



AAC Publications

Hamilton Dome, West Face, New Routes

California, Sierra Nevada, Sequoia National Park

Brian Prince and I visited the west face of Hamilton Dome in September as part of a weeklong trip to the area. We found it had incredible rock, many possibilities, and the best moderate route I have climbed in the High Sierra. The west face is almost as wide as it is tall—about 1,700’.

On the first day of climbing we started up the center-right side of the wall via a left-facing dihedral. This led to mostly moderate face climbing with a few cracks here and there. Two-thirds of the way up the formation, we had lunch on a ledge large enough for a battalion to bivvy. Above this a chicken head-covered, near-vertical fin took us to the top. The upper feature itself was about 400’ tall. Slinging knobs allowed for adequate protection on this otherwise crackless monolith, and a wild jump-across was required below the summit. The route was no worse than the mega-classic south face of Charlotte Dome—Hamlet Buttress (IV 5.9+)

Our route the next day was even better—we picked a steeper line on the center-left side of the wall, traveling through a couple of roofs. We found a cool splitter crack initially, and above, thankfully, we found a hidden crack that led up to and through a 5.10 roof. As we gained elevation up three pitches of fun cracks, our smiles grew bigger. We soon reached the second prominent roof, which we climbed via monkey bar-like jugs. Some face climbing above this required a couple of bolts to keep the climbing adequately protected. More chicken heads, dihedral climbing, slabs, and several more cracks took us to the top of the difficulties. Four hundred feet of scrambling, with an amazing view, brought us to the top once again—Subliminal Verses (IV 5.10a/b).

The 360° views from this summit are some of the best in the whole range, with Castle Rocks to the west, Eagle Scout Peak, Kaweahs, and the Hamilton Spires to the east, many rock spires to the south, and Angel Wings, Prism, Cherubim Dome, Mt. Stewart, the Globe, and the Saber to the north. To descend the formation on both climbs, we scrambled east toward a notch. A short, fourth-class downclimb gained the first rap off a slung horn, and three more rappels reached a notch. One 60m rope works well.

The lengthy approach, without a trail to the base of the formation, is a blessing in disguise. For those who plan to venture out and repeat either of these climbs, a true adventure is in store. The camping in the upper Eagle Scout Creek drainage is spectacular, and there is plenty of rock around for new-routing, scenic photo-ops, and even fishing.

– Vitaliy Musiyenko

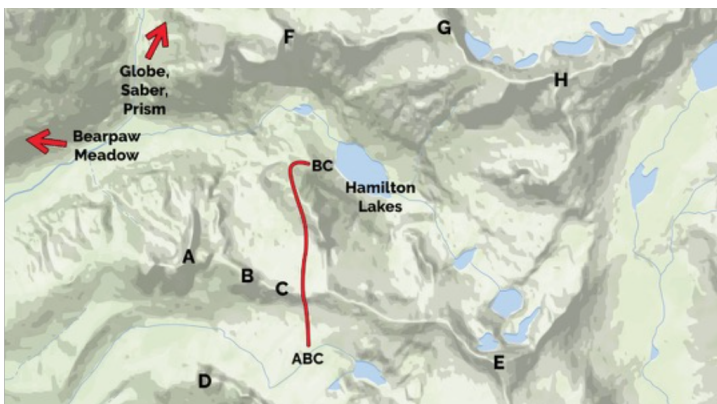
Images



A side view of the west face of Hamilton Dome.



The west face of Hamilton Dome with Subliminal Verses on the left and Hamlet Buttress on the right.



An overview of the Hamilton Lakes area, where California-based Vitaliy Musiyenko and various partners established many new routes spread across multiple trips during the summer and fall of 2015. [See reports on pages 107–115.] Select formations are labeled: (A) Hamilton Dome. (B) Rowell

Tower. (C) Serpent's Tooth. (D) Eagle Scout Creek Dome. (E) Eagle Scout Peak. (F) Angel Wings. (G) Cherubim Dome. (H) Mt. Stewart. (BC) The standard base camp at Hamilton Lakes used for climbing Angel Wings, etc. (ABC) The approach and high camp used by Vitaliy Musiyenko and Brian Prince to climb Hamilton Dome, Rowell Tower, and the Serpent's Tooth.

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