



AAC Publications

Peak 7,100', Galvanized; new route potential.

Alaska, Coast Mountains

Most of the mountains surrounding Haines are geologically not good to climb without snow on them. However, there are quite a few exceptions to this rule, especially in the mostly unexplored wilderness of the surrounding area. The granite spires in a cirque two miles east of Klukwah Mountain (7,000') have caught the attention of a handful of local climbers. Yet, the area remains undeveloped because of its access, which requires either a plane or navigating up the Chilkat River for 12 miles, then bushwhacking over six miles into the cirque.

After many weeks of poor weather during the summer of 2012, the skies finally improved. Dave Sundnas and I quickly jumped into local pilot Drake Olson's Cessna to scout the possibilities. As Drake circled the towers, it appeared the imposing rock walls were of good rock quality; the cirque formed a six-mile perimeter of walls ranging from 400' to 1,200'. We flew back to Haines, excited by what we saw, and assembled our gear, also preparing for the possibility of a long hike out.

The following day, July 19, Drake landed us below an imposing set of granite towers. After setting up camp, we climbed up the glacier to get a closer look at the steepest tower in the center of the cirque. The obvious line appeared to involve 1,200' of climbing through cracks, chimneys, and several large roofs. We agreed it looked like too big of an undertaking, and, instead, we set our sights on the taller south tower, which had a nice-looking, and easier, south-facing buttress.

We awoke early to clear skies and climbed 1,000' to the uppermost snow ramp at the base of the skyline buttress on the south tower. From there we climbed six pitches up cracks, flakes, chimneys, and slabs (5.6-5.9). We finished our route, Galvanized(900', 5.9), on the summit around 5 p.m. We descended by climbing the northeast side of the tower via a large snowfield, then rappelling 200' off the north tower and downclimbing 600' of isothermal snow onto the main glacier.

We spent the remainder of our time exploring the cirque. Most routes would involve lots of cleaning, but one could spend years putting up new routes in the area if only the weather would allow. We've provisionally called the area Rapa Nui, after the statues of Easter Island; the central tower resembles one.

William Wacker

Images



Rapa Nui's unclimbed central tower, located outside Haines.



Central tower, left side.



Peak 7100. The route, Galvanized, takes the center line.

Article Details

Author	William Wacker
Publication	AAJ
Volume	55
Issue	87
Page	162
Copyright Date	2013
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions