



AAC Publications

Big Rock Candy Mountain, new routes

Colorado, Rocky Mountains

During the summer and fall of 2013, I ferreted out two new lines on the monolith of Big Rock Candy Mountain while researching an upcoming guidebook. In June, Greg Miller and I put up the 11-pitch route Nicaraguan Nut Butter (1,300', 5.9) ground-up and onsight. We placed two bolts on lead from free stances, but otherwise climbed the entire route on gear.

In September, Greg and I returned to establish the White Whale (900', 5.10c A2) on the northwest corner of the rock. While the crux is a bolt-protected slab on the fifth pitch (bolted on lead), most will get worked on the unrelenting, 170' offwidth (5.9+) on pitch four. We climbed five new pitches before hitting a few bolts on an undocumented and unfinished aid project on the north face, which we followed for two pitches to the top (A2).

Weeks later, while searching through boxes of old notes and photos from the late guidebook author Peter Hubbel, I came across a topo drawn on a folded sheet of yellow legal paper. It was clear the on White Whale bolts were from an unfinished project started by Dave Bell in 1987. We went back after our climb and rappelled over the old line, cleaned it up a bit, and believe it will go free around 5.11+. We intend to return and free the entire climb.

During my forays into Big Rock, I also discovered a difficult, one-pitch finger crack on the south shoulder of Tick Dome—the formation directly across the river from Big Rock Candy Mountain. After extensive effort, I freed the line, dubbing it Question Your Progression (5.14a). Without doubt it is the hardest crack in Colorado's Front Range.

Images

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