



AAC Publications

Goat's Beard, second ascent and first free ascent

Washington, Cascades

On January 12, 2013, Vern Nelson Jr. and I made the second known ascent and first known free ascent of Goat's Beard (IV WI5), an approximately 350m ice climb up the center of the Goat Wall in Mazama. The route was pioneered in 1991 by Tom Kimbrell and Jack Lewis, and originally graded V WI5+ 5.9 A2.

After two weeks of waiting and close monitoring, we found the climb in chance-of-a-lifetime conditions. The route consisted of six pitches up the longest and best quality ice we have ever encountered in Washington; this thought was seconded by John Friehe and Wayne Wallace, who repeated the climb the following day. There was significant and unavoidable objective hazard caused by falling ice. Later parties described this hazard as "multiple assassination attempts."

We rappelled the route, though later climbers may have found safer descents via neighboring, bolted rock routes, avoiding the objective dangers. At least three parties, including ours, experienced severely stuck ropes high on the route while descending.

Images



Goat's Beard in rare, fully-formed ice conditions.

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