

## NEW YORK BUTTE 10668 FEET CLASS 4

MILEAGE: 213 miles of paved road, 0.3 miles of excellent dirt, 1.8 miles of poor dirt or 4WD

DRIVE/ROUTE A: From Lone Pine, CA drive N on US Highway 395 about 0.75 miles to the signed, paved "LP Nar Ga" Road. Turning right here, drive 3.0 miles to the signed Dolomite Road, which is an excellent dirt road running NW-SE along the base of the Inyo Mountains. Turn right (SE) on the Dolomite Road, drive 0.3 miles and then turn left onto a poor dirt (possibly 4WD) road which is followed E 1.8 miles into Long John Canyon. Park. 'P qv<c'hgy 'eco r lpi 'ur qu'gzku'cv'cr r tqzko cvn( '6322)'cv'c'hqtnlp"j g'tqcf "qp"j g'tki j x0

CLIMB/ROUTE A: Hike 0.1 miles at a 75° bearing across the prominent wash to the base of a long ridge heading up toward the mountain. Climb this ridge in a generally NE direction over points 6666 and 8293 on your way to point 9007. From point 9007 climb ESE to the summit.

ROUND TRIP STATS/ROUTE A: 6300 feet elevation gain, 8 miles, 10-12 hours

DRIVE/ROUTE B/WESTERN APPROACH: This route involves driving the Swansea Grade, a BLM signed and sanctioned 4WD road starting at the tiny settlement of Swansea on the eastern shore of Owens Dry Lake. It is a very difficult 4WD road that can easily wreck a vehicle, even if you know what you're doing! It should only be attempted by experienced 4-wheelers with high clearance vehicles. To get there, drive about 3 miles N of Keeler, CA (directions to Keeler given in Drive/Route B/Southern Approach) on State Highway 136 to Swansea. Turning right (NE) here, you'll immediately pass a small ranch on the right (see Sidelines 3) and in a short distance come to a BLM sign "Swansea-Cerro Gordo Road". Continuing generally N from here, 2.6 miles after leaving the pavement at State Highway 136 you will encounter the first of many bad spots on the route, a rock band extending across the road. A second steep, rocky spot will be found 0.4 miles further on followed by a steep hill with poor traction about 0.1 miles beyond that. If you choose, the steep hill can be bypassed by taking a very poor road to the right and up a wash. Past the hill the road descends SW into a small valley and in 0.7 miles comes to the crux move on this route, a very steep hill with large rocks on the road. The narrow road climbs this impossible looking hill for 0.2 miles without letup, eventually yielding to the easier terrain above. In 1.1 miles bear left at a fork, driving E up a wash for 0.9 miles to a junction near hill 6653 (If you are following this route on the 7.5 minute topo maps, you'll cross over from the Dolomite map to the Cerro Gordo Peak map along this stretch of road). Turn left (N) at the junction and drive 1.0 mile to a fork. Bear left, following the road first N then W (in and out of a wash) for 2.5 miles to a fork (Now you're back on the Dolomite topo map again). Bearing left at this fork, follow the road for 3.0 miles as it climbs to the Inyo crest and its intersection with the 4WD road from Cerro Gordo (See Drive/Route B/Southern Approach). Continue NW for 0.6 miles to the Burgess Mine saddle at about 9600 feet elevation. Turn left here and drive 0.2 miles to a fork. Bear right, continuing 0.4 miles to a fork just before road's end at a turnaround. Bear left and drive a short distance to where the road deteriorates. Park.

