



## AAC Publications

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### Human-Powered Linkup of Croft's Big Four

California, Eastern Sierra

**An adventure is inherently subjective.** Weather, season, linking multiple objectives, and your team's fitness all combine to change the way an adventure plays out and how big you need to go to scratch the itch. This summer, with travel not being an option, my friend Chris Natalie reached out to me with an intriguing proposition—to link Peter Croft's "Big 4" via human power. We knew multiple parties that had done these routes as a 4x4, climbing back-to-back days and driving between each trailhead. Linking these mountains by our own power added enough novelty and uncertainty to pique my interest.

Our route consisted of walking the first half through a gorgeous section of the Yosemite Wilderness, climbing the Red Dihedral on the Incredible Hulk and the Southwest Face of Mt. Conness en-route to our bicycles parked on Tioga Pass. That's when the challenge began in earnest. Neither Chris nor I had cycled in preparation and it showed. The combined toll of 100° heat and the unrelenting steepness of the Glacier Lodge Road to the Palisades trailhead nearly ended our adventure. But by giving in to the suffering and accepting the challenge we had chosen, we continued and found new life among the craggy peaks of the Palisade Crest, climbing Dark Star on Temple Crag.

Our last two days consisted of a pleasant morning ride to Lone Pine, another steep grind to the Whitney Portal, a meandering ascent through off-route choss on Keeler Needle's Harding Route, and the relief and release of the summit.

All told we hiked 62.5 miles, biked 160 miles, and climbed a total of 52 pitches or 5,700' in 6 days and 11 hours. The Sierra Nevada has never felt bigger.

— Eric Lynch

**Images**

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