



AAC Publications

Flatiron Butte, East Face

California, High Sierra

Over a weekend in mid-June, Caitlin Taylor and I established a new route and first free ascent on the remote Flatiron Butte (ca 11,600'), a seldom-visited wall somewhat lost to history. In recent years the area has come to be known as Shangri La. On June 14 we made the first ascent of Parasitic Nematode (IV 5.10+), which climbs a right-leaning crack and corner system on the right side of the east face. The route contains about 500' of sustained climbing up steep cracks and corners before joining the northeast ridge (Beckey-Nolting, AAJ 1981). There are no fixed belays or bolts on this route; a standard rack with the addition of a few offset cams will suffice.

The next day we ventured up the central part of the face, hoping to free climb Et Tu, Brute! (V A2 5.9+, Binder-Harris-Holland-Hove, 2001). This ca 1,500' route follows natural crack and corner systems and contains some bolted belays from the first-ascent team. Near the upper pitches, which were previously aided, I led a super-fun two-pitch variation. The first pitch features a double roof and a slightly overhanging crack that widens from ring locks to fist jams—the enduro crux. The technical crux follows with a wide overhang where large cams are highly recommended. Even though it looks like the route tops out above this, difficulties up to 5.8 continue before the summit. Overall, the route seemed like a step up in difficulty from the southwest face of Conness, but without any step down in quality. I dubbed the free version Brutus of Wyde Memorial Route (V 5.11a), named for the late Bruce Binder.

As a side note, I carried out over 40lbs of garbage from this “secret area,” no doubt left by climbers—including sleeping bags, bivy sacks, rope tarps, and a ripped-up haulbag.

– Vitaliy Musiyenko

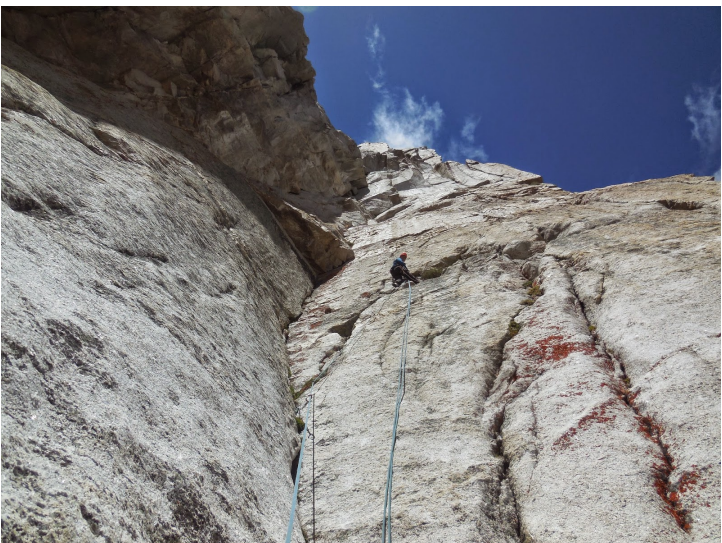
Images



Flatiron Butte, showing known routes: (1) Brutus of Wyde Memorial Route (V 5.11a, Musiyenko-Taylor, 2014), the free version of Et Tu, Brute! (V A2 5.9+, Binder-Harris-Holland-Hove, 2001). (2) Parasitic Nematode (IV 5.10+, Musiyenko-Taylor, 2014), which joins the northeast ridge. (3) Northeast ridge (Beckey-Nolting, AAJ 1981).



Vitaliy Musiyenko leading the first of two new pitches on a variation to Et Tu, Brute! (V A2 5.9+, Binder-Harris-Holland-Hove, 2001), which he dubbed the Brutus of Wyde Memorial Route (V 5.11a).



Vitaliy Musiyenko en route on Parasitic Nematode.

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