



AAC Publications

Wheeler Crest, Neptune Tower, Ice Giants

United States, California, Eastern Sierra

In October 2018, Jeremy Freeman and I started a new route up the northeastern prow of Neptune Tower, roughly in the center of the Wheeler Crest, north of Pine Creek Canyon. We climbed five pitches that day, fixing anchors and cleaning the line for a return trip. Three years and two children later, Jeremy was finally free again to make the three-hour, 3,000' sand slog to the base. Tai DeVore joined us for the summit push on April 18, 2021.

Three pitches of varied climbing (5.9, 5.10, 5.9) got us established at the base of the headwall. This steep green-and-gold shield features a few horizontal black dikes and one very thin crack system shooting straight up the middle. Pitch five follows the zigzag black dikes up and left past a few bolts, with a bouldery 5.11+ finish before a traverse back right. Pitch six follows the thin crack system up to a roof, requiring technical 5.11 laybacking and smearing on the polished wall. Unfortunately, our thin crack came to a screeching halt just out of reach from the next climb-able system, and we were forced to make two A0 moves (bolt and fixed pin) to finish the pitch. Three more pitches of moderate crack climbing (5.9, 5.8, 5.7) led directly onto the summit prow.

Ice Giants (900', IV 5.11+ A0) is now the best route on Neptune Tower and is equipped with fixed anchors for a convenient descent with a single 70m rope.

— **Richard Shore**

Images



The line of Ice Giants on Neptune Tower.



Jeremy Freeman following pitch four of Ice Giants during the first attempt in 2018.



Tai DeVore following the crux pitch five headwall on Ice Giants.

Article Details

Author	Richard Shore
Publication	AAJ
Volume	64
Issue	96
Page	130
Copyright Date	2022
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions