

Angel Wings South Face  
Valkyrie 5.12, 17 pitches

Trailhead: Crescent Meadows in Sequoia National Park. The western start of the High Sierra Trail. Permits issued at Lodgepole Visitor Center.

Base Camp: Hamilton Lake (bear boxes and great swimming) 16 miles from Crescent Meadows. Approximately an hour from the start of routes on Angel Wings.

Horse Packer: Horse Corral Meadows Pack Station.  
Charley and Judy Mills (559) 565-3404.

Approach: From Hamilton Lake walk back down the HST about 15 minutes to the point where the trail comes closest to the creek (outlet of lower Hamilton Lake). There is a narrow point to hop across the creek that lands you below a huge boulder. Make your way through a short section of bushes, past an obvious white crystal boulder, and onto the start of the talus slope. (The route ahead was well marked with cairns in 2012) Scramble up through the talus slope, first trending up and left (passing a huge boulder on its right side) then trending back up and right eventually arriving at the first of two large Sierra Juniper trees. From just past the tree move right a bit into a small rocky drainage the heads straight up the slope (there are several rocky drainages and all will work) until you reach the base of Angel Wings. Continue left up the scree and sage slope into the large gully system that divides the main south face (left) with the south arete (right). For Valkyrie, hike up the gully a bit past the low point of the face to avoid thick bushes, (\*) cut left to near the rock, then drop back down to the low point of the face which is marked by a flat sandy area. The route starts here and the first bolt can be seen on the slab 40 feet above and slightly right near a seam. The first belay is 60 feet up at a comfortable stance with two bolts. Don't run the first 2 pitches together due to rope drag. Approach time: 30-45 minutes from creek crossing.

\*For the South Arete Direct Route you would continue up the gully and head up and right across class 3 slabs and ledges to the start of the route.

Descent: From the top out point, descend several hundred feet, angling right towards the brushy ridge that comes down from the South Arete summit. Cut right and cross through a short but thick section of bushes to an open slope of talus and scree. Follow easy open ground down into a small stand of large trees (you can see this group of trees from the summit) then continue down through the trees and into bushes following weaknesses down and slightly left until you emerge on an open spur that borders the right side of a huge gully that descends down along the west face of Angel Wings. NOTE: There are two gullies that drop into this drainage, be sure you take the one on the right which begins with a steep, brushy, but easy, section. The descent is easy walking over loose scree and dirt, zig-zagging down the gully. When you reach a 100 foot rock cliff drop off you can either climb down class 3 slabs on the right OR left (decision may vary depending on wetness, etc.) OR establish a rappel anchor on the left side, just above a slab. (In 2012 there was a 2 stopper anchor in place). As soon as you reach the base of the cliff scramble up and left over loose dirt and scree to a prominent shoulder that leads to a large bench that runs directly next to the south face of the wall and leads back to the start of the route. (DO NOT continue down the main gully as it leads into steep slabs and cliffs!). In general, stay close to the wall, dropping down occasionally to avoid short cliffs or thick brush. Descent time: 1 1/2 - 2 hours.