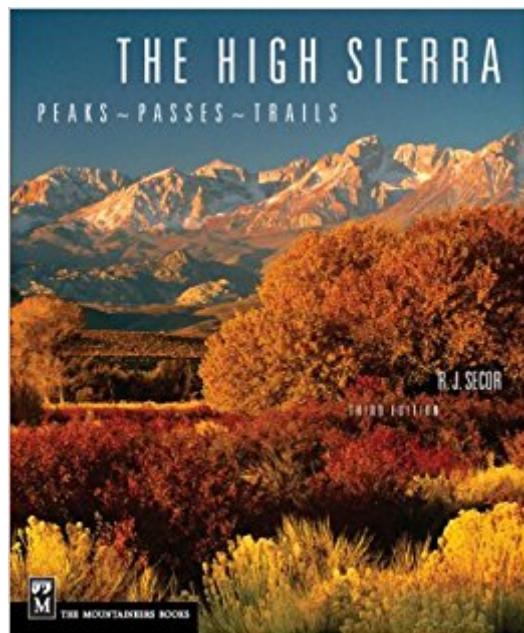


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The High Sierra: Peaks, Passes, Trails



Synopsis

Please note we have a few edits and updates for THE HIGH SIERRA: Peaks, Passes, Trails, 3rd Ed. Please download the edits [HERE](#) so your copy reflects the appropriate changes and additions. Thank you. "The Sierra climbing bible" - The Los Angeles Times "The best field guide to the region." - Men's Journal "The guide to the Sierra Nevada high country." - Climbing magazine* More than 100 new routes, route variations, and winter ascents in this edition compared to the previous* User friendly organization* Author has made more than 350 ascents in the SierraHigh Sierra is the most popular guidebook to this magnificent mountain range, and has long been the definitive source of climbing and hiking information for this wonderland. This comprehensive and exhaustive guidebook includes route descriptions, historical information, and GPS-enabled driving directions. This edition rearranged the information to keep roads and trails, and passes and peaks together, making the book easier to use.

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Customer Reviews

Provides extensive information useful to hikers, climbers, skiers, and visitors to the region in a detailed, easy-to-follow format. -- Wyoming Tribune-Eagle --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

Secor has climbed Denali and more than 250 peaks in the High Sierra range, as well as Mexico's volcanoes, Aconcagua, the Himalaya and Karakoram ranges.

THE HIGH SIERRA, subtitled "Peaks ~ Passes ~ Trails", is a prodigious and information-jammed book to which I'm awarding five stars even though its usefulness to me is not what I expected and will be minimal, a fact that would otherwise cause me to award two or three stars. (Normally, I'm not so schizophrenic when reviewing; I missed a dose of medication.) At 500 pages and 699 grams (1.541031 pounds) and 8.5 x 7 x 1 inches, the paperback volume isn't one you could stash in any side pocket of a vest or backpack, although I'm sure some will stuff it into a main compartment of the latter along with an iPad and an extra dozen energy bars. THE HIGH SIERRA is comprised of fourteen chapters - an Introduction and then thirteen following, each headed by the name given to one of thirteen High Sierra areas. Each area name, according to author R.J. Secor, is basically based on the drainage patterns. While that may sound ominously esoteric, it really isn't. The thirteen areas are (in sequential text order): The Whitney Region, The Kaweahs and the Great Western Divide, The Kings-Kern Divide, The High Passes, Monarch Divide and the Cirque Crest, Kettle Ridge and the LeConte Divide, The Palisades, The Evolution Region, The Mono Recesses, Mammoth Lakes and the Silver Divide, The Minarets and June Lake, The Clark and Cathedral Ranges, and Northern Yosemite. At this point, you're probably wondering why I purchased the book. Well, my wife and I are planning to do a couple of day hikes come early October - hopefully when the trees are in color - just west of Bishop, CA in The Evolution Region. Via the Internet, I've already identified two trails of interest: The Bishop Pass Trail and the Sabrina Basin Trail. More about these later in the context of the book. THE HIGH SIERRA begins with a map of the mountain range with all thirteen areas located and with the main road access routes shown. The Introduction has the following subheading topics: History, Safety, Conservation, How to Use This Book, Rating System, and Peaks and Registers. The How to Use This Book section assumes the concurrent use of detailed topographical maps. The "rating system" refers to the Yosemite Decimal System (Class 1-5) used to categorize the difficulty of the terrain. The Introduction and all other chapters are printed in the small font that I usually associate with most reference works. A larger type easier on aging eyes would easily expand this puppy to over 1,000 pages. All area chapters are uniformly divided into History, Maps, Wilderness Permits, Emergency, Roads and Trails, and Peaks and Passes. The Maps section is a listing of the topo maps that one might use to cross-reference the area. The Emergency section provides the phone number(s) to be called in case of a crisis. Each chapter also includes a minimally detailed (considering the subject matter) map of the area plus an occasional vicinity map of a particularly relevant topographical feature. Upon reading through an area chapter, it becomes apparent why I headed this review as I did: "More for the intrepid rock climber, not the

