



## Introduction to Ice Climbing

Ice climbing has enjoyed a surge in popularity over the last few years and at SMC we are lucky to have ideal locations to learn and practice the skills of this fun activity in our own backyard. Ice is a scarce commodity in sunny California but the two places that stand out are June Lake and Lee Vining, on the east side of the Sierra Nevada, near Mammoth Lakes. Sierra Mountain Center offers scheduled courses all winter and can also schedule a private course that fits your schedule; simply call and ask if your dates are available. We try to offer both weekend and weekday programs and suggest that you try the weekday ones if your schedule permits, since the ice is popular and can be crowded. Our lead guides are American Mountain Guides Association certified so you can expect a high level of climbing and safety knowledge combined with solid instructional skills.

**Itinerary:** About forty minutes steep walk, from the parking area at Silver Lake are the flows of Horsetail Falls and an ideal location to start learning ice climbing. Here the ice forms in thick frozen waterfalls up to 80 degrees in angle with a few short vertical steps. After this first day we will assess conditions and skill levels and then decide if we will return to June for some longer multi-pitch routes or head up to Lee Vining Canyon with its steeper ice with icicles and pillars that approach vertical and an ideal location to push one's limits.

### **Curriculum day one:**

Equipment design and selection  
Ice axe and crampon usage  
Front pointing skills  
American and French technique  
Practice, practice, practice...

### **Curriculum day two:**

Climbing ice from 50 degree to vertical and beyond  
Ice screw placement  
Anchor construction  
Threaded holes and bollards  
Route selection and safe climbing  
Practice, practice, practice....  
Where to go next

**Accommodation:** We do not include accommodation in the pricing but we have an arrangement with Murpheys Motel in Lee Vining for our guests to stay there. The motel is on the west side of Highway 395 at the north end of Lee Vining. The phone number here is (760) 647-6316 and the manager is Nancy.

**Meeting place and time:** We meet at either Niceley's Restaurant in Lee Vining or the Double Eagle Resort restaurant near the town of June Lake. Which one very much depends upon the ice condition and we do not know until the course. But we will confirm with you prior to the course commencement. We meet at both places for breakfast at 7.00 a.m.. Refer to the map for directions on how to get there. However since it is winter and conditions change we ask that you be flexible. If you are staying at Murphey's Motel in Lee Vining we normally leave a message with Nancy, the manager, if we are considering any changes.

If there are any last minute problems call Nicely's at (760) 647-6477 or the Double Eagle at (760) 648-7004 and leave a message on our office answer machine so we will check for it if you do not show up.

**Dates and Prices:** Check the latest brochure, call us or go to our web site for dates and rates. Should minimum participant numbers not be reached you will be given the option of paying our private rate, rescheduling, or cancelling. Price includes guiding, permits, demo ice tools and crampons, helmets and group climbing equipment.

**Notes and other information:** Our lead guides are American Mountain Guides Association certified so you can expect a high level of climbing and safety knowledge combined with solid instructional skills.

The SMC web site has photos and , a map and more information.

For the latest ice report and information including recent photos of the ice head to our website and look at our Ice Info.

The course includes: demo models of all best equipment with ice tools and crampons from Black Diamond and Petzl , all other necessary climbing gear (except harnesses), and snowshoes (if necessary). Please refer to the attached equipment list. Please be sure to tell us your shoe size in advance if you're using our crampons.

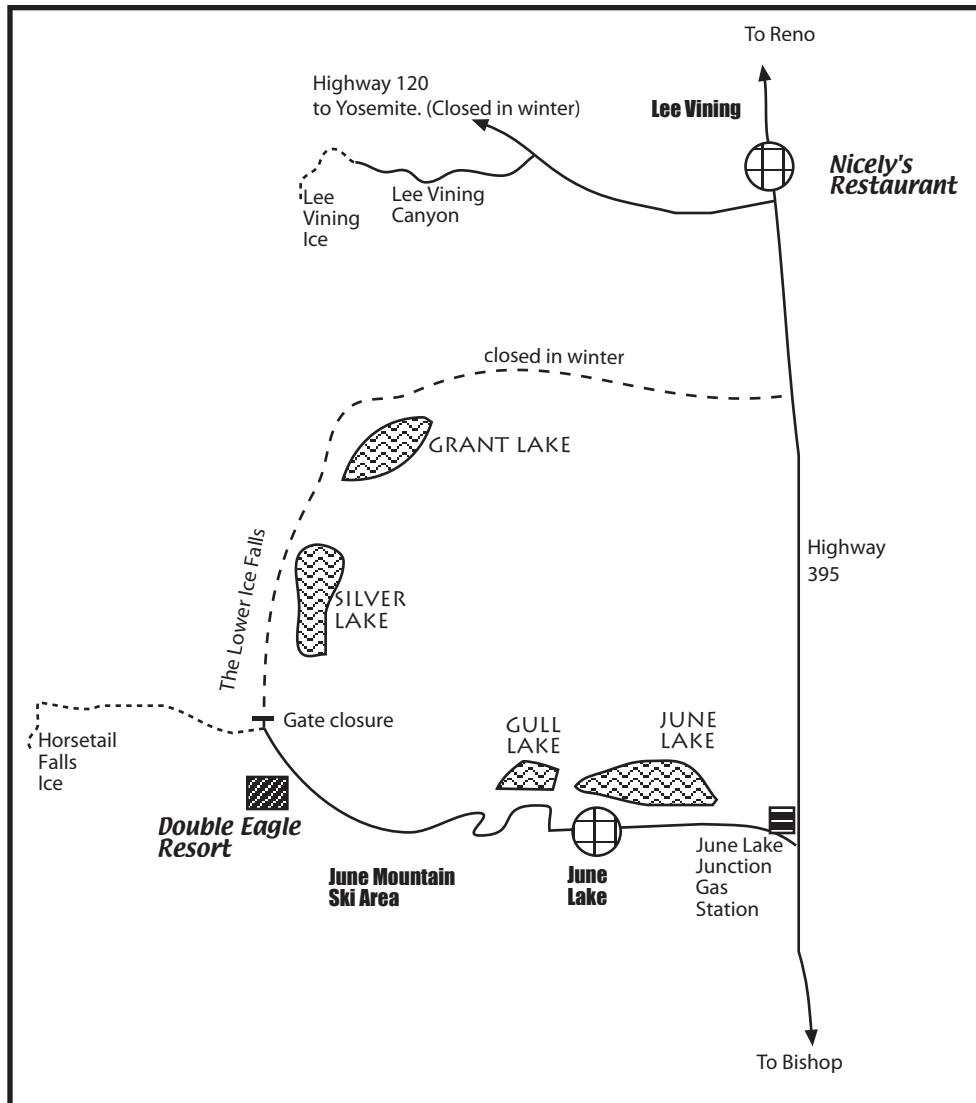
The best, and only, guidebook is our own SP Parker's "Eastern Sierra Ice".

