



AAC Publications

Reids Peak, Northeast Face, New Ice Routes

Utah, Uinta Mountains

On October 4, Scott Adamson, Angela Van Wiemeersch, and I established a new ice and mixed line, The One Who Knocks (550', WI6 M5 R/X), on the northeast face of Reids Peak (11,708') in the Uinta Mountains of northeastern Utah. I scouted the line in the fall of 2013, but conditions were never right for it to fully form. Although visible from the Mirror Lake Highway, the line is difficult to see and has a short window of accessibility when there's enough snow to form melt-freeze ice in the chimney but before there's *too much* snow and the road closes for winter. The shadow of Bald Mountain (11,942') keeps the ice itself out of the sun.

I drove from Salt Lake before work on October 3 to check out the route, then called Angela and Scott to see if they were interested. Both initially may have thought I was nuts, but once I showed them photos of the line they were in. With a week of snow in the Uintas, then rapidly warming temps, we found the right mix of conditions, with fully formed ice on three out of four pitches. It's about an hour uphill hike to reach the climb.

The first pitch presented two options, only one of which had decent ice: the leftmost corner. I took the initial lead up this thin, verglased wall, which gained an ever-narrowing runnel of ice (80', WI4).

Scott claimed the second pitch, the crux, where 50' of frozen drips and blobs on shallow ledges, with poor to no gear, led to a decent shelf where he could finally access a rotten ice pillar. Scott bear-hugged this pillar, afraid to swing, and then pulled around to the right side and gained a good stem, where he placed the first solid piece of protection on the pitch, a knifeblade piton. As he continued up the pillar, the chimney made swinging difficult, which was just as well as swinging might have brought the whole thing down. The final 30' of ice led to a good, sheltered belay in a corner on the right (80', WI6 M5 R/X).

The third pitch was Angela's, tackling a 100' stemming chimney on rotten ice and rock. Technical and tedious mixed and ice sections led to the end of the ice and a 100' snow-filled gully with easier climbing (200', WI4+/WI5- M5 R). I took the final pitch, with easier climbing for 190' to the ridge. In the alpine spirit, we continued up the northeast ridge to the summit of Reids Peak before descending. Although much of the route was ice, our ice screws functioned merely as decoration.

This is a unique route for Utah. So far, there are not many alpine ice and mixed routes, and ones of this length and difficulty are pretty rare.

Not having had enough, Scott and Angela decided to try for another line in the fading light while I bowed out. Scott re climbed the first pitch of the One Who Knocks and then continued up a leftward-leaning corner system with thin, golden-colored melt-ice (230', WI4 M5 R). Angela took the second pitch: 115' of verglas to gain thicker blobs of ice, and then good three-inch-thick ice until it all faded back to pure rock. They left two pitons and slings on a block to rappel the route and called the route Golden Spike (345', WI4 M5 R). Again, rock gear and no ice screws.

– Nikki Smith

Images



Scott Adamson on pitch two of the One Who Knocks (550', WI6 M5 R/X) on Reids Peak in the Uinta Mountains.



A close up photo-topo for the new routes on Reids Peak. (1) The One Who Knocks (550', WI6 M5 R/X). (2) Golden Spike (345', WI4 M5 R).



An overview photo-topo for the new routes on Reids Peak. (1) The One Who Knocks (550', WI6 M5 R/X). (2) Golden Spike (345', WI4 M5 R).



Angela Van Wiemeersch on the third pitch of the One Who Knocks.



Scott Adamson, Angela Van Wiemeersch, and Nikki Smith atop Reids Peak after climbing the One Who Knocks.



Angela Van Wiemeersch on the second pitch of Golden Spike (345', WI4 M5 R) on Reids Peak in the Uinta Mountains.



Nikki Smith follows the second pitch of the One Who Knocks.



Angela Van Wiemeersch follows pitch two of the One Who Knocks.



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Nikki Smith leading the first pitch of the One Who Knocks.

Article Details

Author	Nikki Smith
Publication	AAJ
Volume	57
Issue	89
Page	0
Copyright Date	2015
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions