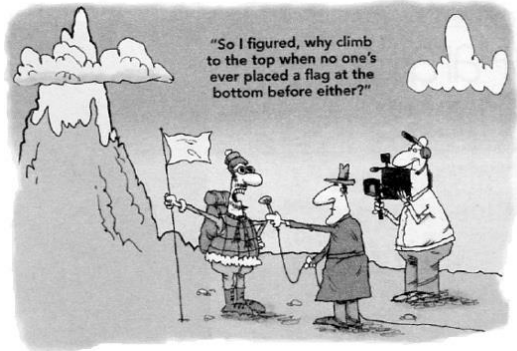


## Peak Bagging



Ultrarunners in the Mountain West likely also become peak baggers. Those peaks stand high above and call runners who are fit enough to run and climb their slopes to the top. Climbing to the tops of peaks never really was an interest to me in my earlier years. I would get up to the top of peaks by car or ski lift, but never under my own power. As a child I used to climb up “Y mountain” in Utah to the Y on the mountain slope. One day I went up as far as I could toward the top, but was stopped by difficult cliffs. Peak bagging for me came decades later.

I believe the first peaks I bagged were the two highest peaks in Utah, Kings Peak and Gilbert Peak, in 1996 with my backpacking buddies. This was the second year that I went backpacking with this group and tried to be much more prepared than the previous year when I suffered hiking more than 40 miles with them. That year I bought some heavy, water-proof boots to protect my feet. But after just two miles, I had to stop because blisters were already forming. Those boots would tear apart my feet for the entire trip and I did my best to continually duct tape my feet. I was such an outdoor rookie at that time. On the second day of our trip we summited Gilbert Peak, the #2 peak in Utah and I was introduced to boulder hopping and false summits for the first time.



Camped at Dollar Lake the day before climbing Kings Peak



On the third day we summited Kings Peak and my boulder hopping skills greatly increased as I went straight up to the top of the peak and straight down instead of using the established routes. I survived that trip and looked forward to future peak bagging. A couple years later I returned and bagged Kings Peak again with my brother and our sons. That year we were eaten alive by mosquitos at Henrys Lake.

My backpacking trips would lead me to bag other peaks in Idaho, Wyoming, Oregon, and Utah. My buddies seemed a bit overly excited to bag peaks on our trips. I struggled to the tops with them. On my own I would climb Gobbler’s Knob high above our family cabin in Utah and started to feel a sense of accomplishment pushing to the top of peaks.

My fascination for Kings Peak continued. In 2003, I read a newspaper article about two guys, Craig Lloyd and Scott Wesemann who climbed the three highest peaks in Utah (Kings Peak, South Kings Peak, and Gilbert Peak) in one day from a base camp at Dollar Lake. They called their accomplishment the “Utah Triple Crown.” After reading the article and discussing it with my brother-in-law Ed, I mentioned that they had “done it wrong.” I believed a proper “triple crown” needed to be accomplished from a trailhead, not from a base camp. We believed that we could do it and a few weeks later we attempted it, but aborted because of overnight snow. We did reach the top of Kings Peak and returned to the trailhead in one day.

## My Path to Ultrarunning – Davy Crockett

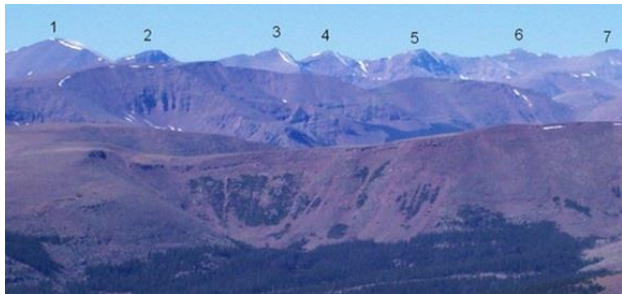
Five years later, now an experienced ultrarunner, on my 50<sup>th</sup> birthday, August 1, 2008, I would become the first person to accomplish a proper [Utah Triple Crown](#) from the Henry's Fork trailhead and I did it solo. By evening I was back home eating birthday cake. In the years to come many other ultrarunners would follow in my footsteps running up all three mountains in one day. Many would do it faster but few, if any, did it solo like I did that first time.



On top of Gilbert Peak

A year earlier, I took my peak bagging to truly new heights. I had planned on doing the first Utah Triple Crown that year but decided that I would do something tougher, the four highest peaks in Utah. To bag the fourth highest peak (Emmons Peak) would require a very long boulder hop across the highest continuous ridge in the United States outside of Colorado, Kings-Emmons Ridge. Descriptions tell hikers that it will take them 4-6 days to do a round-trip of hiking the ridge. Four-to-six days? How about one day? I could do it.

This turned out to be the most dangerous solo adventure I ever ran. It is so remote with no one else up on that high ridge that involves boulder hopping for more than five miles. It required careful skill on moving boulders to avoid injury. I fell hard one time, hit my chin and nearly knocked myself out with no one around for miles. I'll never try this again solo, but I did it! I was the first person to travel the [Kings-Emmons Ridge in one day](#) from a trailhead. Along the way I summited seven 13-ers. I ended up not summiting the top four peaks in Utah in one day because I ran out of time and determination to bag Gilbert Peak on the way back.



twice. To bag a peak, you must reach the true summit. By 2015 I had bagged that peak 80 times.

In 2002 I [started climbing to the top of Mount Timpanogos](#) in Utah for the first time. For more than 100 years, Mount Timpanogos (11,749 feet) has been the most popular hiking destination in Utah. Timpanogos towers over the valley floors below by more than 7,000 feet – an impressive sight that draws hikers of all ages to its trails. After my first summit, I decided that I disliked the last mile to the true summit and I started to only hike to the saddle overlooking Utah County below. But in 2005 as I started to run up Timpanogos with Phil Lowry I concluded that the only proper way to hike the mountain was to reach the true summit. I thought I had climbed the mountain 14 times, but in reality only twice. To bag a peak, you must reach the true summit. By 2015 I had bagged that peak 80 times.

As ultrarunners bag peaks, they will often try for fastest known times going up and down a mountain. Since I can no longer compete with younger runners sprinting up mountains, I instead gravitate toward the longer endurance feats. How many times in a day can a peak be bagged? As of 2104 I still hold the record for [five consecutive Timpanogos summits](#) and [two consecutive Kings Peak summits](#). I've



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accomplished the double Kings Peak three different times. Each time I was going after a triple Kings Peak [but came up short](#).

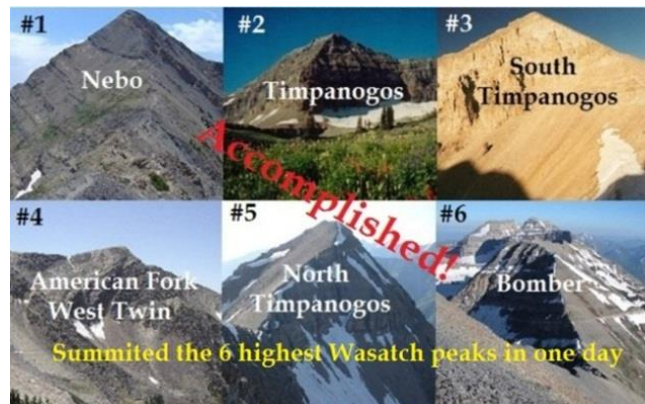
By 2014 I had bagged Kings Peak 14 times from the Henry Fork trailhead. I knew the trail too well and wanted to get to the top of the mountain from a different way. No one had ever climbed [Kings Peak in a day from a trailhead from the south](#). Starting from the Swift Creek trailhead, this route is a 41-mile round trip with 6,580 feet of climbing instead of 26 miles and 4,300 feet of climbing. I battled rain and snow but still made it to the top and back in about 15.5 hours for an amazing adventure.



View of Kings Peak from Anderson Pass on my 2014 adventure

For me bagging peaks is just a side-hobby of ultrarunning. I don't carefully seek to bag a list of peaks like the serious peak baggers. For me, they are there and seem like a good place to go for a training run. When considering what a peak is, you have to understand "prominence." If you don't, every bump on a ridge could be considered as a new peak. The prominence of a peak is the height of the peak's summit above the lowest contour line that encircles it without also encircling a higher summit. For me, I like to consider peaks that have at least a 300-foot prominence.

In 2013 I took Wasatch peak bagging to new heights. I considered whether the top six peaks in the [Wasatch Range could be summited in one day](#). I had one failed attempt, but on the second one I did it, or thought I did. With a closer look at the peak statistics, the list I was using had an error. Bomber Peak on the Timpanogos ridge didn't quite pass my 300-foot prominence rule and thus isn't a separate peak by that rule. But I did summit it along with the top five highest Wasatch peaks, Mount Nebo, Mount Timpanogos, South Timpanogos, American Fork West Twin, and North Timpanogos. The adventure included about two hours of drive time between the trailheads, 40 miles of running, and climbing about 18,000 feet. My total time start, to finish including driving was 21:33.



In 2014, I tried something even harder. I attempted to climb the [eight highest peaks in Utah County in one push](#).