timid hiker (like me)." The amount of text space dedicated to roads and trails is disproportionately small compared to that dedicated to peaks and passes. For example, in the chapter The Evolution Region, the former fills roughly two and a half pages, while the latter extends over FORTY-THREE. This is a characteristic of all thirteen area chapters. So, let's return to the subject of my October hiking trip. In The Evolution Region chapter, the Sabrina Basin Trails are described thusly: "These trails lead to the scenic lakes above Lake Sabrina. Wood campfires are prohibited in this entire basin. The trailhead is just below the dam for Lake Sabrina (0 mi; 9040 ft+; UTM 572196). The trail traverses around and up above Lake Sabrina to the junction with the trail leading to George and Tyee lakes (1.25 mi; 9400 ft+). The trail continues to Blue Lake where it branches (1.5 mi; 10,400 ft+). The south branch continues to Donkey Lake and Baboon Lakes (1.5 mi; 10,976 ft). The other branch goes west past Emerald Lake and Dingleberry Lake to a fork (2.25 mi; 10,840 ft+). The right-hand fork leads to Midnight Lake (0.5 mi; 10,988 ft); the left-hand fork leads to Hungry Packer Lake and Moonlight Lake (1 mi; 11,071 ft)." "UTM" refers to the Universal Transverse Mercator coordinate system. The description of the Bishop Pass Trail is similar in tone and format though longer by another paragraph of the same length. The thing is, THE HIGH SIERRA doesn't visually depict the trails with trail-specific maps. The descriptions of the Sabrina Basin Trails and Bishop Pass Trail are busy and I would've liked some; I'm a visual kind of guy. And in the case of the former, the only lake shown on any map is Lake Sabrina itself. On the other hand, the Peaks and Passes section of each chapter is positively littered with black and white, half-page and full-page photos of mountains and peaks upon which are drawn the routes to the top. To pick an example at random, in the Minarets and June Lake chapter for the "Clyde Minaret (3738 m, 12,281 ft, UTM 083702)" there are twelve climbing routes described in the text, several of which are superimposed on a full-page snap of the minaret including the Glacier Route: "Glacier Route. Class 4. First ascent June 27, 1928, by Norman Clyde. Climb to the highest left-hand edge of the glacier north of Clyde Minaret. Cross the bergschrund and make a left-diagonal ascent across some shallow ribs and chutes to the ridge between Eichorn and Clyde minarets. Follow the ridge toward Clyde Minaret. There is a short class 4 move just before the summit." This kind of stuff has to make the volume virtually porn for the rock climber. In summation, THE HIGH SIERRA is a fabulous resource for those to whom most of the material is tailored. For the simple trail trekker perhaps afraid of heights, the volume is inadequate in some respects. For me, it was not a wise purchase.

This is not a hiking trail guide. Think of it as an encyclopedia of the entire high Sierra Nevada range. It has a short description of all the major trails and climbing routes, instead of a lengthy turn by turn

guide. It also lists the class rating for climbing and mountaineering routes using the Yosemite Decimal System. This is for more advanced climbers/hikers who want to go beyond the popular and well maintained trails. Personally, I found the most useful way to use this book, is to determine an area I want to explore, find out the name of trails or peaks, then Google the photos or detailed descriptions for said trails/peaks.

This is the definitive book for Sierra climbing and off-trail hiking. An outstanding resource you will refer to often. I have the print edition and the Kindle edition and much prefer the print edition as it is easier to locate specific mountains, cols or passes by using the index. The Kindle edition has an index but it isn't hypertext so you cannot just click on the mountain or col you want and be taken to the article.

Over the years I have used each and every edition of this book to plan many trips. It offers information that is simply unavailable from any other source. It is a mountaineers guide, not a rock climbers topo book, and I would not have it any other way. Sometimes all you have is "southeast ridge, class 3-4" and the rest is up to you! This book has given me many ideas, shown me things I would never have known about, and been a great help selecting goals for trips. I was recently comparing the second and third editions. One thing I definitely miss from the second edition is the "wrinkles" section at the end of each chapter. It was a big mistake to leave this out. I also noticed that in a few places Secor decided to drop some personal comments, which is too bad. I would much rather have some human flavor than have a sterilized guidebook. Paper and binding were better on the second edition, shame on you mountaineers! I guess I will just have to keep all the editions. Maybe this is space pressure and this book needs to become multiple volumes in the future. No book is perfect, this one is unique and special for anyone who loves the Sierra.

This massive tome is oriented to those who really want to stray from the beaten path and adventure the Sierra Nevada. The book covers the Sequoia/Kings Canyon region to realms north of Yosemite. Trails, cross-country treks, mountain passes and peaks not found in other guides receive mention here. The comprehensiveness of this makes it a singular achievement that stands out from the many other books on this region. Be forewarned though, because of the sheer scope here, a great deal of information can not be listed for each topic. If you plan to hike an established trail, you would be better served by any number of other guides out there. Secor's text is oriented more for the Sierra veteran, particularly the climber, and mountain peaks seem to get a bit more space here.

Nonetheless, there is still plenty here for the non-technical backcountry adventurer. Despite the encyclopedic style of this thing, it's not altogether dry. Sample text: "The only thing 'enchanted' about Enchanted Gorge is its name. This is a difficult cross-country route..." One clearly needs good topographic maps handy to make use of this book. Even so, the book could stand to have a few more maps. Furthermore, the text descriptions ought do a better job telling one where a particular entry would be located on a map (abbreviated UTM coordinates are sometimes as good as it gets). Nonetheless, this is the only widely-available book that describes so many remote corners of the Sierra. This book is kind of an updated and far expanded version of Steve Roper's classic "Climber's Guide To The High Sierra", whose "Sierra High Route" book is a great source as well.

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