



AAC Publications

Great Western Divide, New Routes

California, Sequoia National Park

In June, Chaz Langelier and I made one of the longest approaches possible in the High Sierra in order to climb a few remote gems on the Great Western Divide. We approached via the Shepherd Pass Trail, over the ca 12,000' pass and descended to an unnamed lake on the Kern River at around 10,700', where we camped after about 22 miles of hiking. It was another 3-5 miles to the walls we had our sights set on.

First, we climbed a beautiful corner system and steep cracks up the east face of Milestone Mountain (13,641') to reach one of the coolest summit pinnacles in the range—Western Divine (750', 5.10b).

Over the next two days, we made an attempt at an unclimbed wall that remained that way—after making it up five and a half pitches of often poorly protected, difficult climbing. After a 30' runout, we reached a section which looked potentially 5.13, if at all possible. Without a bolt kit, we decided to bail.

The following day we managed the first ascent of a steep, previously unclimbed wall that Doug Robinson had first spotted on one of his trans-Sierra ski trips. The wall, the southeast face of Peak 13,228, sits directly across from the striking northeast face of Table Mountain. The photos Doug had posted online are quite intimidating because of how steep it appears. Chaz and I managed to find a clean route littered with splitters and juggy dikes that led directly to the top of the wall. A huge flake resembling a diving board hung from the top of the wall—Fear Inoculum (800', 5.10c).

The view of Table Mountain from the route encouraged me to repeat the long approach later in the summer with Tad McCrea. On that trip we climbed the most striking pillar on the northeast face of Table Mountain via Pass the Courvoisier (1,000', 5.10) as well as the north ridge of Thunder Mountain, which we named Thunder Thighs (1,000', 5.7). Unfortunately, both of these routes are aesthetic lines more than good climbs, with Thunder Thighs being more of a chossaneering adventure than a technical climb.

— Vitaliy Musiyenko

Images



The east face of Milestone Mountain (13,641'), along the Great Western Divide in Sequoia National Park. In summer of 2020, Chaz Langelier and Vitaliy Musiyenko climbed Western Divine (750', 5.10b), which follows cracks and corners to the blocky summit.

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