- Mount Nebo 11,928
- Mount Timpanogos 11,750
- South Timpanogos 11,722
- North Timpanogos 11,441
- North Peak ("North Nebo") 11,174
- Box Elder Peak 11,101
- Provo Peak 11,068
- East Peak ("East Provo") 11,040



## My Path to Ultrarunning – Davy Crockett



This would involve about 22,000 feet of climbing in about 50 miles using four trailheads. My adventure started out well. I bagged Mount Nebo and North Nebo in the early morning returning to my car after a four-hour round trip. I then drove up the Squaw Peak road toward the trailhead for Provo Peak. Since I was using a 2wd car, I stopped four miles short of the trailhead putting in some extra miles. I had never climbed Provo Peak and it was pretty steep and hard but I made it.

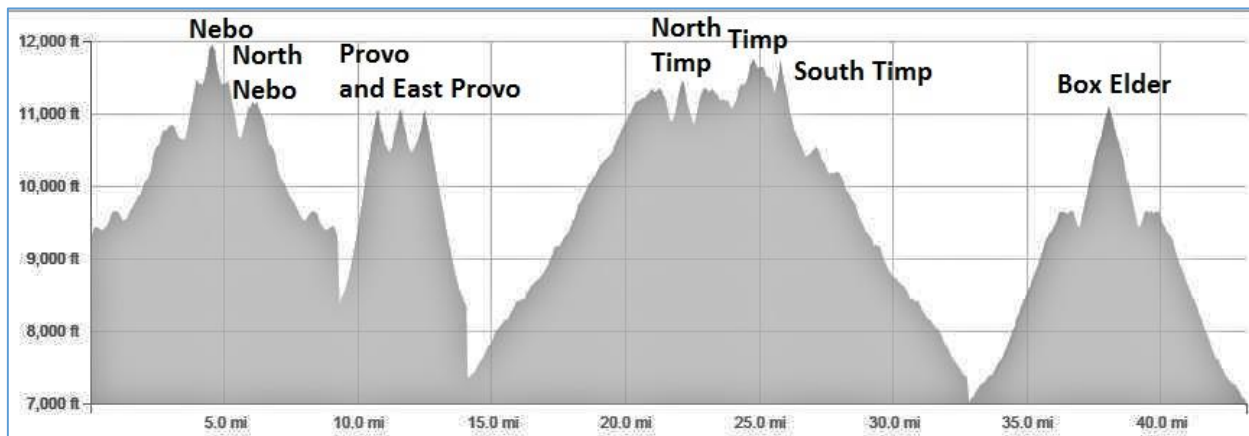
The trip over to East Provo Peak was very hard and scary. I ended up on very steep scree slopes and it took me 5.5 hours to do both peaks. I was pretty beat up with many wounds from falls, but I continued on to Mount Timpanogos. During the night I successfully summited the toughest peak on the ridge, North Timpanogos. The “trail” was much rougher than the year before and really wore me out. By time I returned to the saddle below the main summit, I had lost my energy and determination, deciding to quit and return another day.

A year later, [in 2015, I](#) time. Using all the experience plans to compress the time it difficult sections during East Provo Peak and back was that I would never again bag that was joined by Kendall Wimmer



[returned](#), very determined to finish this from the past year, I made careful would take. I planned to do the most daylight. All went well. The trip to again very difficult and slow. I vowed peak. For the Timpanogos peaks, I and Matthew Van Horn and had great year’s experience, I was more than time.

We finished the Timp portion and I returned to my car at 1:25 a.m. There was just one more peak to climb, Box Elder. The trip up and down was very slow, and not very fun, but my determination pushed me through and I finished at 9:28 a.m. with a total time of 30:48 for all eight peaks. I had accomplished my goal! I had summited the eight highest peaks in Utah County. My GPS recorded 43.1 miles and about 20,000 feet of climbing. Excluding my car travel time, I ran for about 25.5 hours.



## My Path to Ultrarunning – Davy Crockett

Since I'm not very serious about peak bagging, my list is small, but each adventure is very memorable. Here are the Utah peaks that I have bagged that are over 10,000 feet.

<b>Peaks in Utah</b>	<b>Height</b>	<b>Summits</b>
Kings Peak	13,528	15
South Kings Peak	13,512	2
Gilbert Peak	13,442	2
Mount Emmons	13,440	1
Painter Peak	13,387	1
Roberts Peak	13,287	1
Gunsight Peak	13,263	1
Trail Rider Peak	13,247	1
Mount Lovenia	13,219	1
Mount Waas	12,331	1
Manns Peak	12,272	1
Mount Nebo	11,928	5
Mount Timpanogos	11,750	80
South Timpanogos	11,722	2
American Fork Twin	11,489	1
North Timpanogos	11,441	4
Lone Peak	11,253	1
North Nebo	11,174	2
Box Elder Peak	11,101	2
Provo Peak	11,068	2
East Provo Peak	11,044	2
Deseret Peak	11,031	1
Clayton Peak	10,721	1
Gobblers Knob	10,246	2
Mount Raymond	10,241	1
Scott Hill	10,116	4