



AAC Publications

Hall Peak and Block Tower: New Routes

Canada, British Columbia, Purcell Mountains, Leaning Towers Group

In August, Jenny Abegg, Alix Morris, Forest Woodward, and Graham Zimmerman visited the Leaning Towers of the Purcell Wilderness Conservancy Provincial Park. They made the arduous approach over two days, hiring horse packers to carry gear for the first six miles before camping at the Dewer Creek hot springs. The next morning, with the help of a local friend, they humped loads over a pass to the base of Hall Peak and set up camp.

Over the next ten days the four climbers split into two teams: Abegg and Morris, and Woodward and Zimmerman. Both teams began their trip by repeating routes established recently by Matthew Morriss and Winter Ramos (AAJ 2015).

Abegg and Morris then went on to establish Heart Like a Hippo (600', 5.10) on the right side of the east face of Hall Peak. According to Abegg, Heart Like a Hippo was "full of fun moves and beautiful crack systems." Following this success, Morris and Abegg attempted a variation to State of Wonder (300m, 5.11- C1, 2015), established by Jasmin Caton and Kate Rutherford on the east side of Wall Tower (AAJ 2016). After six pitches on State of Wonder, including free climbing the formerly C1 first pitch and fourth pitch (followed at 5.11+), they started up a left-facing corner to the right of the 2015 route. However, after one new 5.10 pitch they were halted by a widening crack for which they lacked protection. They rapped off to return to State of Wonder and continued up that route to the summit. Abegg is confident the full variation to the summit would go free, with steep crack climbing on high-quality rock.

Meanwhile, Woodward and Zimmerman put up two routes on the east face of Hall Peak: Shoeless Solidarity (400', 5.10a) and Affirmations in the Afternoon (800', 5.10b). Zimmerman said both offered excellent climbing on good, albeit dirty, stone and were well protected with a standard rack to a number four Camalot. Affirmations in the Afternoon finished with a 150' traverse to the right, joining Heart Like a Hippo for its final 60' of climbing.

Woodward and Zimmerman then climbed Pink Rabbits (1,400', 5.11 A2) on the east face of Block Tower. Their route began at the low point of "a very compelling buttress" between Trout Fishing in America (Issac-Edwards, 1997) and Slim Princess (Caton-Rutherford, 2015), starting with a leaning finger crack to an obvious wide splitter. The resulting route involved 1,400' of finger cracks, sustained wide cracks (it would be recommended that future parties bring a number five), some serious gardening, a dash of run-out slab climbing, and a single aid pitch utilizing beaks, small cams, and tension traversing to reach a small ledge, where the pair bivied under an emergency blanket before finishing the route next morning. Zimmerman said the aid pitch could be freed at approximately 5.12 if the aid seam were cleaned out.

– Chris Kalman, with information from Jenny Abegg and Graham Zimmerman, USA

Images



Alix Morris on the east buttress of Hall Peak.



Alix Morris follows an attempted variation to State of Wonder (Caton-Rutherford, 2015) on Wall Tower.



Alex Morris following pitch seven of State of Wonder on Wall Tower.



The approach to base camp beneath Hall Peak.



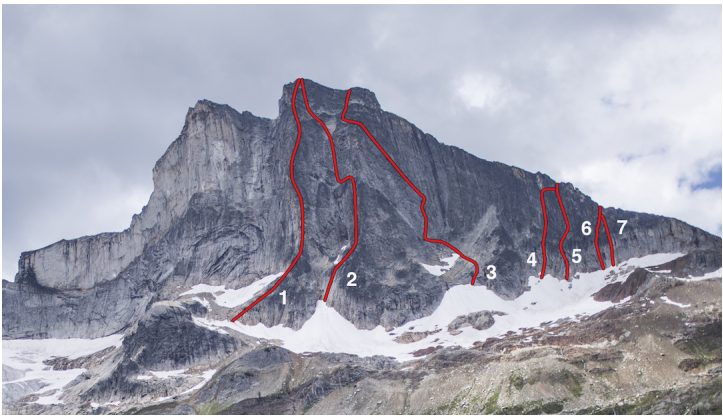
Forest Woodward and Graham Zimmerman checking out Hall Peak.



The line of Pink Rabbits on the east face of Block Tower.



Steep snow on the approach to Wall Tower.



Known routes on the east side of Hall Peak. (1) East Buttress Direct (Morriss-Ramos, 2014). (2) East Buttress (McComb-Myers-Twomey, 1975). (3) East Face Ramp (Leary-Reimondo, 2013). (4) Affirmations in the Afternoon (Woodward-Zimmerman, 2016). (5) Heart Like a Hippo (Abegg-Morris, 2016). (6) Post Credit Cookie (Morriss-Ramos, 2014). (7) Shoeless Solidarity (Woodward-Zimmerman, 2016). The formation to the left is the Pulpit.

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