

CMC TRIP REPORTS

Joe Devel Peak, Mt Pickering, Mt Newcomb, to Mt Chamberlain; Traverse

August 1-3, 2008

by Paul Morash

I'd had this trip in the back of my mind for several years after hearing about it from Nile Sorenson on a Sierra Club trip some time ago. I'm a sucker for punishment, for some reason these multi peak trips always appeal to me. The trick now was to find someone who enjoyed pain as much as I do! Enter Ron Norton. Ron and I have been climbing together for several years now and we never seem to have a problem agreeing on what trips to do next. I remember throwing this one out on a drive home from somewhere and he bit! Truly a sucker as he'd even done Joe Devel previously!



Cottonwood Pass. Photo: Greg Jacobus

I think at least half the fun of any climbing trip is the planning stage. This trip was a lot of fun to plan. Big time bragg'n rights here, 4 listed Sierra peaks in a single day with the possibility of bagging a 5th!! Throughout the planning stage, the 5th was never really considered an option, it was just a must do. I mean Nile did 4 so we had to do 5 right?

We didn't expect a lot of interest but figured we'd list it as a club trip and see if our misery could find any more company. Enter Greg Jacobus. Both Ron and I had climbed with Greg before and knew him as a likeable guy who would be up to the task. We had a couple more folks sign up, but by show time it was just the three of us.

Let the Joe Devel Death March begin!

We all met at Horseshoe Meadows Campground the night before and got away pretty much on time the next morning. The hike in was long! Up to and past Cottonwood Pass, through the Siberian Outpost, down to Rock Creek and then up to the campsite, phew! Approximately 13.5 miles and 3,000' - that's a long walk! We had picked Nile's brain for beta on this trip and he gave us the location of his suggested campsite. Nile really knows the Sierras well, so we fully expected this campsite to be right where he said it was and that it would give us our best shot at our 5 peaks the next day. After some second guessing, he had given us the elevation of the site and he said you actually end up following the trail to a higher elevation and then dropping down to it; we did find the campsite, right where he said it was!

Show time!

Bright and early the next day we got on our way. We had agreed to start with Joe Devel and work our way around to Mount Chamberlain and then onto Mount Guyout. Joe Devel went without incident, a couple of hmm's... in trying to decide where to jump on the ridge, but in hindsight it would have all gone. One down 4 to go. "Boy it looks a little further to Mount

Pickering from here than I imagined” I heard someone say, maybe it was me! And from here all of our goals were in view, “BOY IT SURE LOOKS A LONG WAY TO CHAMBERLAIN FROM HERE”, I think we all agreed on that one!

Off we went feeling ever so slightly less cocky than we had felt up to this point. Previous trip beta, from Nile and also from Rick Kent who had done the trip approximately 4 weeks earlier, in a single day from the trailhead I must add, proved to be very useful and accurate. You can pretty much stay high on the ridge in all but 2 or 3 places.

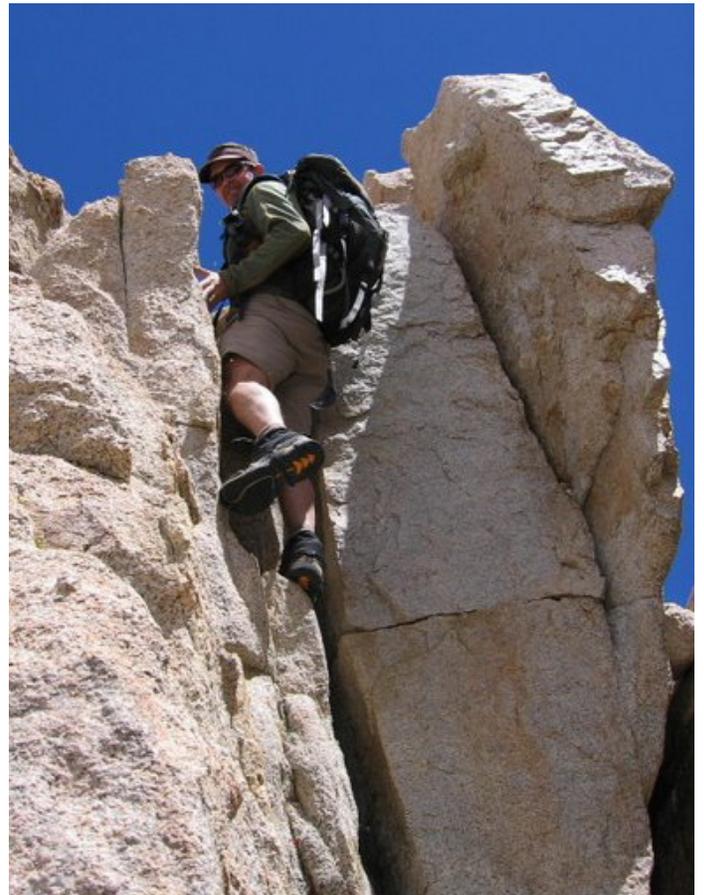
The tone of the trip continued to mellow as we crept up on our objectives only to leave them behind in pursuit of the next one. On the approach to Mount Chamberlain, the gung ho attitude of tagging 5 summits that

day had unanimously and almost silently disappeared. Four summits would absolutely be enough for that day! After all it was a beautiful area that we would like to re-visit again. Maybe! Mount Guyout was a very unimpressive mountain of rubble that did little to inspire us to be on the go anymore than we’d been already this day. All in all it took about 12 hour camp to camp that day, covering approximately 9 miles and 5,000’ of gain.

We spent one more night in camp and then hiked out the next day meeting lots of Whitney hikers on their way in to tackle the big guy from the backside. Don’t underestimate the approach on this trip. This isn’t the one to break in a new pair of boots on!



Ron Norton and Paul Morash with Mt. Newcomb in Background. Photo: Greg Jacobus



Ron Climbing on a Technical Section. Photo: Greg Jacobus