

Chauvin Guides International Whitney-Gilman Ridge Route Description

Rack- A standard rack is all that is required for this climb. Consider leading on double ropes or bringing a second rope along in case a retreat becomes necessary.

This climb is very highly recommended. The Whitney-Gilman Ridge is THE ridge climb to do in the East. It is a very sharp and well-defined arête with outstanding situations and exposure, especially around the famous Pipe Pitch. There are also several excellent ledges along the route from which to enjoy the spectacular views of Franconia Notch and the Franconia Ridge. This climb is an excellent introduction to "Alpine" rock climbing. Of course in order to have an alpine rock climb, there has to be some loose rock. Most of the loose rock on this climb is confined to the large ledges, however just as on any other route of this nature always be on the lookout for loose holds and rock. Also, due to the Alpine nature of this climb (or any of the longer climbs on Cannon) climbers should be competent in their route finding, anchoring, and rappelling skills. The weather in the notch can change quite quickly, so climbers should be prepared for wind, rain, and the possibility of retreat. The big routes on Cannon are not the place to learn how to climb. That all having been said, this really is a "must do" route. There's nothing else like it in the East.

Approach- Because I-93 which runs through the notch is a limited access highway, you must get onto the southbound lane (which may mean driving to the north end of the notch and turning around) so that you can park at the parking lot for Profile Lake which is that the very north end of the cliff. To approach the Whitney-Gilman Ridge, hike south from the parking lot along the paved path until you reach the first small foot path that crosses the bicycle path (Boise rock is to the left on this trail). Head up into the woods towards the cliff on this trail. It is just past a picnic table that you pass on the left and is marked by a cairn on the right. Don't take the first small trail branching off to the right of the bicycle path (just past the big boulder that nearly hit the path a few years ago); this would take you to Moby Grape. Also, don't continue on the bicycle path until below the south end of the cliff as described in the guidebook. This would take you to the descent trail not the approach trail. Follow the small trail uphill through the woods until you come out onto the talus slope. Note where you exit the woods in case of retreat. There's a large distinctive boulder nearby. Follow cairns through the scree slope (several different ways) to the Whitney-Gilman Ridge. Use caution on the talus for loose blocks. The first pitch begins about 50 feet uphill of the base of the ridge at a large break in the north side of the ridge.

Pitch 1 - 140 ft, 5.4 Climb up into the wide break past some old pins until it is possible to easily angle left to a big ledge at the base of a right facing inside corner with a pin in it. Don't continue all the way up the break as described in Webster's guide. Since that was written, rock fall has left some loose blocks on the last half of the first pitch as he describes it. Climb the corner to gain the top of a pedestal. Step left and up onto a face, then angle right avoiding steeper rock until it's possible to head back up to a big belay ledge. Variation-A longer, cleaner, and maybe better start (5.7) is a little to the left of the very bottom of the ridge. From the very bottom of the ridge scramble up a short ways to a nice ledge at the base of a crack and a right facing inside corner. Climb this corner and crack (a little difficult at first) to more cracks leading up to the beautiful flat ledge at the base of the right facing inside corner with a pin in it described above. Belay here and then with an extra pitch get to the next big ledge the same way as described above.

Pitch 2 - 100 ft, 5.5 Move up and then right from the belay to the left-slanting V-groove. Follow this past a pin and past the new scar where a large block recently fell off. Get onto a sloping ledge (some loose rock but not a problem if you're careful) and then work your way back up and to the right to an excellent belay ledge in a corner at the base of a couple cracks. **Variation-** Avoid the original second pitch by climbing the obvious parallel sided, vertical crack which is in a steeper section of rock a small distance up above the belay ledge. Belay just above the crack on a sloping shelf. 80 ft, 5.8

Pitch 3 - 70 ft, 5.7 The Pipe Pitch. Climb the cracks to the top of a pedestal. Then move up and around right onto the north wall of the ridge. Climb above the pipe (tricky move) and move up a short ways to a small stance and belay below a steep step, right on the very edge of the arete. **Variation-** If you climbed the 5.8 variation for pitch 2, climb the intimidating steep rock above the crack. Eventually trend to the left to reach the pipe and then finish the pitch as described above. This section on the intimidating north wall of the ridge it is actually easier than it looks (good thing!). 80 ft, 5.7

Pitch 4 - 70 ft, 5.6 Move up above the belay and slightly onto the north wall of the ridge and climb the steep step. Angle slightly left the around a bulge and then climb up staying just to the left of the edge of the ridge until you run into a very narrow part of the arête that you'll actually wrap your hands around. Traverse left to the base of a clean left facing corner and belay.

Pitch 5 - 130 ft, 5.7 Climb the corner and flake above to a thin crack just left of the actual ridge. Diagonal left across a ramp below steep rock until it's possible to get around into a large, blocky corner. Climb this corner (tricky climbing and gear) past a bulge to easier climbing to the top.

Descent- From the top of the climb, continue uphill on a good trail. This gradually trends to the left (south) and then goes steeply downhill in the woods just to the south of the cliff. Upon reaching the bicycle path, turn left to get back to the Profile Lake parking lot.