

BOYDEN CAVERN AREA

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Intro

NOTE: The Rough Fire in 2016 burned much of this area. Some of the trees may be missing and the bridges on the Boyden Cavern trail were burned so take care when crossing until they are repaired.

The Boyden Cavern area is unique because it is composed of metamorphosed limestone, also known as marble. Driving on the 180 through thousand-foot-tall marble towers is an experience in and of itself and this entire area is called the Windy Cliffs. When the rock isn't polished into a countertop or a coliseum it can range from kitty litter to bullet hard. Be careful with gear placements as sometimes they do not hold well in marble. The routes described here generally follow high quality and often sharp rock that retains some of its limestone characteristics and lends itself to sport climbing, unlike most areas in SEKI. Many of the climbs are right off the road or trail, if anyone asks you to stop climbing it's best to just say sorry and move on. It is allowed but let's stay under the radar and keep it that way.

Caves in SEKI

Marble is soluble in slightly acidic rainwater and is therefore home to all the parks 300+ solution caves. Well, the Boyden Cavern area isn't technically in SEKI, but whatever. Anyway, when you are on marble in the park you are likely near a cave. PLEASE respect them and it is best not to venture inside unless you or someone in your group is experienced in caving. Not only for safety, but because caves are fragile ecosystems. The formations are old and delicate and many of the caves in SEKI are home to tiny endemic organisms, meaning they live nowhere else in the world except in their home cave. Most are extremely small and may be in the dirt under your feet, along with delicate crystals that sometimes form in the dirt on the floor of caves. Basically, if you enter a cave please leave it how you found it and don't give land managers a reason to build another gate. Even the oil from your skin will stop the growth of most formations if you touch them. If you want to see a beautiful cave sign up for a tour of Boyden Cavern or Crystal Cave, the two guided cave systems in the area.

Directions

Boyden Cavern is on Highway 180 in between Grant Grove and Road's End in Kings Canyon. It is the low point on the road, right where it crosses the South Fork of the Kings River for the first time.

To Boyden Cavern Wall:

This one is easy, the routes are right in the parking lot or along the trail to Boyden Cavern. You can literally belay from your bumper.

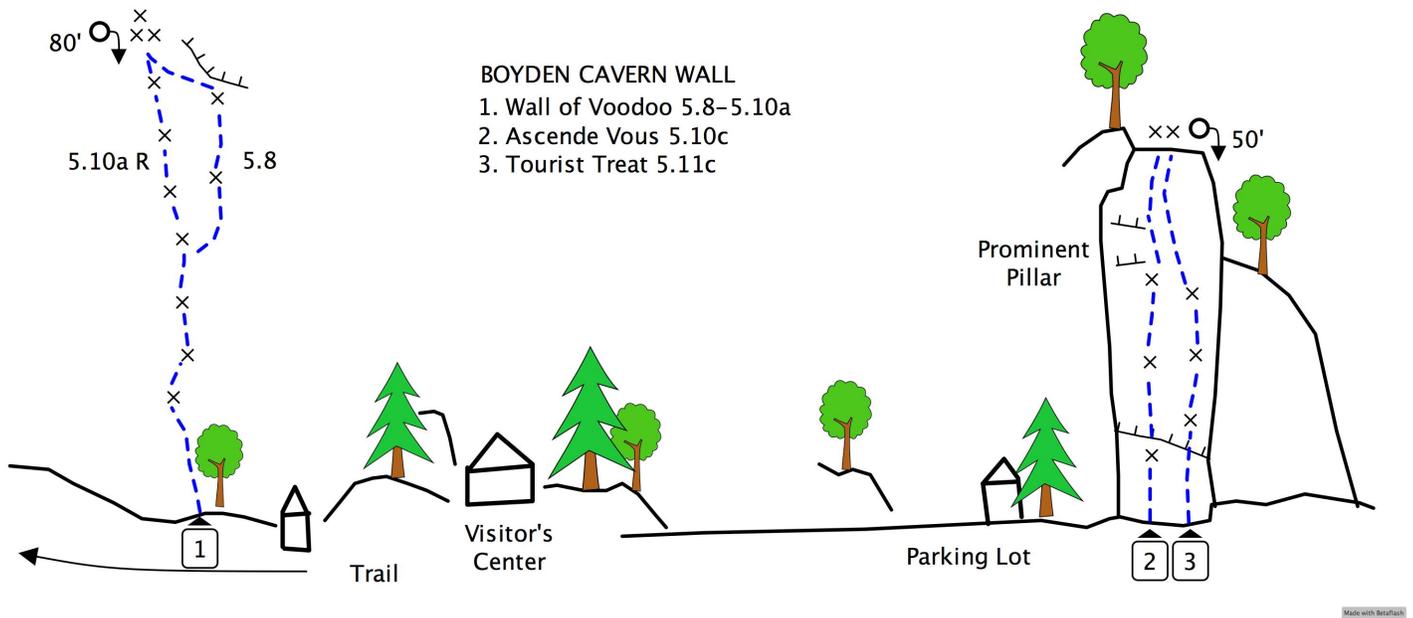
To Boyden Cavern Wall (Backside):

