



AAC Publications

Capricorn Peak, northeast face, new routes

Canada, Canadian Rockies

In mid-November I had some great adventures completing a couple of big, new mixed routes with strong partners on the lower northeast face of Capricorn Peak. This mountain is just north of and behind Mt. Patterson along the Icefields Parkway. The routes are both about 300m long, with mixed climbing and very thin ice climbing. They do not reach the summit, topping out at the ridgeline.

I completed the first route on November 16 with Steve Holeczi and Eamonn Walsh. The route appeared to have the fattest ice on the cliff, and we named it Big Ears Teddy (300m, WI4 R M4 X). On November 20 I climbed a second route, with Rob Owens, and we named it Space Goat (320m, WI5+ X M5). Space Goat had one of the thinnest and most run-out ice pitches either of us had ever climbed—hard to grade and certainly adventurous! Both routes require an extensive rock rack, including pitons, Peckers, and short ice screws. No bolts were used. We rappelled back down both routes using V-threads and piton anchors.

To approach the climbs, park on the side of the highway near the south end of Mistaya Lake. Bushwack to the lake and then up snow slopes to the routes. It takes about two hours. Space Goat is the farthest right line, and Big Ears Teddy is located just left. During the same time, the extremely talented and bold team of Jonny Simms and Mike Verway almost completed the obvious line farthest left, but found the final pitch too unprotected. As far as I know these routes hadn't been tried before, although climbers had been scoping them for years. Most years they appear quite thin, but there is some ice every season.

– Jay Mills, Canada

Images



The northeast face of Capricorn Peak. The right ice line is Space Goat (320m, WI5+ X M5), and the obvious one to the left is Big Ears Teddy (300m, WI4 R M4 X).



Eamonn Walsh heads up a thinly iced corner on Big Ears Teddy.



Steve Holeczi leading a steep curtain on Big Ears Teddy.



The northeast face of Capricorn Peak. The farthest right ice line is Space Goat (320m, WI5+ X M5), and the next one left is Big Ears Teddy (300m, WI4 R M4 X). Jonny Simms and Mike Verway almost completed the thin line farthest left but found the last pitch too unprotected.



Jay Mills leading the final pitch of Space Goat.

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