



AAC Publications

Ericsson Crag 3, Mud Falcon

California, Kings Canyon National Park

In August, Tad McCrea and I climbed a new route called Mud Falcon (1,400', IV 5.11- C1) up the north face of Ericsson Crag 3 in Kings Canyon National Park. We had been curious about this mountain after seeing it from the top of North Guard the previous summer and hearing rumors about excellent rock quality. We accessed the peak via the East Lake Trail from Road's End and spent the night at Lake Reflection before hiking the last three miles to the base of the face.

We began on the lowest part of the wall and to the right of the prominent Northwest Arête (see AAJ 2016 for photos) and Vinland (AAJ 1988). We followed moderate cracks and face climbing for seven pitches, aiming for a massive corner system two-thirds of the way up. The right side of the corner was covered with an incredible green lichen and gave way to excellent stemming and 5.10+ crack climbing for two 60m pitches. In the fading light, I aided a thin, broken seam to reach easier ground and we continued up a few moderate pitches in the dark until reaching another crux pitch: a one-inch Indian Creek-style splitter (0.75 Camalots) in a corner, capped by a roof, which we traversed on the right. Luckily there were a few face holds on the traverse keeping the grade at 5.11-.

At this point, we began searching for a bivy as the descent would be tedious and involved, and we still had close to 100m before the summit. We found a nice ledge and cozied up for a few hours under a tarp. Eager to be warm and drink water, we left around 5 a.m. and climbed the final ridge, topping out in the morning glow. The descent was more complex than the usual Sierra endeavor and required 300' of often exposed 3rd- and 4th-class downclimbing to the southeast until we reached a notch and were able to unrope and head down loose slopes.

– Whitney Clark

Images



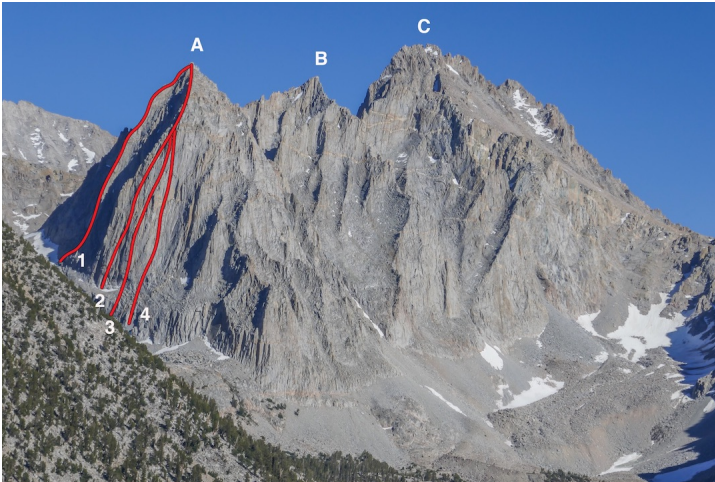
Whitney Clark midway up the lichen-covered dihedral during the first ascent of Mud Falcon (1,400', IV 5.11- C1) on Ericsson Crag 3 in Kings Canyon National Park.



Downclimbing a 4th-class ridge the morning after making the first ascent of Mud Falcon (1,400', IV 5.11- C1) on Ericsson Crag 3 in Kings Canyon National Park.



The north face of Ericsson Crag 3 in Sequoia National Park, showing the line of Mud Falcon (1,400', IV 5.11- C1), a new route climbed by Whitney Clark and Tad McCrea in August 2018.



The Ericsson massif from the northwest. (A) Ericsson Crag 3, showing approximate lines of (1) Northwest Arête (Belyakov-Musiyenko, 2016), (2) Vinland (Bartlett-Beckey, 1987), (3) King of the North (Langlier-Musiyenko, 2018), and (4) Mud Falcon (Clark-McCrea, 2018). Reed Cundiff and Fred Beckey climbed the shaded face left of Vinland in 1972 at 5.7. Brujo Dihedral (Neff-Wilson, 1980) is to the right of the other routes. (B) Ericsson Crag 2. (C) Mt. Ericsson (13,589'). Ericsson's north face, climbed in 2018, is hidden behind the ridgeline.

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