

Table Mountain Wilderness Area

Table Mountain is almost in the dead center of Nevada, and you will benefit from the seclusion it brings (if that's what you want), but also makes it one of the toughest to reach. It holds one of the most extensive groves of quaking aspen you'll find in the state, but, because of its distance from both the Sierra Nevada and Rockies, that supply seeds of many of the conifers, its heights are blessed with only the limber pine, as far as conifers go.

It sits between both highways 50 and 80, so you will have to drive quite a distance from either one on the gravel Monitor Valley Road, also known as highway 82. From either, turn east on Morgan Creek Road, and travel about six miles to the Morgan Creek Trailhead. I made it in my two-wheeled sedan, but after storms, I would be hesitant about making the trip.

There were reports of the bristlecone pine at the very north reach of the range, outside the wilderness area, so I wanted to see if a few strays made it further south. As it turns out, all I saw were limber pines, beautiful swathes of quaking aspen (which should make for a brilliant display in the fall), and large expanses of very easily ambled.

The trailhead could be used to camp at night after a long jaunt getting there, but my sights were set on the high country, so I started south up the canyon. Although the trail parallels the creek, it does take some bushwhacking to get to it, so it might be best to make sure you have water at the start.



Start of the trail at the Morgan Creek trailhead



The trail quickly leaves the coolness of the trailhead, and takes you out into the sun. The trail progresses up to the notch you see in the center-left.



This is what the access to the creek looks like in the first part of the trail

When you finally reach the top of the climb, this is what you see - "table" like landscape, easily traversed, with large pockets of quaking aspen, sprinkled with a few limber pine – a very common sight up here:



The kind of landscape I saw for the bulk of my time here



My camp beneath quaking aspen and limber pine



The site I beheld that evening from camp

The next day I took the trail west following the small creek, and then south through a thicket of quaking aspen. The trail would nearly disappear at points, and without some maintenance I could see it disappearing altogether. I was headed for the highest part of the range, a fairly level crest.



Small but provided drinking water



Quaking aspen thicket

I encircled the western slope, then made it to the flattened crest, and walked north until I found my way to the top of the basin I was camped in and ended my three day stay.



Wild Iris



And the ubiquitous Lupine



The view to the northeast from the mesa-like top of the range

Table Mountain Trail