Take the trail towards Boyden Cavern from the parking lot. At the first switchback, when the trail cuts right, go over the rail and onto a use trail. The use trail continues east to a beautiful swimming hole called Tarzan Falls on Boulder Creek, but to get to the climb you leave the trail and contour right and up to the back of the Boyden Cavern Wall.

To Windy Cliff:

The entire marble intrusion in this area is technically called the Windy Cliffs, but for this guide it refers to the small section across the river from Boyden Cavern, just downstream from the bridge. Some routes are approached from a use trail directly off the road while others are approached from the river's edge. The latter are best saved for low water months.

Boyden Cavern Wall



1. **5.8-5.10a** 1 pitch **Wall of Voodoo** 6-7 bolts. Near the start of the trail to Boyden Cavern, across from the grey generator building and about 50 feet off the trail, look for the first bolt. After the fourth bolt you can trend right and follow the last two bolts to an overlap to stay on 5.8 terrain, or go straight up three more retrobolts on 5.10a to the three bolt anchor. Anchor may need new webbing.
FA: Greg Francek 1989
2. **5.10c** 1 pitch **Ascende Vous** 3 bolts and small-medium gear if wanted. Look for the steep pillar right by the parking lot. This route ascends the left line of bolts on the pillar.
FA: B. Harmon, Greg Francek 1989
3. **5.11c** 1 pitch **Tourist Treat** 3 bolts and small-medium gear if wanted..
Look for the steep pillar right by the parking lot. This route ascends the right line of bolts on the pillar.
FA: Greg Francek, B. Harmon 6/91

Boyden Cavern Wall (Backside)

5.11a 8 pitches **Magic Mountain Marble Majesty** Two 60m ropes, draws and slings, single cams from 0.3 to 3" with extra 0.5, 0.75 and 1" pieces.

P1 From the approach described in the introduction, scramble up a gully beneath the wall and work across 4th class slabs, looking for an orange hanger to the left of a bush. Follow the bolts along a dike to the anchor.

P2 Trend left across an easy, grainy section and move up into a left facing corner.

P3 Up the dihedral, then follow bolts left and up to the next anchor.

P4 Up and past a sloping ledge to a horizontal crack, then trend up and right to anchor.

P5 A small corner leads to more face climbing into a curving left facing corner. Belay above the corner on a stance.

