



## AAC Publications

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### **Mt. Hooker, northeast face: Hook, Line, and Sinker**

Wyoming, Wind River Range

In August, Whit Magro and I completed a free version of the Boissenault-Larson Route (VI 5.11 A4, 1979), which we called Hook, Line, and Sinker (1,800', V 5.12). We accessed Mt. Hooker from the Big Sandy trailhead using horses. The horses dropped us at Mae's Lake (otherwise a four-hour walk), and from there we made the two-hour hump over Hailey Pass to Baptiste Lake.

Whit originally had tried the line with Hermes Lynn earlier in the summer. After Whit and I completed two additional days of work on it, we did an all-free ascent of the 12-pitch route. The climb begins near the obvious left-trending ramp/flake just left of the nose of the wall (the free version of Sendero Luminoso also starts on this feature). Going ground-up, we cleaned and then redpointed the first six pitches, and climbed the remaining pitches onsight. Our one-day ascent took about 11 hours, with both the leader and follower taking no falls.

Many sections of the climb that appeared difficult proved to be only 5.11-, due to a veritable potpourri of incut edges. A good portion of the terrain differs from the original aid line, and our route shares the crux pitches (seven and eight) with the Free Eye (V 5.12, Goodman-Miyamoto-Sharratt, AAJ 2011). [Free Eye is a free variation to the lower portion of Third Eye (VI 5.10 A4, Middendorf-Quinlan, AAJ 1994) and the upper part of the Boissonneault-Larson. All of Free Eye's pitches were redpointed or onsighted but not climbed in a continuous free ascent.] About one-third of the terrain we covered appears to be new ground. The climbing is sustained, steep, and incredibly good.

Since this route was so good, and proved surprisingly moderate, our goal was to create a high-quality free line that would be fun to repeat (not a "headpoint" route that's a pain in the ass for everybody but the first-ascent team). By adding six bolts to our free variations, and also replacing a couple of old button-head bolts, I think we succeeded.

Future parties may consider adding a more direct two-pitch start, coming in from the left side of the big arch to avoid the sub-par first pitch. There's also the possibility for a right-trending variation from the top of pitch six, which could make the route better and reduce the overall difficulty; this will require at least a few bolts, but should be well worth the effort to create an accessible route on the biggest portion of the wall.

After a few trips, I have to say, Mt. Hooker has incredible rock for free climbing. It's highly featured and often very clean. The biggest issue is protection, as many of the cracks are discontinuous or seams, which makes establishing routes a process. Nonetheless, there's still enormous potential.

Josh Wharton

## Images



Josh Wharton on pitch 5 (5.11+) of Hook Line and Sinker.

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