



AAC Publications

Beartooth Mountains, Last Call

Montana

On October 17 Chris Guyer and I went on an early morning recon run in the northern part of the central Beartooths. About five miles in we discovered a brilliant vein of ice dripping down a prominent north-facing wall. On October 19, Tanner Callender, Chris, and I started up toward the ice at 4 a.m., reaching the base of the wall by early morning.

We climbed moderate mixed terrain for several pitches before getting to the base of a large headwall where there were several drips of unreachable ice. At this point we traversed up a snow ramp to gain the ridgeline. Once on the ridge, a small traverse led us to the approximately 1,000' vein of ice we'd spied the day prior. In order to move quickly, we simul-climbed the next 500' of ice, which was mostly moderate with short, technical mixed sections. The final three leads contained more sustained and technical thin-ice climbing, and the route finishes in a tight corner system with lots of exposure. At many times the ice was only a foot wide.

We finished in the dark and then tried a walk-off from the summit plateau. After going the wrong way, we wandered a snaking ridgeline for several hours before finding a good descent route back to the trail. We arrived at the car psyched and tired around 2 a.m. We named our route Last Call. It has about 2,000' of vertical gain from base to summit, and we broke up the climbing into 13 pitches.

– Aaron Mulkey

Images



Aaron Mulkey leading thin ice on Last Call.



Chris Guyer leading a fat section of ice on Last Call, one of the best pitches on the route, as the daylight fades. Above him, the ice narrows to body width.

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