground at the trailhead, but it does not have water. There are also several campgrounds lower in South Willow Canyon.

Route

Summit: 3362 m (11031 ft.)

Trailhead: 2260 m (7415 ft.)

Follow the trail west as it works gradually uphill. In 10-15 minutes, it crosses a stream to an important junction. Just after the stream crossing, stay left at the junction, and contour around on the trail to where it turns west again. From here, follow the trail as it works its way west up Mill Fork, then very steeply switchbacks up to the ridge. Phew! The hard part is over.

At the top of the ridge is a four-way junction. Go right (north) following the trail up the ridgeline to the summit.

Return the same way, or, alternatively, continue following the ridge line/trail north/west. It circles around two gullies, then descends to a junction in Pockets Fork. Go right, descending to the stream crossing and junction you passed on the way up.