DRIVE/ROUTE B/SOUTHERN APPROACH: Like Route B/Western Approach, this route is also a 4WD adventure, but perhaps to a lesser degree. It starts at the 8200 foot elevation saddle located on the

crest of the Inyos about 500 feet N of the townsite of Cerro Gordo. It is easier than the Swansea Grade route but nevertheless has its own objective dangers in the form of narrow, outwardly sloped road sections and

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steep, loose grades. From Olancha, CA on US Highway 395 drive 14.6 miles E on State Highway 190 to its junction with State Highway 136. Turn left (N) on State Highway 136 and drive 4.9 miles to the town of Keeler on the eastern shore of Owens Dry Lake. If you're coming S on State Highway 136 from Lone Pine, CA you'll drive 12.6 miles to Keeler. Just S of Keeler turn E off the highway onto the signed Cerro Gordo Road. Follow the good dirt road for 7.5 miles (steep at times) to the historic townsite of Cerro Gordo. About 500 feet beyond Cerro Gordo proper you'll reach the abovementioned 8200 foot saddle, which is the starting point for the 4WD BLM road N to New York Butte. Turn left (N) here on a good dirt road and drive 0.15 miles to a gate (unlocked) and a BLM sign "Swansea-Cerro Gordo Road". Drive this narrow road as it heads N, hugging the mountain slope and contouring for 1.1 miles to a fork. Bear right (downhill) here, following the road for 1.0 mile to its lowpoint at 7460 feet elevation. The road now climbs steeply uphill for 1.7 miles, easing off at about 9000 feet elevation (park here for Route C on Pleasant Point, Guide No. 1.11). This is the most difficult part of the drive because the steep uphill section presents traction problems, especially at a few sharp uphill curves along the way. Follow the road N alongside the crest for 3.2 miles to a fork just before the remains of the old Saline Valley salt tramway and some cabins. Bear left (downhill) here and drive 0.8 miles to a fork. Bear right and drive 1.6 miles to a fork where you'll bear right again. In 0.25 miles bear left at a fork and drive 0.4 miles to a junction. Turning right here, you'll drive 1.2 miles to intersect the Swansea Grade road (see Drive/Route B/Western Approach) coming up from the west. 0.2 miles beyond this intersection bear right at a fork. Drive 0.40 miles to a junction at the Burgess Mine saddle near 9600 feet elevation. Turn left here and drive 0.2 miles to a fork. Bear right and continue 0.4 miles to a last fork just before the road's end at a turnaround near 9800 feet elevation. Bear left and drive just a short distance to where the road deteriorates. Park.

CLIMB/ROUTE B: From the vehicles, hike NW on the deteriorating road which soon turns into a trail, following it well below the left (W) side of the crest. In 0.75 miles you'll come to a vertical mine shaft with wooden reinforcement around its mouth just off the right side of the trail. Either leave the trail here and head N up easy slopes to the top or stay on the trail another 0.3 miles to its highpoint at 10520 feet elevation and turn right (E) to the summit.

