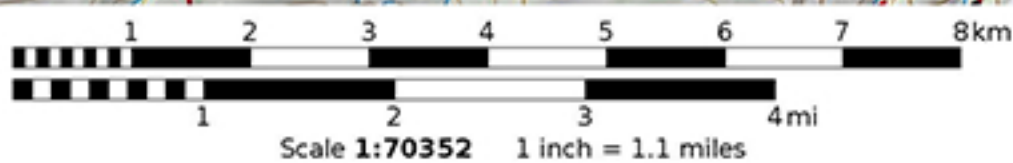
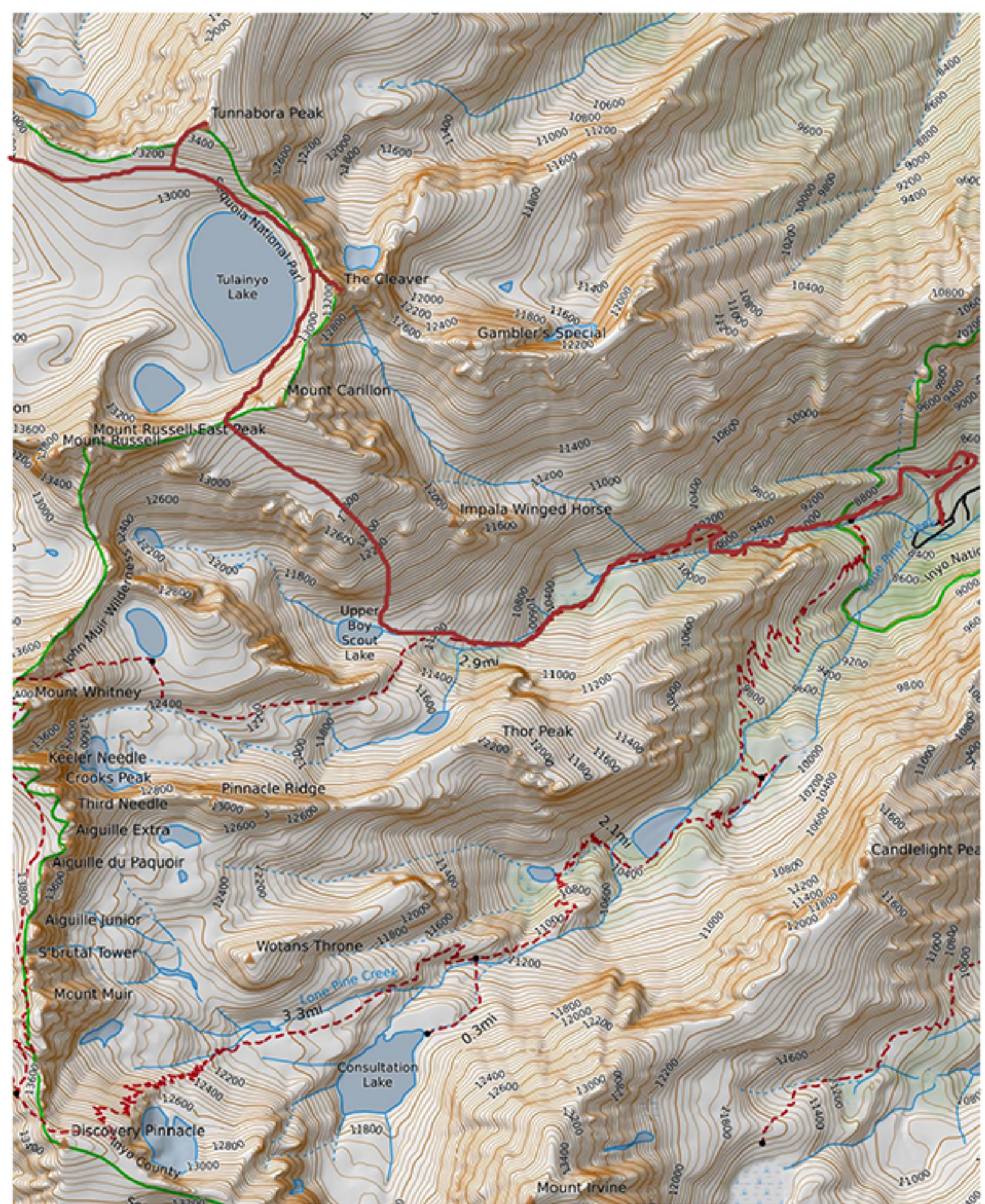
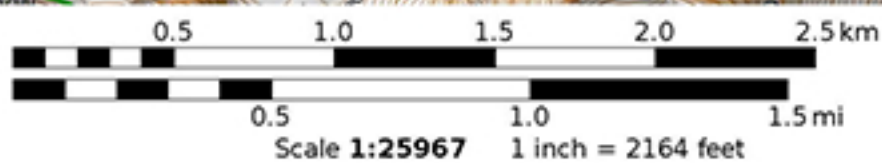


