

CASTLE BUTTE

Distance--2 miles
Hiking time--1½ hours

Hiking distance--15 miles
Hiking time--½ hour

Hiking distance--2½ miles
Hiking time--3 hours

By: Roland Neave

of Kamloops
summit is an
200-foot high
from Copper
viewing of the

The spectacular Dewdrop Range rises to the north of Kamloops Lake with its highest summit reaching 4500 feet in elevation. The south slopes of the range are rugged and steep, but its north side merges with the Red Plateau, west of the canyon of Tranquille River. Although not the highest of the Dewdrop peaks, Castle Butte offers interesting climbing and an unusual Natural Bridge which spans a deep gully.

Red Lake
Dewdrop
200
Hills to
Shortly,
It
the low

Leave Kamloops by Tranquille Highway and drive ten miles west to the School. Take the Red Lake Road for three miles to the junction with the rough track into Dewdrop Valley and drive along it for two miles to a fork. The right-hand road will lead you up into trees; park your car shortly before reaching a wide cleared area. Castle Butte is quite a prominent thumb of rock which is visible for most of the way along the Valley.

From your car, walk up the slopes toward the main cliffs, and aim to the left (west) side of them. After half an hour of steady climbing, you will reach a good viewpoint of the Natural Bridge which is located on the second series of cliffs and diagonally to your right. From below, it appears quite spectacular and its thirty-foot high arch spans a deep rocky gully in the side of the mountain. Climb up the shale slopes into the gully and leave your packs (and small children) near the base of the first rock barrier you encounter. The actual scramble to beneath the Bridge will take about twenty minutes. Some caution should be observed since the rock is extremely loose on this part of the mountain.

After returning to the lower part of the gully where your packs were left, continue straight up the mountain swinging to the right (east) until you are close to the top of the Bridge. You are now on the main ridge of Castle Butte and for the next ½ mile there is easy scrambling. Maintain a route directly up the centre of the ridge and utilize a wide grassy gully which cuts the mountain from east to west at a 45° angle. By ascending this route, you will shortly reach a point below the final rock cap of Castle Butte. Here, traverse several hundred yards to the right (east) until you are on the mountain's eastern flank. A long, generally grass-covered ledge provides access to the summit. It ascends along the side of the mountain until past the true summit; at this point, leave the ledge and scramble the last fifty feet to the top. An excellent view is achieved of the valley and the entire expanse of Kamloops Lake. Across the lake are the wooded summits of Mts. Greenstone and Chuwhels.