ROUND TRIP STATS/ROUTE B: 820 feet elevation gain, 2 miles, 1.5 hours

**SIDELINES**

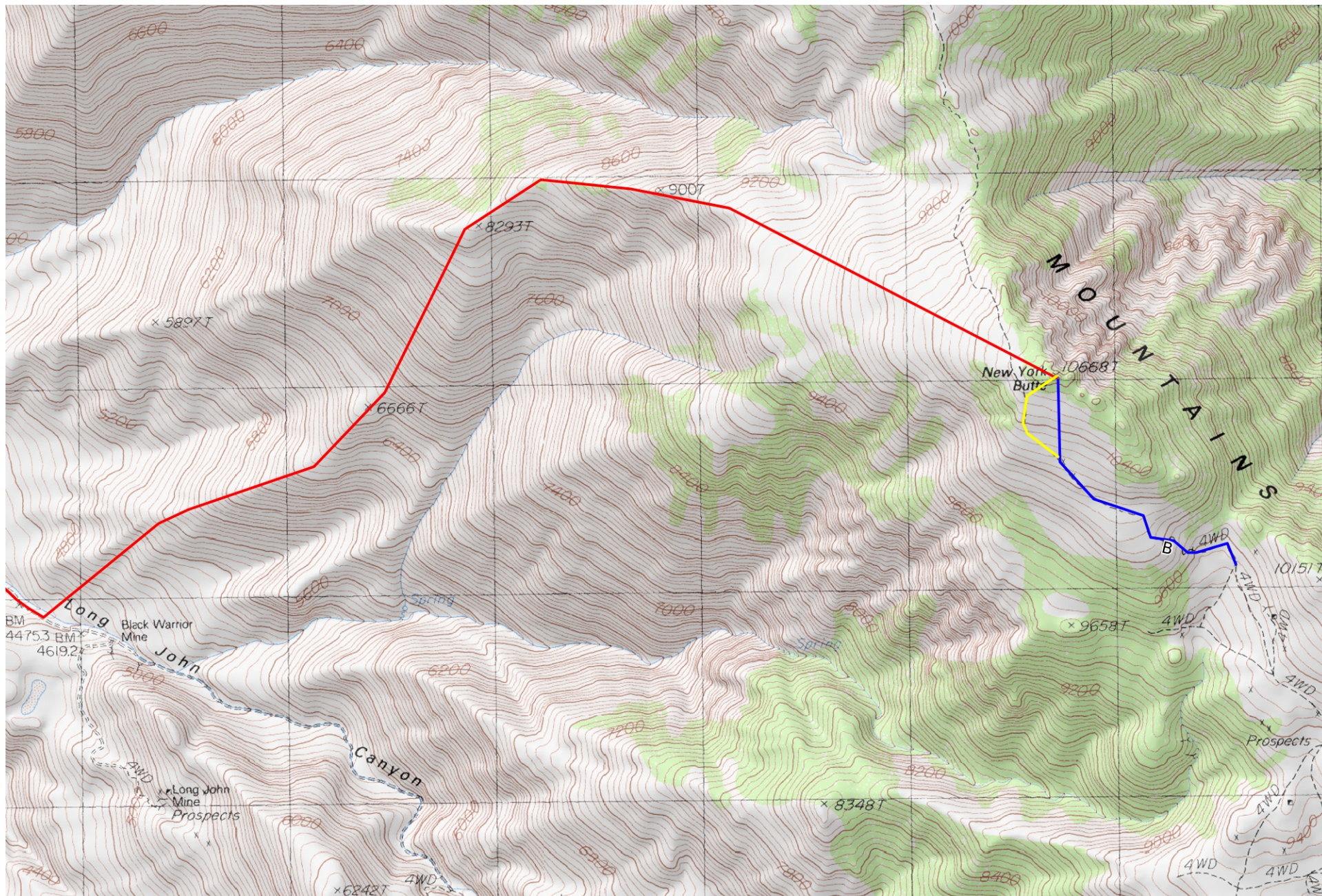
1. Looking eastward from the summit of New York Butte you'll be gazing down into the deep desert sink of Saline Valley and beyond to the mountain ranges surrounding Death Valley. To the west are great views of Owens Dry Lake, Lone Pine, the Alabama Hills and the Sierra Nevada, particularly the Mt. Whitney area.

2. If you reached New York Butte via the Swansea Grade or the 4WD road from Cerro Gordo, you passed by the remains of a great tramway that once crossed the Inyo Mountains from Saline Valley into Owens Valley. This tramway, built in 1913 to transport salt from the Saline Valley to a terminus near Swansea, didn't prove to be a lucrative venture.

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3. The small ranch at Swansea is currently owned by the same people who own the property at Cerro Gordo. Consider stopping at the ranch house to ask permission to pass through this stretch of private property before continuing on your way up the mountain.
4. On the weekend of November 15-16, 1941, the first officially scheduled DPS climb was held; a climb of New York Butte led by Chester Versteeg and Niles Werner.
5. New York Butte is located within the boundaries of the Inyo Mountains Wilderness Area. This new wilderness area was created as a part of the California Desert Protection Act of 1994, Public Law 103-433, Section 102 (28). The Inyo Mountains Wilderness Area encompasses approximately 205,020 acres of land and is managed by the United States Forest Service in its northern part and the Bureau of Land Management in its central and southern parts.





Mercator Projection  
WGS84  
USNG Zone 11SMA  
CalTopo.com

