
Tree surfing.

Posted by treeman - 10/18/2007 09:06pm

Tree surfing

Interest group-recreational tree climbers.

Origin-Peter Treeman Jenkins. This is a term I invented in 1980 to describe and define one of my favorite activities- climbing to the top of a tree during a windy day and riding the winds.

Meaning- Riding the winds in the treetops. I had recently been to California and seen surfers ride the waves and it seemed I was doing the same kind of thing- riding the crest of a wave but much more invisible until it hit the tree. I'm speaking about the wind of course. I could see the wind wave coming towards me from my treetop perch by the effect on the trees nearby. A big wind wave would have the trees bow down deeply and it would only take a few seconds before it loudly swept over my tree. Some trees are more limber, like the pine trees which creates a larger sweep of motion. One day I came down from one of my adventures and a person walked up to me and asked me what I was doing. I was unhooking from my rope and looked at the inquiring person as I tried to regain my land legs and made what seemed as a coherent reply.

"I've been tree surfing." The older man shook his head and I heard him mumble something as he walked away.

"What's next?"

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Re:Tree surfing.

Posted by michaeljspraggon - 11/08/2007 05:02pm

I too discovered the thrill of riding the treetops in high winds in the late 1980's. Of course, I didn't know about using ropes back then :ohmy: Like you, I found I could anticipate each gust by watching the wave approaching across the treetops! I'm sure I used the term 'tree-surfing' too, thinking of a windsurfer hanging on for dear life :woohoo: !!!

We're perfectly sane, you know.

Michael

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Re:Tree surfing.

Posted by Trebuchet - 11/08/2007 06:34pm

Dude! I've done some extensive surfing, back in the day. I engaged the stuff of hurricanes and storm surge; encountered rip tides, sharks, porpoise, urchins, jellyfish, and Coast Guard helicopters. My novice treeclimber question is, "Do we have a 'beaufort scale' of sorts to understand when to descend from the trees, ie. before gusts turn to gales?" I'd be a more comfortable treeclimber understanding how to judge, from the treetop, if a wind storm was approaching, preserving enough time to secure climbing partners and gear before too much is risked. I'd like to hear how arborists determine when to make such an critical, hastened descent, if indeed that is recommended. Specifically, I'd like to hear about how either the figure-eight descender or munter hitch, either connected with a spare double-locking carabiner, might play a role in a critical descent circumstance when integrated into a traditional dynamic doubled rope system. The wind in the trees is a wonderful experience. Surf's up!

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Re:Tree surfing.

Posted by michaeljspraggon - 11/09/2007 03:27pm

The first thing to assess is what the worst gust could be and whether the tree is strong and healthy (and some trees are more brittle than others...) Also, look out for dead hanging branches that could be dislodged by a heavy gust.

I guess the best way to be prepared for a swift exit is to have a rope suspended by it's mid point from a strong crotch high up in the tree. Make sure the two ends are tied together before you lower them down to the ground (and that the rope reaches the ground) so that you don't run out of rope on one side before you reach the bottom or you will accelerate

at the terrible rate of 9.81m/s²!! This way you can rappel down both ropes together to ground level and pull the rope through afterwards to get it back (this is called a retrievable abseil in mountaineering). Being a rock climber too, I use a Sticht plate to abseil with. An Italian hitch can be used in the absence of an abseiling device - I'm sure there are books or rock climbing instructors who could show you this and other techniques.

One more thing I would say to any novice treeclimber - never use dead or sick-looking branches, no matter how thick - I trusted a dead branch about 6 inches thick when I was new to climbing trees - it broke almost immediately leaving me desperately trying to stay in the tree 35ft above a greenhouse :ohmy: It seems the weight of the branch alone was nearly enough to break it so all it needed was a delicate touch from me...

Sounds like you've got some serious surfing stories to tell - I'm not too keen on water myself so I'll stick to climbing (and snow)!

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