



## AAC Publications

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### **Bedson Ridge Major, New Route**

Canada, Canadian Rockies, Jasper National Park

**Bedson Ridge is a beautiful gray and yellow wall of south-facing limestone that stands 1,000' above the Athabasca River. Although contained within the boundaries of Jasper National Park, the face isn't easily accessed from a convenient highway pullout.** It's either an hour's drive along a rancher's road—complete with huge mud puddles, gates, and wild horses—followed by an hour's walk along railway tracks, or else a nautical approach across the channels of the Athabasca. In August, Tyler Davidson and I were shut down on the road by impassable mud. A month later, after some dry weather, we returned and found the road much more reasonable. Our intention was to climb No Illusion (275m, 5.10b).

At what we believed to be the base of the route, beneath a prominent roof, we soloed up more than 60m of beautifully textured 5.5 and 5.6 limestone slabs until we were 100m below and left of the roof. Tyler found a sloping grassy ledge and built a gear anchor at the base of a short offwidth, which seemed to match our route description for No Illusion. Tyler led up the offwidth, with an awkward-looking step right, then continued up slabs. I followed and arrived to find Tyler belaying off a gear anchor instead of the two-bolt station I'd anticipated. At this point we began to wonder if we were on route.

Another pitch with a short, steep wall, then a traverse right, brought us to that prominent roof, which looked way too big and blank to be 5.10b. Tyler took the rack again and traversed left, looking for a way to bypass the roof. He took close to two hours on the lead, and now we were sure we were off route. I began to worry about worst-case scenarios as a chest-size block of limestone rang down the face. Minutes later I heard him call, "on belay!" so I followed. His traverse led left to a step around an arête, followed by a slabby roof that looked blank. I desperately fought my way up to the belay, astounded by Tyler's lead. He had only placed six pieces in over 65m, most of it along the traverse. The climbing felt somewhere around 5.10b.

I was in no shape for leading such run-out unclimbed terrain, so Tyler quickly took the gear and set off through a series of overhangs. Again, in a 60m pitch, he only placed six pieces of somewhat suspect-looking gear. I arrived at the belay to see a final 40–50m of cracks and overhangs. Tyler seemed more confident now, seeing obvious gear placements, and soon made it to the summit.

After a total of 12 hours of climbing we topped out the face. We traversed low-angle slabs and descended the east side of the ridge, eventually finding the approach trail and the railroad tracks below. Looking at the guidebook in the dark, we realized we had climbed a mostly new route between two others, with four pitches of new ground out of five pitches of climbing. We named the route the Illusion of Running Scared in Dark Places with Grand Mother (310m, 5.10c), a word play on the two existing routes we climbed between.

– Dunynel Geiger, Canada

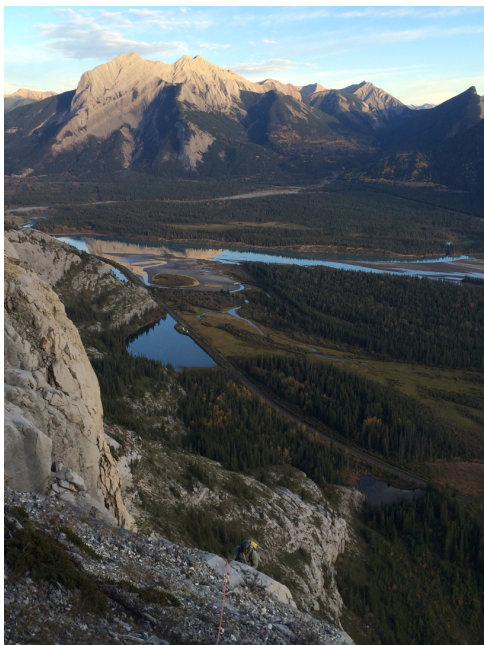
## Images



Dunynel Geiger stepping around the arête on pitch four (5.10a R) of the new route on Benson Ridge Major.



Benson Ridge Major and the new route The Illusion of Running Scared in Dark Places with Grand Mother (310m, 5.10c).



: Dunynel Geiger topping out on the final pitch (5.10c) of the new route on Benson Ridge Major.



Tyler Davidson leading the traverse of pitch three (5.10b R) of the new route on Benson Ridge Major.

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