



AAC Publications

Longs Peak, The Diamond, Waterhole #3, first free ascent

Colorado, Rocky Mountain National Park

Waterhole #3 was the first route to be put up solo on the Diamond (Walker, 1971). I first attempted to free the route in 2011, going ground-up, onsight. It looked like there were small cracks on the route that would take gear, but I kept climbing higher and higher to false shadows and seams with no openings (150', 5.10 X). I eventually reached a massive roof that wouldn't be possible to reverse once I went over it and bailed. My partner, Lukas Hill, never wanted to come back, but for some weird reason I did.

I returned in 2012, threw down a massive static line from the top of the Diamond, and spent an entire day cleaning the route. I Mini-Traxioned the route, doing all the moves, and soon gave up my cleaning efforts because it was too miserable hanging out in the route's namesake waterfall, by myself, 1,000' off of the ground. I convinced my friend Jeff Duran to come out and belay me. He said he would try and follow the route clean, but after watching rock rain down on the first pitch, he became content to jug.

The route starts by going through a waterfall and then climbing up behind it. You pop through the waterfall at various times on the wall, getting totally soaked. At one point, it started to rain on us, which I didn't even realize until the thunder began and I saw a storm surrounding us. I think there's a natural spring above this side of the Diamond. The water seems to just come right out of the mountain. As for the climb, it's the worst route I've done on the Diamond, and probably even in the park (6 pitches, 800', 5.11+ X). I don't recommend it to anyone. I love adventure, but sometimes there are adventures just not meant to go on, you know what I mean?

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Images

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