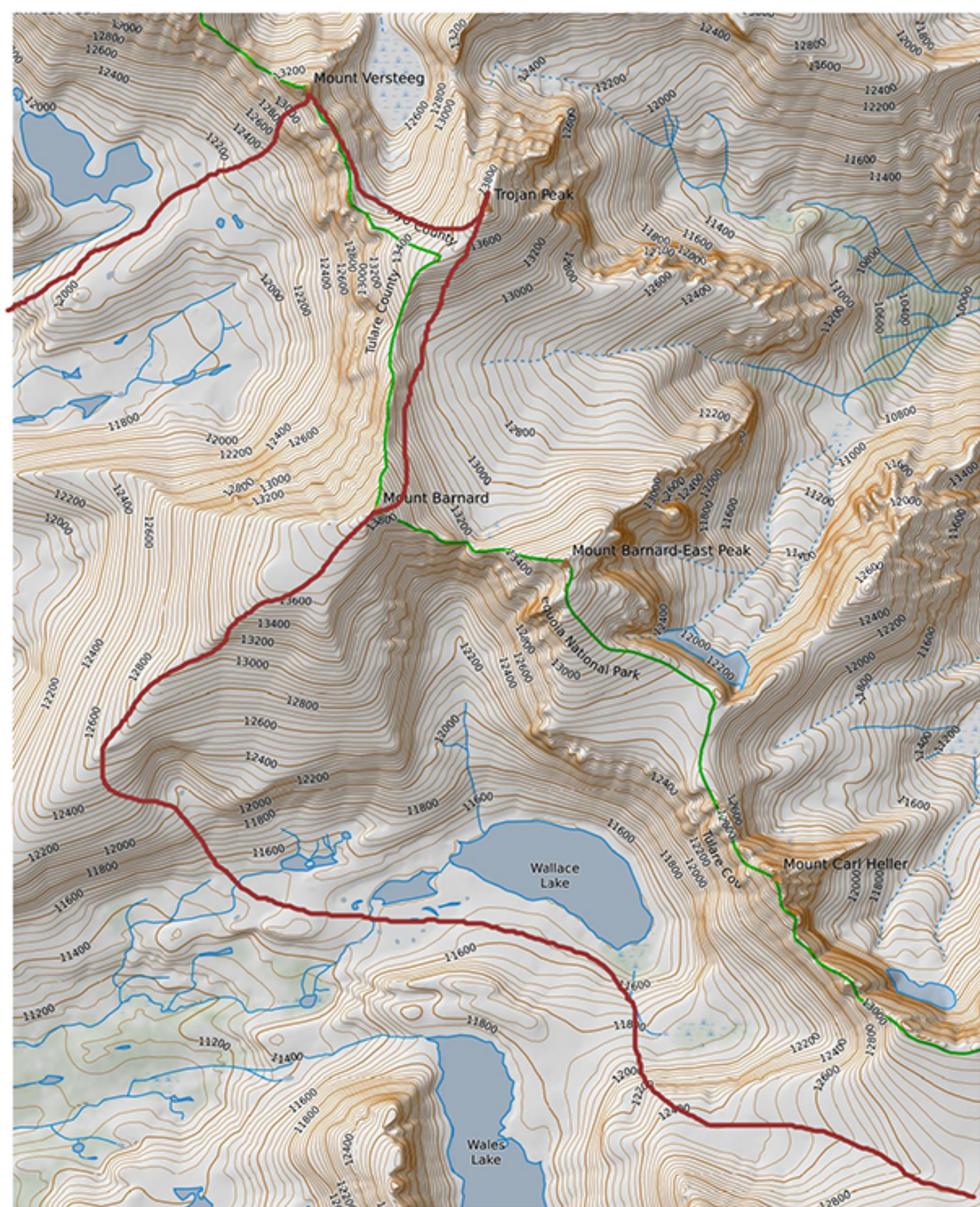
Mercator Projection
 WGS84
 USNG Zone 11SLA
 CalTopo.com



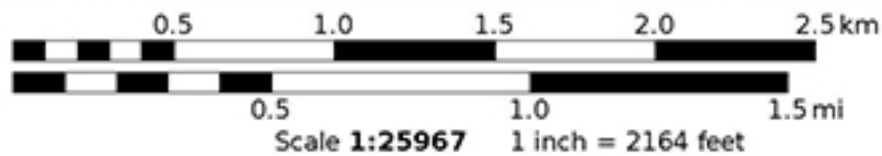


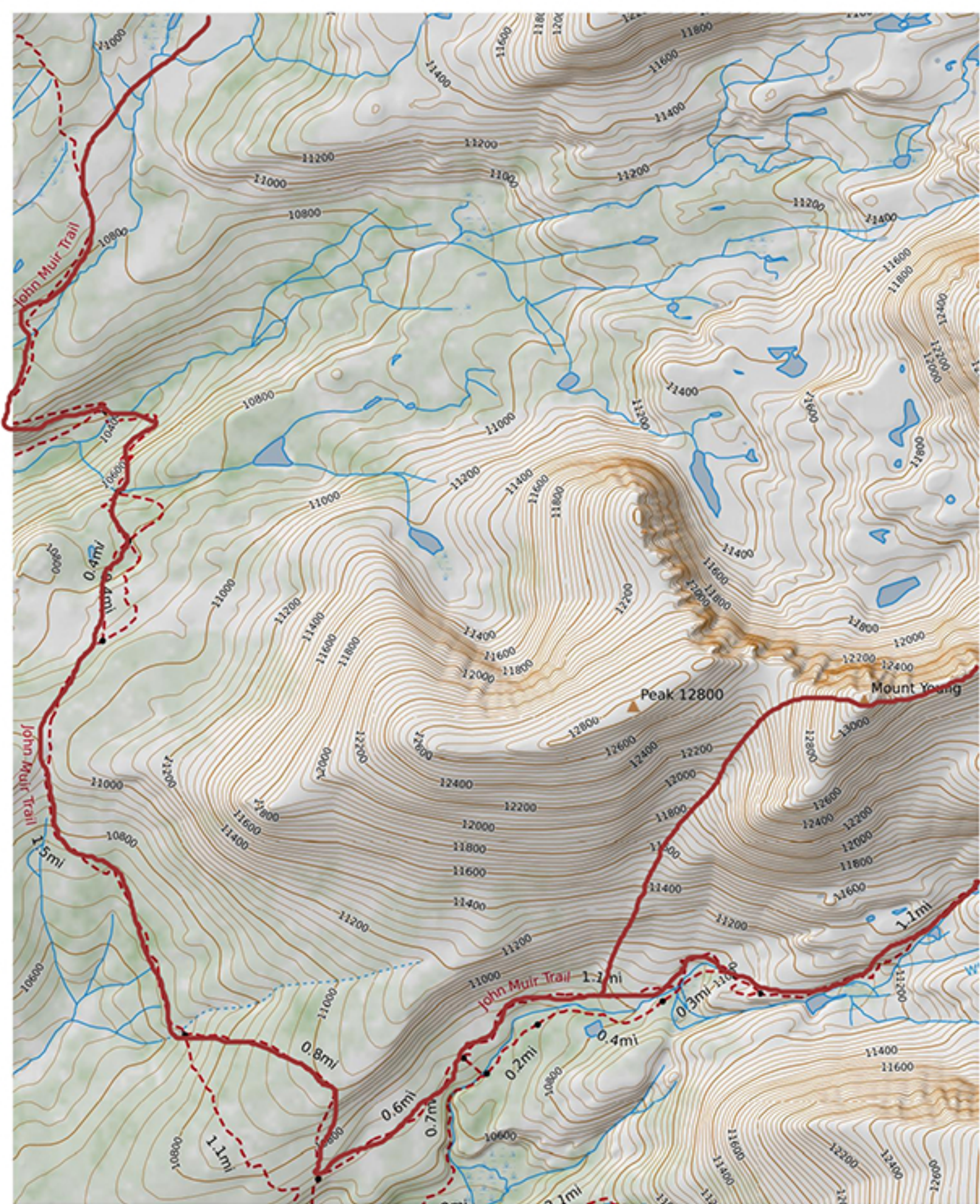
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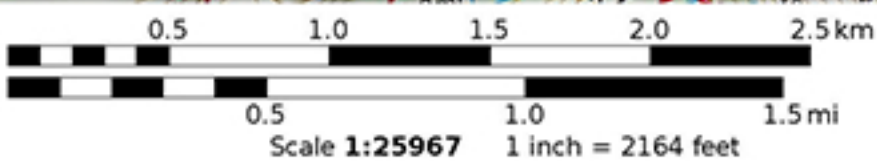


Mercator Projection
WGS84
USNG Zone 11SLA
CalTopo.com





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North Fork Lone Pine Creek fastpack & mountain climbing

Distance:

48 miles

Elevation Gain/Loss:

19000'

Altitude Range:

8325' - 13990'

Location:

Whitney Portal Trailhead (need Whitney Zone use permit)

Suggested Map:

Tom Harrison Maps 'Mt Whitney Zone' & 'Mt Whitney High Country'
RJ Secor's 'High Sierra: Peaks, Passes, Trails'

Time Of Year:

Summer & Fall

Directions From Bishop:

395 South to Lone Pine, turn right on Whitney Portal Road, trailhead is at end of road

Route Description:

This route begins at Whitney Portal and heads up the main trail briefly before turning right (signed) onto the North Fork Lone Pine Creek trail, a use trail used for access to Whitney's Mountaineers Route (among other destinations) that has become more and more well-defined over the years with increased usage. With that said, staying on it requires paying more attention than when cruising down other, regularly maintained, trails in the Sierra. Navigating the Ebersbacher Ledges is a great example of this. If you find yourself having to do any real climbing you are off route. The proper route through the ledges is remarkably mellow, considering what the cliff band looks like on approach. Once through the ledges the use trail cruises steadily and sometimes steeply upward past Lower Boy Scout Lk and Clyde Meadow. At Upper Boy Scout Lake (actually just before it) at 11300' leave the use trail and head north up a very steep and sandy slope to Russell-Carillon Saddle at 13200'. This is a tedious slog and involves negotiating some rock outcrops. From the saddle the classic Sierra 3rd class East Ridge of Mt. Russell heads west and to the north you look straight down on surreal Tulainyo Lake. The descent to the lake is steep and loose in place and the best route seems to be to traverse from left to right as you descend, picking your way along a break in the steepness where the angle is slightly less and the rock more solid. This descent is solid 2nd class with some 3rd class depending on the line you end up taking. Once at the lake it is easiest to hike around it's east side past The Cleaver (which has a really fun 3rd class route on solid rock

ledges) and to the base of Tunnabora Peak (a walkup with great views). A broad plateau extends north and west from Tulainyo Lk that you follow to drop into the Wallace Creek drainage. This plateau cliffs out and it is easiest to drop in along the creek feeding into Wallace Lake at 11475' which has created a lower angle talus break in the cliff band. The head of the drainage is dominated by the imposing Mt. Carl Heller. From west of Wallace Lake the long, tedious slog (reminiscent of the climb to Russell-Carillon Saddle) up the SW slopes of Mt. Barnard (13990') can be started from many points. The traverse from Barnard to Trojan Peak is straightforward, with a talus descent to a sandy saddle and similar terrain climb to Trojan, threading through rock outcrops as the summit is approached. Massive Mt. Williamson sits just north of Trojan Peak. The traverse around the ridgeline above Lake Helen of Troy to Mt. Versteeg becomes increasingly loose and steep while constantly circumnavigating crumbling rock outcrops, staying just below and to the east of the main ridgeline. Eventually, as you approach Mt Versteeg the terrain becomes a jumbled maze of loose rock spires and chutes. This is very steep and loose 2nd and 3rd class terrain and was the crux of the route for me. I gave up trying to find the proper way up Versteeg and the chute I used to drop into the head of the Wright Lakes Basin was very nerve-wracking despite being considered 2nd class because it was so steep and loose and occasionally had rock slabs and ledges covered in sandy debris to navigate. Once off this ridge though the travel through the Wright Lakes drainage is easy and straightforward as you make your way to the John Muir Trail, aiming to intersect it in the trees just south of where it ascends to the Bighorn Plateau. Once on the JMT head south to Crabtree Meadows. Inbetween Timberline and Guitar Lakes leave the trail and ascend cross country to the north to a broad sandy saddle between Mts Hale and Young. I climbed Hale first then traversed over to Young. Because I had left my camp setup at Crabtree I descended Young to the SW and enjoyed a plunging and fast, sandy descent back to Crabtree. Otherwise, you can return to the trail where you left it. Either way head up the JMT to Trail Crest at 13500' via steep switchbacks. From Trail Crest it is about 8 miles and 5200' of descent on the Whitney Trail back to the Portal trailhead.