



AAC Publications

Four Gables, east face, Nettle-Reed Direct.

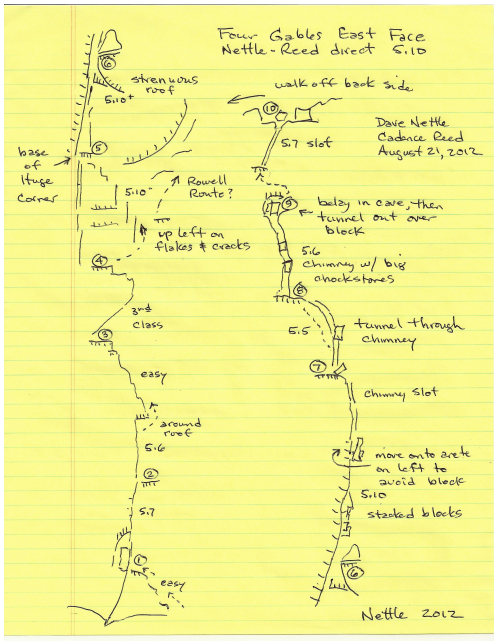
California, Sierra Nevada

Just a few miles west of the world-famous Buttermilk Boulders, the Horton Lake trail leads into a valley of spectacular scenery and mining history, and to the dramatic east face of Four Gables (12,720'). On August 15, 2012, Cadence Reed and I ascended a direct line up the main east face of the peak that is probably a mostly new route: the Nettle-Reed Direct (10 pitches, 5.10+).

The route begins in a right-trending crack system in the center of the face, aiming for the massive left-facing dihedral leading to the summit. After two pitches of clean corners and flakes (5.7), two rope-lengths of easy terrain lead to a steep headwall. At this point it's likely the Rowell-Neale route (AAJ 1973) angles right, following cracks and chimneys (5.8) around the right side of the massive summit buttress. Our direct line continues up and left on steep flakes and cracks (5.10-) to the base of a huge, left-facing corner system. This corner contains two pitches of sustained climbing (5.10) through a tiered roof and delicate stemming around some blocks. After that, you tunnel through a wild chimney (5.5) then exit to a final pitch with a clean offwidth slot (5.7).

A furious wind-driven hailstorm greeted us at the top of the chimney, where we were able to hunker down under a chockstone until it let up just long enough to dash for the top. We topped out as the storm rolled back in full force, adding a very alpine feel to the adventure. After a long, roundabout descent in soggy clothes we arrived at our camp at upper Horton Lake.

Images



Topo for the Nettle-Reed direct.



The east face of Four Gables, showing the Nettle-Reed Direct. The route may share terrain down low with the Rowell-Neale route (not shown).



Cadence Reed following the crux 5.10 overhang on Four Gables.



On the summit of Four Gables in a hail storm.

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