

Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit

Sierra Peaks near Kearsarge Pass

September 3-6, 2020

FUN 2020-002

Written by Tyler Shumway.

This year I was excited to share my passion for the Sierra Nevada by planning a recreational trip for the team. The main objective would be to summit University Peak at 13,589' along with a few other peaks in the vicinity.

Thursday: We arrived at Onion Valley at 5:00pm and started our hike up the Kearsarge Pass Trail.



Hike to Base Camp by James.

We made it to camp at Matlock Lake just before sunset to watch the alpenglow on University Peak and its crystal-clear reflection on the lake.



University Peak right high point skyline by James.

Friday: The group split ways with different objectives for the day. One day hike involved cross country travel to Peak 12,432 (Snow Crown), then drop down into Kearsarge Lakes, (James, Blake, and Tyler). We would then summit Kearsarge Pinnacle #9 and #10 which involved easy class 3.



Tyler and Blake Summit of Peak 12,423 by James.



Tyler Signing register on Peak 12,423 by James.



Tyler at Kearsarge Lake by James.



Blake on Kearsarge Pinnacle #9 by James.

Another group headed up to Kearsarge Pass and scrambled up to Mount Gould at 13,005' which has a class 3 summit block, (Eric and Kase).



Kase Climbing 3rd class summit Mt. Gould by Eric.



Kase on Summit of Mt. Gould by Eric.

Both groups returned to camp by mid-afternoon for a refreshing swim in Matlock Lake. We even used an Exped Mega Mat as a 3-person raft. Kaitlyn and Corey arrived during the day while we were out doing the two routes.

Saturday: We started out at 7am for University Peak via the north face route. We ascended a slabby ridge along Bench Lake and made it to the base of the mountain which consisted of scree and loose talus. From here it was only 0.7 miles to the summit, but with over 2,000 feet of elevation gain. It was a slow going slog up the precarious slope with some staying closer to the ridge and others in the gully.



Kase and Eric Heading up the North Face by James.

The route was full of loose rock but once we made it closer to the summit the route turned into enjoyable class 3 slab and traversing cracks.



Corey finding the Sierra 3rd Class by Tyler.



Corey with Kearsarge Lakes in Back by Tyler.



Kaitlyn and Eric on the final 3rd Class by Corey.

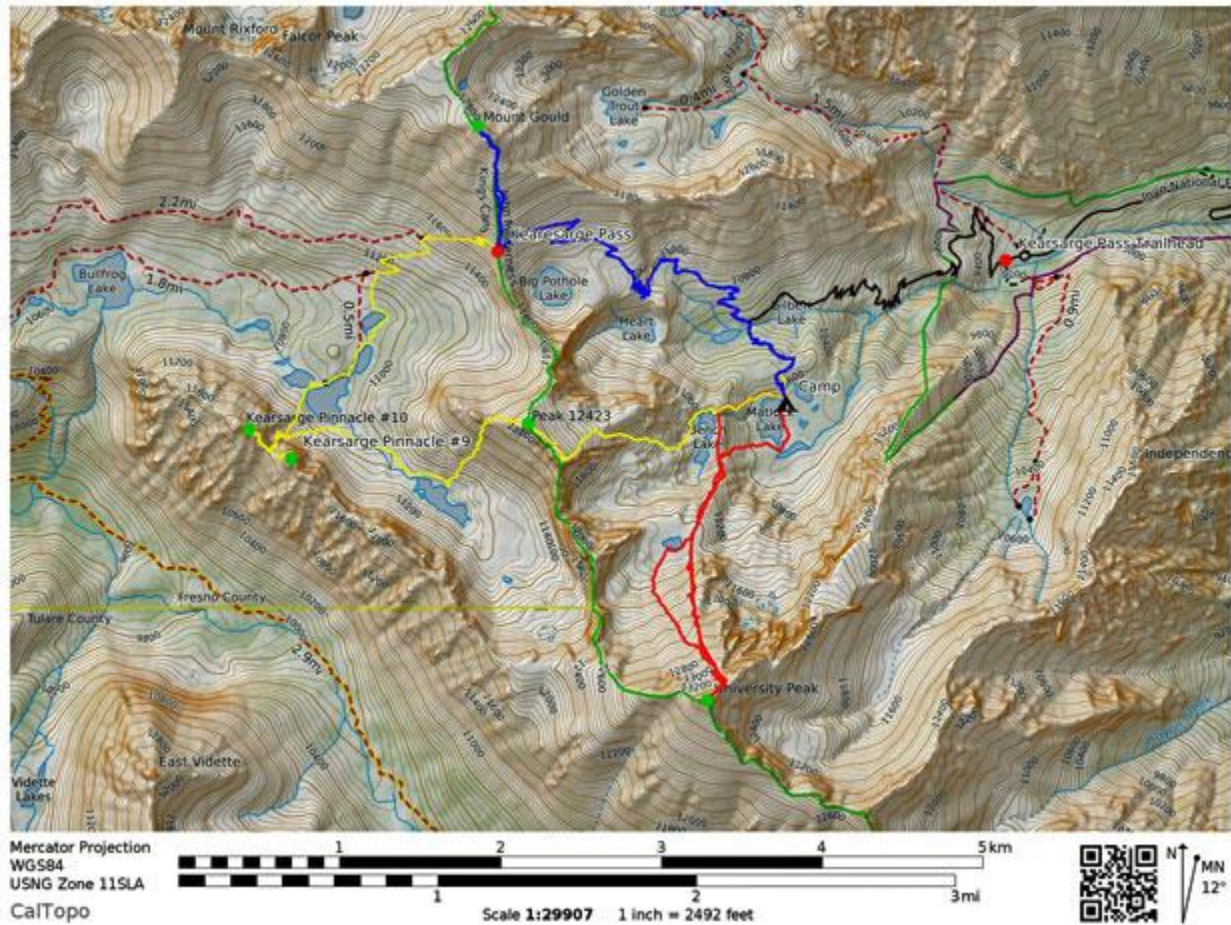
Once on the summit ridge we stayed right and found an easy path to the top.



Blake, Kase, Eric, Kaitlyn, Corey, James on Summit by Tyler.

The views from the summit were exceptional. We even saw the massive smoke plume from the Creek Fire that started on Friday. We reversed our route for the descent and took a dip in the tarn at 11,400'.

Sunday: Smoke started to fill the high country overnight and the Owens Valley below was completely blanketed in thick smoke. Luckily for us this was our last day and we were pleased to have clear days prior. We made it down the 3-mile hike to the car in an hour and headed to Alabama Hills Cafe in Lone Pine for some well-earned breakfast burritos.



Black to Blue to Camp Route.

Yellow Snow Crown-Kearsarge Pinnacles Loop Route, coming back on part of Blue.

Blue Mt. Gould Route, out and back.

Red University Peak Route, Ridge and Gully.

Team Members: Kase Chong, Blake Douglas, James Eckhardt, Corey Ellison, Eric Holden, Kaitlyn Purington, and Tyler Shumway.