



AAC Publications

Wales Lake Peak, High Fashion

California, Sequoia National Park

In late August, Jon Griffin, Tad McCrea, and I hiked into Wales Lake in search of steep unclimbed rock. We hiked via George Creek, which involves 6,000' feet of elevation gain to Vacation Pass and 2,000' down to Wales Lake. Our efforts were rewarded with a pristine lake, sandy beaches, and complete solitude for the four days we spent there.

On our first day, we attempted a 1,000' east-facing wall above Wales Lake via a striking crack that angled left across the face and up into steep dihedrals. We encountered great climbing up to 5.11 for six pitches before it began to get dark and we were faced with a section we were unsure would go free. Jon made great progress high into the dihedral, but as the light faded we decided to rappel.

After a day of exploring the basin and relaxing on a white sand beach, we climbed the east side of an attractive peak to the left of the first line we attempted. We encountered continuous pitches of 5.10 climbing and followed cracks and corners straight up the middle of the face. The route started with a beautiful right-facing dihedral, which began with hands and slowly widened to offwidth before stepping right at the top to a ledge belay. After a short leftward traverse, we followed a corner and chimney system all the way to the summit and were glad to have two number 4's and a number 5.

Upon reaching the top, we found a tiny pill bottle stuffed with paper documenting two previous ascents of the peak. In the '70s (and later in the '90s), a team had walked up the backside and named the mountain Wales Lake Peak. We were likely the first to climb the technical east face, and we called our route High Fashion (1,000', IV 5.10+). [These formations are part of the mile-long ridgeline extending northward from 13,494' Mt. Hale.]

– Whitney Clark

Images



Whitney Clark climbing the final pitch of High Fashion (1,000', IV 5.10+) on Wales Lake Peak. Clark, Jon Griffin, and Tad McCrea found a small summit register documenting two previous ascents of the peak, though it's likely they were the first to climb the technical eastern aspect.



Jon Griffin leading pitch five of High Fashion (1000', IV 5.10+) on Wales Lake Peak. Griffin, Whitney Clark and Tad McCrea spent four days at Wales Lake in late August, during which they completed one new route and attempted another.



The east face of Wales Lake Peak, showing the line of High Fashion (1000', IV 5.10+). Whitney Clark, Jon Griffin, and Tad McCrea completed this new route in late August 2017.



A 1,000' face to the right of Wales Lake Peak attempted by Whitney Clark, Jon Griffin and Tad McCrea in late August 2017. The trio climbed six pitches up to 5.11 before encountering more difficult climbing and running out of daylight.

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