



Peak 7,400', Southwest Face, Pastime Paradise; Peak 5,850', Southwest Face, Triple Wannabe Couloirs

Alaska, Central Alaska Range

In May, Carter Stritch and I climbed a pair of possible new routes in the Ruth Gorge, in addition to repeating routes on Mooses Tooth and Mt. Johnson.

On May 1 we climbed the southwest face of Peak 7,400'. A couloir splits the right side of this face, and, although the whole feature is certainly climbable, we chose a less committing variation due to lack of ice. We began by hiking up the small west-side glacier between Peak 7,400' and London Bridge. After gaining 1,500', we traversed a snow ramp left to reach the couloir at two-thirds height. We kicked steps for a short ways before realizing this passage ended in a wide, overhanging flare. To avoid this overhang we climbed 400' of broken rock to the left, the crux being a 5.8 corner. Faceted snow slopes above led us north and to the summit.

We carefully descended our tracks to the top of the couloir before heading south to weave our way down snow patches. A lot of downclimbing and one rappel brought us back to the approach glacier. Pastime Paradise (3,000', III 5.8 50°) is named after fond memories shared with Eitan Green, who climbed a new route on this peak before his death (AAJ 2014). In colder conditions, harder men could link the lower two-thirds of the couloir into the upper part of our route to create a better line. [Editor's Note: Cramer and Stritch's initial approach up a broad couloir to gain Pastime Paradise is shared with the south ridge route (AAJ 2007).]

On May 11 we aimed for a weakness on an unnamed peak (5,850') immediately south of Hut Tower. Understandably, this junky-looking pile has been ignored in favor of the impressive walls surrounding it. However, the path we chose surprised us with the most engaging climbing of our entire trip. Our route followed the couloir dividing the southwest face. At half height we took the right-hand fork and followed it as it zigzagged to the summit ridge. Several constrictions held sections of rotten, melting ice that we either climbed directly or via rock to the sides. Once on the summit ridge, we dodged cornices and scratched up easy rock steps to reach the western summit.

To descend we made two rappels on the north side to the snowfield below Hut Tower. We followed this down to the Ruth Glacier and our skis. Triple Wannabe Couloirs (1,800', 5.7 WI4) references our social aspirations and a climb of similar character, the Triple Couloirs on Washington's Dragontail Peak.

– Jack Cramer

Images



Jack Cramer leading on the southwest face of Peak 7,400'.



Jack Cramer and Carter Stritch atop Peak 7,400'.



The red line shows the upper portion of the team's new route Pastime Paradise on Peak 7,400'. The

blue line shows the south ridge route, well to the right (east). See AAJ 2007 for the latter route.



Triple Wannabe Cooiors (1,800', WI4 5.7) on the southwest face of Peak 5,850'.



Pastime Paradise (3,000', III 5.8 50°) on the southwest face of Peak 7,400'.

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