



## AAC Publications

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### **Woods Creek Wall, Woodburner**

California, Sierra Nevada, Kings Canyon National Park

**Although the Bubbs Creek valley, with Charlotte Dome and Bubbs Creek Wall, is arguably the premier climbing destination in the Kings Canyon area, nearby Woods Creek is certainly a close runner-up, with miles of impressive granite walls and domes, culminating with the striking cluster of formations called Castle Domes.**

Just a short hike from the Upper Paradise backpackers' camp—which is 10 miles from the Road's End trailhead—is an 800' south-facing formation, which we dubbed Woods Creek Wall, with prominent corner features reminiscent of the Incredible Hulk. To our knowledge, there were no prior lines on this wall.

During the blistering heat wave that broiled the Sierra Nevada over Labor Day Weekend (102°F at the Cedar Grove trailhead), Brandon Thau and I established Woodburner, a nine-pitch route linking a series of corners with sustained and enjoyable climbing on splitter rock. At one point, around pitch six, a brief but wild heat-generated thunderstorm splattered us with huge raindrops. Normally a rainstorm in the middle of putting up a new route is a bummer, but we leaned back in our harnesses and welcomed the temporary cooling.

Woodburner (9 pitches, 5.11-) can be rappelled with one 70m rope. Walking off the top, which we did not do, looks like it would be a long, complicated, and character-building adventure.

— Dave Nettle

#### **Approach Information:**

From Road's End at Cedar Grove in Kings Canyon National Park, take the Paradise Valley Trail for 10 miles to the Upper Paradise campsites near the junction of the Upper South Fork of the Kings River and Woods Creek. Cross the Kings either by wading or on a log crossing (which was there as of 2022), 500' downstream from the footings of the washed-out old bridge.

After the river crossing, continue on the Woods Creek Trail for 20 minutes to the top of a low, open crest where you get a full view of Woods Creek Wall. Leave the trail here and start the approach on easy open slabs. Continue up and slightly left through moderately dense forest and brush, but no thick bushwhacking, following openings that lead along a bench and bearing left on a steep side hill toward talus fields. When the slope steepens and the forest thickens, angle left into the first talus field you come to. Follow easy talus and then a short final steep dirt slope to the base of the wall.

Follow the base right for a couple of hundred feet to the start of the route. Approach time from the trail crest to the route is about 30 minutes. (Note: While on the approach, mark with a cairn the point where you will need to leave the talus field and exit left into the forest on your descent. If you miss this exit point and keep descending the tempting talus field, a cliff band on the left blocks access to the forest descent and you will have to follow the talus all the way down to the valley floor—hitting the hiking trail at the crest is much faster and easier. There were some cairns placed in 2022.)

**Rappel beta for Woodburner:**

(Note: Although the route continues to the top of the formation, the first ascent team did not walk off, so no information is available. It looks like it would be long, difficult, and complicated.) Begin the single 70-meter-rope rappels from the top of pitch nine at a block with a double-length sling. (Even though pitch nine is short, it definitely puts you in the best position for the first rappel. Rappelling from the top of pitch eight is likely to get the rope hung up on bushes and loose blocks.) Knot the ends of the rope. Bring material to replace anchor slings as necessary.

R-1 Rap from double-length sling on block at top of pitch 9 to a good ledge with one bolt and cam back-up. 125 feet.

R-2 Rappel about 75 feet, then move left around arête to an airy, hidden ledge (on a very steep wall) with two bolts. 100 feet.

R-3 Down and left to two bolts at the top of pitch 6. 100 feet.

R-4 Down and left following ramp feature to a good ledge (not on route) with two bolts. 100 feet.

R-5 Straight down to the top of pitch 4 on a big ledge with two bolts. 125 feet.

R-6 To top of pitch 3, where there are two bolts.

R-7 To top of pitch 2, where there are two bolts.

R-8 To top of pitch 1, where there are two bolts.

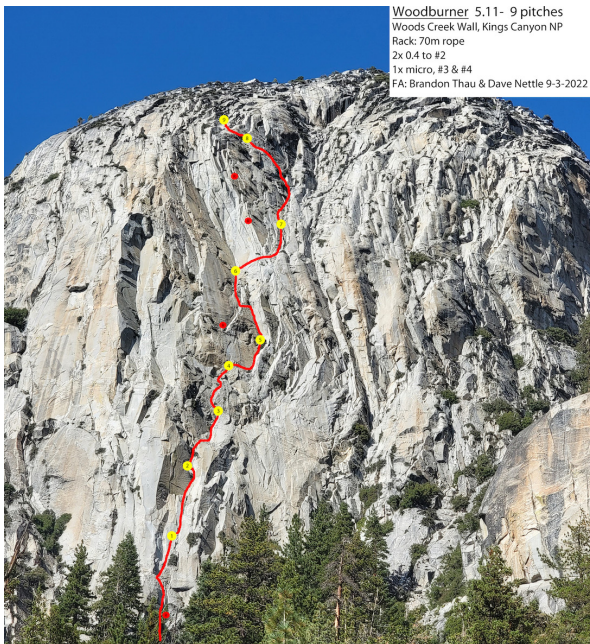
R-9 Straight down, staying climber's RIGHT of the big bush below the anchors until about 50 feet above the ground. The rappel will not reach an easy downclimb, but there is a prominent, small flake/horn (shoulder-length sling left there in 2022) from which to set up a final short rap. Tip: have the first climber rap all the way to the ground on a single rope, then the second does the two raps.

R-10 From sling on flake to ground. 50 feet.

## Images



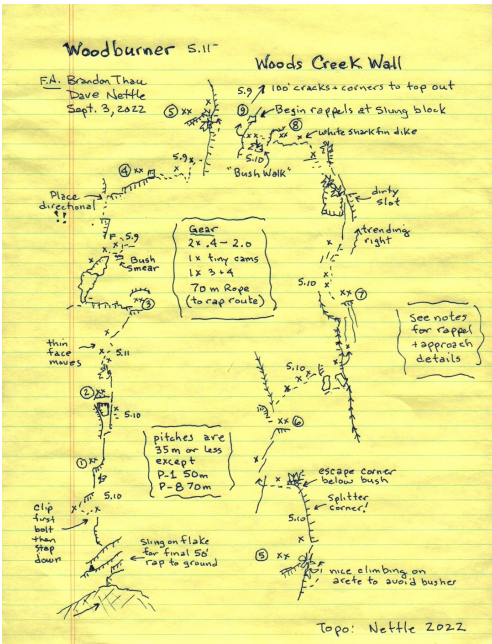
The 800' south face of Woods Creek Wall, near the Upper Paradise backpackers' camp, about 10 miles from the Road's End trailhead.



Woodburner (9 pitches, 5.11-) on Woods Creek Wall, Kings Canyon National Park. Dave Nettle and Brandon Thau made the first ascent on September 3, 2022.



Brandon Thau on the approach to Woods Creek Wall, seen in front of him.



Topo for Woodburner on the Woods Creek Wall, Kings Canyon National Park.





Brandon Thau following pitch two of Woodburner (9 pitches, 5.11-).



Brandon Thau belaying at the bottom of pitch four during the first ascent of Woodburner (9 pitches, 5.11-).



Brandon Thau at the belay on pitch eight of nine during the first ascent of Woodburner (9 pitches, 5.11-), Woods Creek Wall, Kings Canyon National Park, Sierra Nevada, California.

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