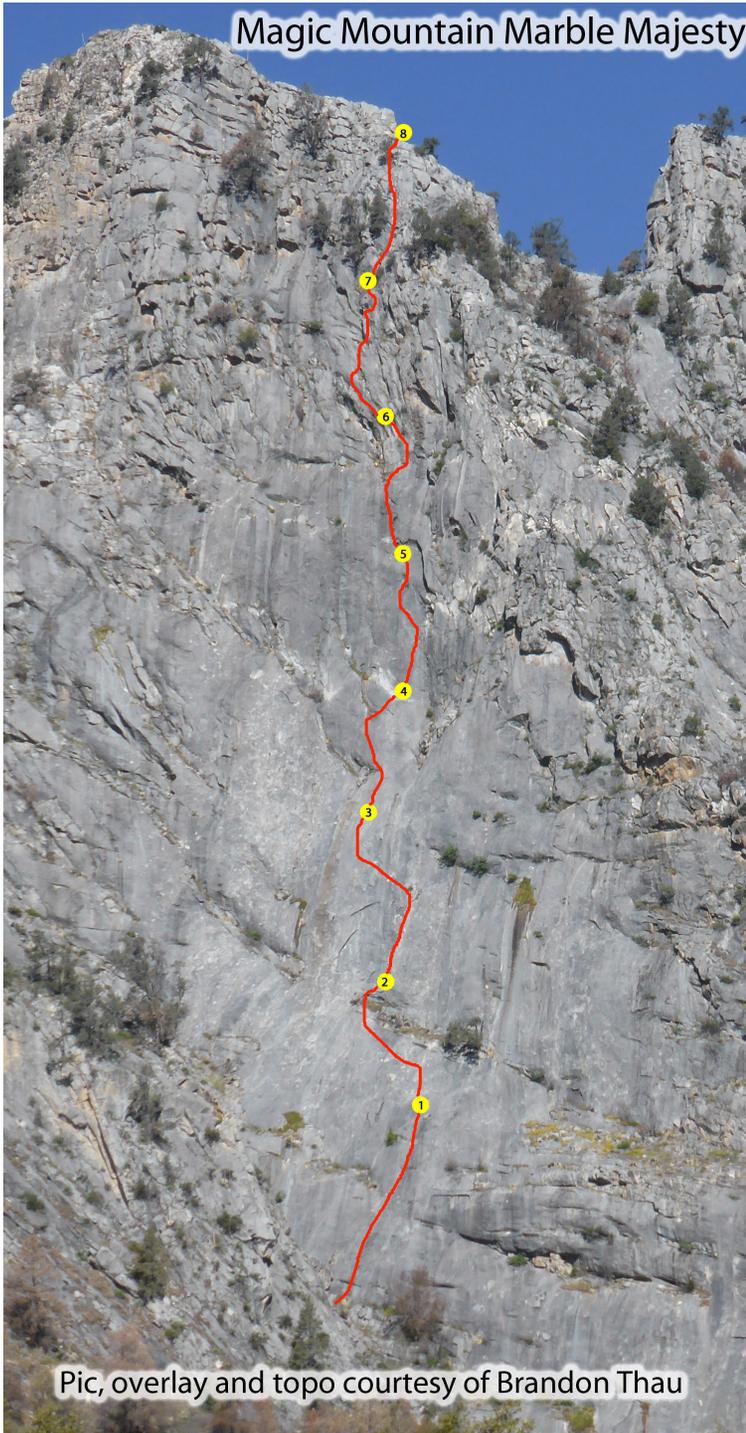
P6 Up cracks, through two small roofs, past three bolts and into a groove with an anchor at its end.

P7 Follow the ramp and then step right at the second bolt, linking features and bolts up to a ledge.

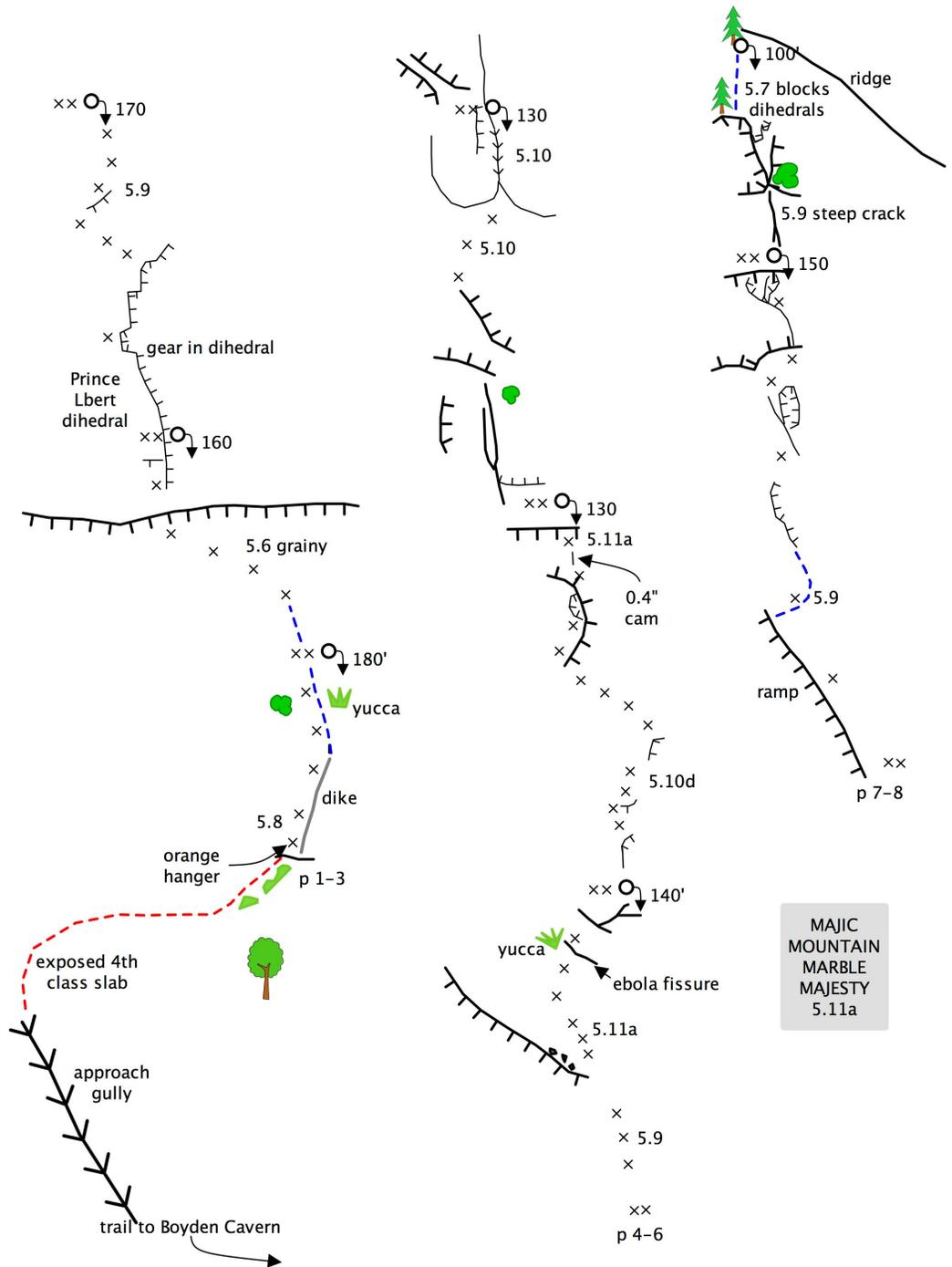
P8 A steep 5.9 crack heads into blocks and dihedrals with the route finishing by a tree on the ridge. Descend by rapping the route.

