



AAC Publications

Pine Creek Canyon, Brownstone Mine, summary

California, Sierra Nevada

I first noticed the cliffs adjacent to the Brownstone Mine while hiking to Merriam Peak some years ago, thinking there might be good routes to do on the clean, featured granite. In the summer of 2009 my wife and I hiked over Italy Pass and down into Pine Creek Canyon, and on this trip I stopped to take a closer look: We spotted line after line of potentially excellent climbing.

So it began. The next summer Tai Devore and I started doing the one-hour hike up the steep two-mile trail and establishing routes. Our first explorations yielded five- and six-pitch trad routes, which made us familiar with the terrain. Over time we filled in the gaps with mostly mixed climbs, but also some sport routes. Today the tally stands at over 30 routes. Many of the routes are single-pitch climbs, but a number of them are multi-pitch—up to eight pitches long. The climbing is varied and interesting, and the fine-grained, gray and white granite is as good as any in Pine Creek. Much of the climbing is on featured faces reminiscent of Lover's Leap or the Needles of California. There also are splitter cracks in flint-hard golden granite among the many dikes and edges. The routes range from 5.8 to 5.12b, with most in the 5.10 to 5.11 range.

The cliff faces north-northwest and is at ca 10,000', making it an ideal midsummer destination. Clean water is available a short distance below and above the crag, along the well-maintained Pine Creek Pass Trail. In addition to Tai and myself, SP Parker, Darrel Hensel, Jeremy Freeman, Shayd Forest Otis, Hunter Sibbald, and Steve Bullock have contributed to route development. This area and many more will be covered in an upcoming guidebook, *Climber's Guide to Pine Creek*, by Tai Devore.

Images



Climber on Inobvious Deposit 5.11a.



Tai Devore on Enemy Mine 5.11d.

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