Get it from Maximus Press (<http://www.maximuspress.com>)

**Ratios:** Maximum ratio is six participants and one instructor. This allows us to run two ropes, each with a backup belayer and the all necessary photographer.

**Directions** For the Double Eagle head south on 395 from Lee Vining 11 miles to the south June Lake Loop junction. (The north loop road works too but is usually closed in winter.) Continue on the June Lake road through the town of June Lake and past the ski area. The Double Eagle is about three miles from the ski area. Soon after the ski area you will come to some S curves in the road (be very careful on these curves if it's snowy...). Below the curves the road straightens out and proceeds downhill, past the Whispering Pines Motel, and the Double Eagle is on your left just after Whispering Pines. In Lee Vining Niceley's is easy to find since Lee Vining is only about 500 yards long. Niceley's is on the west side of the Highway 395 in the center of town.

The restaurants can make lunches to-go, as well as fill thermos bottles with hot water for soup or tea. (A nice treat if it's cold out). Don't bother putting your ice boots on first thing – you might want to bring them into the restaurant and warm them.



# **Equipment List for Introduction to Ice Climbing**

The following list is a general guide and will assist you in packing for the program. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have specific questions regarding equipment and if you need assistance prior to making a purchase. The following list will vary according to the time of year, and your individual requirements.

Items on the list with an \* may be rented from SMC.

## **Hardware**

- Technical Ice Axe: A short, 50 cm, tool.
- Technical Ice Hammer: A short, 50cm, tool.
- Crampons: A rigid type with step in bindings are recommended.
- Boots: Either plastic or good quality leather. These should be stiff with a full length shank and warm. We recommend Asolo, Scarpa, Lowa plastics or the La Sportiva Nepal Tops or K2s. Boots can be rented from Wilson's Eastside Sports (760) 873-7520. Pay particular attention to your footwear. You do need appropriate boots and lightweight hiking boots will not cut it - your feet will get cold! Talk to us if you have any doubts.
- Harness, two locking carabiners, a couple of non-lockers.\*
- A belay/rappel device.\*
- Helmet. We include this with all programs.  
*\*Bring these items if you have them. We can provide crampons, ice tools, harnesses and helmets and these are included with the course. We do however need to know your boot and waist sizes if you need our equipment. We do not rent ice boots.*

## **Clothing**

- 2 pair synthetic liner socks
- 2 pair heavier synthetic or wool blend socks
- Gaiters. Overboots are going to be the warmest, but regular gaiters will protect the Goretex from crampons and keep snow out.
- Long underwear top and bottom. Capilene or some other synthetic is most desirable.
- Warm pants or bibs. Pile or Expedition weight Capilene.
- Warm sweater top of some sort. Pile or Synchronilla.
- Pile jacket.
- Good quality rain/wind pants and jacket. A full storm system will ensure you stay warm even on the coldest days. Bibs are good to avoid the gap between pants and top.
- Warm hat.
- Visor hat (for sun).
- Liner gloves.
- Shell gloves or mittens. Mittens are warm, but you lose dexterity. Bring extra hardware if you have it to change out during the day.

## **Etc.**

- Pack to get it all to the ice. A climbing pack of about 3000 cubic inches is plenty big enough.
- Sunglasses, high quality with keeper leash. The type with side shields are recommended. If you wear corrective glasses you might want a second pair. Goggles are great, especially if it's stormy.
- Sunscreen and lip screen. SPF 30+. Make sure the lip stuff actually contains a sunscreen. A 1oz bottle will be sufficient.
- One or two 1-quart plastic water bottles with insulating jackets.
- Thermos. A hot drink in the day is just wonderful. You can get these filled with a hot drink at the restaurant.
- Headlamp with extra batteries and bulb.
- Camera, film and spare batteries.
- Ski poles: These are helpful on the hike in.

## **Food**

- Bring something easy to eat for lunch. The restaurant can make lunches to go.

## **Group gear that will be provided and divided amongst the group prior to starting the trip**

- Shovels.
- Avalanche transceiver for each person if necessary.
- Climbing gear.
- Snowshoes, should the hike in require them.