



DINOSAUR HILL - GRAND JUNCTION



Rating: Easy Hike

Length: 1 hour (1 mile)

Gear: Standard Hiking Gear

Maps: FRUITA, CO

Water: None

Season: Any, though summers can be hot.

Waypoints:

Trailhead

12S 695661mE 4333976mN

N39° 07' 59" W108° 44' 11"

Mine

12S 695985mE 4333923mN

N39° 07' 57" W108° 43' 57"

Viewpoint

12S 695862mE 4333994mN

N39° 07' 59" W108° 44' 02"

Hype

In 1901, a research group led by Elmer Riggs found almost 2/3's of an Apatosaurus skeleton at the site now known as Dinosaur Hill. Later, more fossils of sauropods were found at the site. These fossils date back to the Jurassic Period (150 million years ago). Excavating the Apatosaurus required actual mining into the slope. The mine was re-visited in the 1990s by a research group that found a few more minor fossils. When excavated, the original Aptaosaurus skeleton was about 70 feet long!

Today, the hill has a family friendly trail looping around it with interpretive signs about the history. Though you don't see actual dinosaur bones at Dinosaur Hill today, it is a great short visit with views of Colorado National Monument and the Fruita/Grand Junction areas.

Tags: *roadside, hike, family friendly, beginner, access: paved*

Trailhead

From I-70, take exit 19 for CO-340 toward U.S. 6/Fruita. Head south off the highway, staying straight through the round-a-bout to stay on CO-340. (Signed Colorado National Monument)

1.5 miles from I-70, after crossing the Colorado River, the Dinosaur Hill trailhead is signed on the left side of CO-340. There is a rest room and picnic tables at the trailhead.

Route

From the parking area, the trail loops around the hill. I recommend a clockwise direction. Not far from the parking area, the trail splits. Left goes a short distance to a large boulder where the indentation of a dinosaur bone can be seen.

The trail then climbs to several excellent viewpoints of the area, before descending the east side of the hill and visiting the now gated mine. The mine burrows into the Morrison Formation.