FA: Brandon Thau, Chris Labounty, Neal Harder 10/2/16

Magic Mountain Marble Majesty

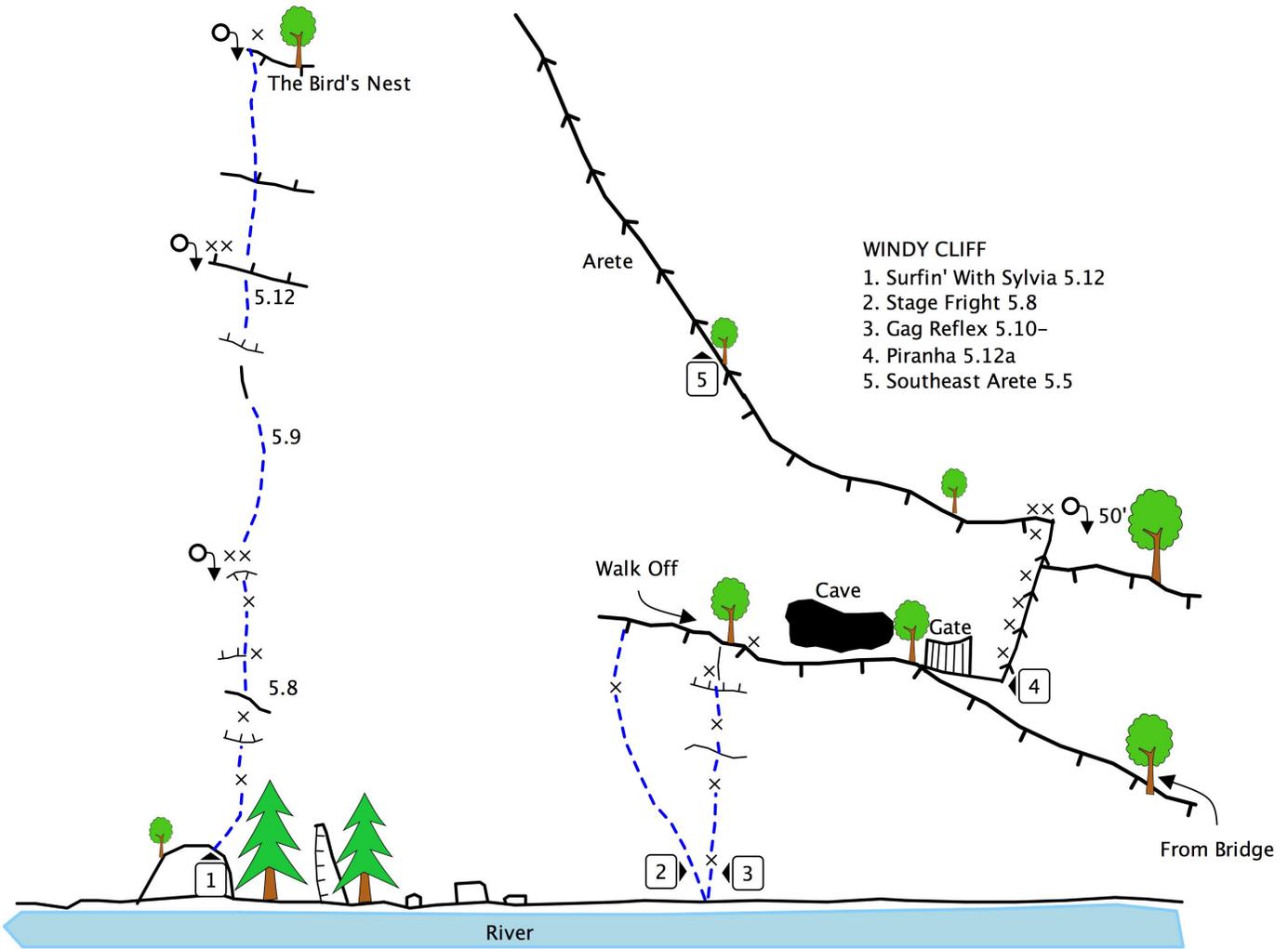


Pic, overlay and topo courtesy of Brandon Thau



MAJIC MOUNTAIN MARBLE MAJESTY 5.11a

Windy Cliff



1. **5.12** 3 pitches **Surfin' With Sylvia** *Two ropes, draws, doubles from 1-3"*.
 P1 Work downstream along the river to a steep face between two recesses. Follow four bolts through small features to a bolted anchor on a stance.
 P2 Continue straight up through a big roof and belay above the overhang.
 P3 Straight up over another big roof and then aim for a tree with a single bolt next to it where the route ends. Rap the route with two ropes and bring bail gear.
 FA: Greg Francek, B. Harmon 8/91
2. **5.8** 1 pitch **Stage Fright** *1 bolts, small gear*. Find the cleaner section of marble below the cave. Trend up and left to a single bolt and onto the walk-off ledge.
 FA: Barry Chambers and friend 8/87
3. **5.10-** 1 pitch **Gag Reflex** *4 bolts and optional small gear*. Find the cleaner section of marble below the cave. Head straight up towards a small tree on the walk-off ledge, passing bolts and shallow horizontal cracks.
 FA: Greg Francek 1989
4. **5.12a** 1 pitch **Piranha** *5 bolts*. Climb the steep, white arête above the use trail and to the right of the cave.
 FA: B. Harmon, Greg Francek 1991
5. **5.5** variable pitches **Southeast Arête** *Gear from small to 3"*. Grain the ridge above the cave and follow easy scrambling a few hundred feet to the summit with a nice view. Descend by walking east and then down. Watch for poison oak.
 FA: Unknow