



Lone Pine Peak, Northeast Ridge

A superb classic ridge climb. If you have never done a multi day route with an en-route bivouac this is an ideal start. The ridge is only rated 5.7 in difficulty, but carrying a pack makes all the difference. Over a mile in length this ridge involves continuously interesting climbing on impeccable Sierra granite with exhilarating exposure and fantastic views of the Whitney region. It can be done with a low bivvy or a high en-route one. The en-route bivouac is worth the trip in itself: from the sleeping bag at night one can gaze the length of Highway 395, all the way past Bishop, 60 miles to the north. This makes for a great weekend climb with a straightforward approach and an easy, non-technical descent.

Options: The Low Bivvy Option - Here we camp in the Meysan drainage and do the ridge in a day, pick up camp and hike to the roadhead. This is a very long day, but involves less pack carrying over technical ground.

The High Bivvy Option - This splits the climb over two days and gives one the opportunity for an incredible high bivvy. But then you have to carry that pack! Both options are great and we will talk with you to decide which one will be best.

Meeting place and time: For the high bivvy option we meet at the Meysan Lakes Trailhead at 9.00 a.m.. This is a mile below the parking for the main Whitney trail with roadside parking above the campground. For the low option bivvy we meet at the same place, but at the later time of 2.00 p.m..

Itinerary: The approach is via the Meysan Lake Trailhead, literally just down the street from the Mt. Whitney Trailhead. (Only the Whitney trail sees hundreds of people a day and we'll be lucky to see another group on this trip.) We leave the trail around 10,000', several hours after leaving the cars. If we are making the climb with the low bivvy this camp. Gaining the Northeast Ridge proper takes several more hours and is via steep second and third class terrain. Early season ascents will encounter significant snow on the approach, which can make for tough going. Eventually the terrain becomes predominantly third and fourth class and we rope up, usually where we join the main ridge. The un-roping point is the summit. The difficulties are generally towers that must be either climbed and descended, or traversed around. Some of these offer short sections of easy fifth class. Shortly before the bivvy two solid fifth class pitches are encountered: one often wonders just what the guide book author was taking when he rated these as 5.4, we've always been happy to call both pitches solid 5.6, especially with the weight of an overnight pack. The first pitch is the more difficult with a tough layback and the second has several hard crack moves. If spending the night here the bivvy is the reward for climbing these pitches though and one of the highlights of the day is watching the afternoon shadow of the Sierra creep across the Owens Valley. The bivvy has room for three people and is small enough that we usually remain tied into the rope for safety. Snow is our water source on early season trips (pre mid July) and on mid or late season trips we carry all our water up the route. From here the ridge continues on around more towers and pinnacles. There is a couple of hard moves out of the final notch and then the last ridge section is five pitches long and we pop up over the final block and the summit register is about ten feet away. Happy to be off the rope for the first time in a while we descend into the Meysan Creek drainage and back to the roadhead.

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.

Ratios: This is along climb so we keep the ratio of one guide to two participants to ensure speed and efficient climbing.

Prerequisites: Technical climbing skills are required: you should be able to comfortably follow 5.7 and have experience at altitudes above 12,000'. This is a physically demanding trip and you should be in good condition and have the ability to traverse broken uneven slopes with a moderate pack.

Special Notes: The best guidebooks is Peter Croft's "The Good, The Great, and the Awesome". Get it from Maximus Press. You can also get our very detailed unpublished SMC Guide to Lone Pine Peak on-line.

We highly recommend that you spend at least one night at moderate altitude (higher than 8,000') just prior to the trip. Sites can be reserved at the Whitney Portal Campground (8,400') through the National Forest Reservation System (800) 280 2267. Nearby Cottonwood Lakes offers a walk-in campground at almost 10,000'. Reservations are not necessary here. Ideally, two days would be spent in the Cottonwood Lakes area immediately prior to starting your climb. It is a 45-minute drive from Cottonwood to the Portal. Please refer to our planning for success info sheet for more info.

Bears are also a major problem at the Portal Trailhead. Do not leave any food, scented items (deodorant, soap etc.) in your vehicle. Clean up all trash and put extra food in a locker at the trailhead. Failure to take precautions can cause the vehicle to be ripped apart by a bear and the added insult of a fine from the Forest Service.

Equipment List for Lone Pine Peak, Northeast Ridge

1/10/05

The following list is a general guide and will assist you in packing for the program. Remember that this is an alpine climb and you want to pare everything down to the minimum since you have to carry it up on technical climbing. 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 * can be provided by 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 bivvy 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.