



## Humphreys East Ridge

While all routes to the summit of 13,986 foot Mt. Humphreys are difficult, the most challenging ascent is surely the wonderful East Ridge. The first ascent in 1935 was by the legendary Norman Clyde, who considered the route a classic mountaineering challenge. There are a number of route options, our favorite is to basecamp at McGee Lake and ascend a snowy gully to gain the true East Ridge. Blocks, towers, and exposed traverses characterize this route, which has been referred to as the "Exum Ridge" of the Sierra. This is a great one for a winter ascent (four days, two on the route).

**Meeting place and time:** We will meet the first day at 10.00 a.m. at the world headquarters of Sierra Mountain Center, 174 W. Line Street, in Bishop. Line Street is an east/west street marked by the southern-most traffic light on Main Street/Highway 395, in town. We're west of the light, on the south side of the street next to the health food store. A large parking lot is located on the south side of the building. Plan on having had breakfast. We will do a gear check and distribution of group gear.

**Itinerary:** From Bishop we travel west to the Buttermilk Country first on paved road and then onto a good dirt road. Once past the Peabody Boulders things change and we shift into four wheel drive (Yes, it is obligatory for this approach) and 45 minutes of rough bouncy driving takes us to the end of the road. Over the years we have taken a number of different approaches and descents. We have found the best to be from the roadhead to a small un-named lake on the south side of the lower East Ridge. This is a short 2-3 hour hike over trail-less terrain to a great sandy camp amidst the last whitebark pines. As always we have the obligatory alpine start early the next morning and it starts of easy but before long we have some tricky sandy ledge to deal with before gaining the ridge proper. Now it gets good! The ridge crest is narrow and exposed. The bold can walk the very crest. The rest of us can scramble across traversing below the crest. We descend some around a tricky tower and then back up and into the final notch. The ridge steepens here and we avoid one steep section by a traverse onto the south face. Above here the rock quality becomes a little grainier but eases off in angle as we near the place known as Married Men's Point. On the first ascent of Humphreys in 1904 some of the party members decided to remain behind here while others went on, citing the fact that the difficulties ahead appeared to be too difficult for those with married responsibilities. But although the final 200 feet to the summit indeed does look daunting, but we are up for it and as we get closer it appears a lot more reasonable. 150 feet of roped climbing and we are scrambling the last few feet to the very small summit. We descend via our ascent route with a short rappel until we get in the last notch. From here we head south and down the McGee Creek drainage back to camp.

**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, all necessary group climbing gear, tents, kitchen gear and breakfasts, lunches and dinners (you bring hot/cold drinks and snack items). Scheduled dates include USFS trail fees. Private programs do not.

**Notes:** The best guidebook is Peter Croft's "The Good, The Great, and the Awesome". Get it from Maximus Press. <http://www.maximuspress.com>

We highly recommend that you spend at least one night at moderate altitude (higher than 8,000') just prior to the trip. Spending a night in Mammoth or camped at a trailhead campground would do the trick. Please refer to our Planning for Success info sheet for more info.

**Ratios:** A maximum of two participants to one guide.

**Prerequisites:** Ability to climb 5.4 with a daypack at elevation and backpacking or peak scrambling experience.

# Equipment List for Mt. Humphreys via the East Ridge

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 marked with a \* can be rented from SMC.

## **Climbing equipment**

- Harness. \* An adjustable type such as a Black Diamond Alpine Bod works best.
- Helmet. New models such as the Petzl "Helios" or the Black Diamond Half Dome are comfortable and light weight. We provide these for the program.
- Two locking carabiners and a couple of non-lockers.\*
- Belay/rappel device\*. An ATC style is preferred.
- Comfortable rock shoes sized large enough so that you can wear them all day.

## **Other essentials**

- Footwear. A pair of boots that can climb rock are needed and a medium-weight pair of leather mountaineering boots will be sufficient. In general you should wear the lightest boot you can get away with. We like the Sportiva Trango or Trango Plus for this route. You can also climb in rock shoes but that means you will have to carry your bigger boots.
- Pack\*. A 3000 cubic inch will hold everything for the climb. It should be well cut and hug the body. A narrow profile will be best for climbing with. Use the smallest pack that you can get away with.
- Sleeping Bag. A bag rated to about 25° will be plenty warm enough except in the spring and late fall.
- Sleeping pad. A 3/4 or full length closed cell foam or Thermarest. If you bring a Thermarest also bring a repair kit to fix pesky leaks.

## **Clothing**

- 1 pair synthetic liner socks.
- 1 pair heavier synthetic or wool blend socks.
- Long underwear top and bottom. Capilene or some other synthetic is most desirable.
- Warm pants. Tights or Expedition weight Capilene.
- Warm shirt. Synchilla or 200 weight works well.
- Another fuzzy sweater top or pile jacket of some sort.
- GoreTex Jacket and Pants - A lightweight set is sufficient and heavy bulky clothing is unnecessary. Side zips on the pants should be long enough to slide on over boots. Must have a hood. Do not skimp on your rain gear.
- Tee shirt for on the trail
- Polypropylene or similar gloves and shells.
- Warm hat.
- Sunhat.

## **Etc.**

- Sun glasses. Good quality with side shields.
- Water Bottles. Two quart (1 liter) wide mouth bottles and or a hydration system holding up to 50oz. (2 liters).
- Headlamp. With a spare set of batteries.
- Eating and drinking equipment. Forget the traditional Sierra cup, instead use an insulated backpacking mug, with a lid. This can double for a bowl. Fork and spoon
- Ski poles. These are not essential, but can be handy on the trail. It is your choice, but they do save wear on the knees.
- Pocket knife. Swiss army style.
- Personal toiletries. It is not necessary to smell like a rose each day so do not over do it. Remember toilet paper and a small zip-lock bag to carry out the used in.
- Personal Medical Kit. The guide will carry a large kit so yours will predominately consist of foot repair items, mild pain killer such as Advil and bandaids.
- Sunscreen and lip screen. SPF 30+. A 1oz. bottle will be enough. Make sure the lip stuff actually contains a sunscreen.
- Camera. Bring film and a spare battery to record those summit moments.
- Plastic Trash Sac. Handy for keeping gear in outside the tent should it rain.

## **Food**

- We will provide breakfast, dinner and lunch but bring some snack items like cliff bars, power bars, gorp concoctions. A days worth for most people would be 2 bars, 3 ounces of gorp, and perhaps a candy bar. Don't over do it.

## **Shared Equipment Provided by SMC**

- Shelter. A bivy sac will be appropriate. Talk to us if you do not have one.
- Stove. We provide MSR Whisperlite stoves.
- Cookwear.
- Water purification. A sad but true fact of life is that much Sierra water is contaminated. Iodine may be used individually or the group can carry a pump style purifier.

## **You specifically don't need**

- ⊖ Cell phones. They rarely work anyway.
- ⊖ Big first aid kits (we have a comprehensive one).
- ⊖ Deodorant or any toiletries beyond those listed above.
- ⊖ Items that are not on this list.