



## AAC Publications

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### **UnawEEP Wall, Wintertime Joy**

Colorado, UnawEEP Canyon

**On a rainy April day, Curtis Chabot and I carried 1,000' of static line and a double set of cams up the northwest arête of the UnawEEP Wall (possibly establishing a new mountaineer's route in the process), the largest cliff in UnawEEP Canyon with routes up to 1,000'.** The wall, with its abundance of greenery, appears less consistent than it climbs, which is why I think other suitors have ignored its magnificence. KC Baum initially established an aid line up the center of the wall, and no other documented climbs were done until Jesse Zacher and I established That's All I'm Asking For! (5.11) on the southern (left) end of the wall, just one month after having my first son.

By the Curtis and I reached the top of the wall and chose a line to rappel and fix our ropes, it was pouring rain, with the temperatures hovering just above freezing. It was a slippery rappel down the wall, and we were concerned about rockfall, stuck ropes, and finding a climbable line. But each turn, twist, and slam down the water-soaked granite unveiled climbable crack after climbable crack. We reached the ground with a probable line up the wall at a moderate grade.

Matt Hurd joined me a week later to clean the line. After the 45-minute uphill approach in subfreezing temperatures, we adjusted the start of the route to a cleaner crack system to the right. While Matt tossed off loose rocks, I ascended the fixed lines and added anchors and the necessary bolts to allow for a safe and engaging free ascent. The day ended with high winds and frozen hands but high psyche.

Jason Nelson accompanied me for the final day of prepping the route. Our goal was to get to the top of the route, clean and bolt the highest anchors, and bolt a variation on the 40-meter granite tower just one pitch from the top. I had told Jason to plan for an adventure, but he didn't bring boots or warm clothes—it was a miserable day for him. It began snowing hard as we hiked up the hill to the base, then turned into a whiteout, and we decided to hike up a steep gully to reach the top instead of ascending our fixed lines. Post-holing up the gully in waist-deep snow was grim. When we finally reached the top, we bolted and cleaned the top half of the new route. At last it was ready to be climbed.

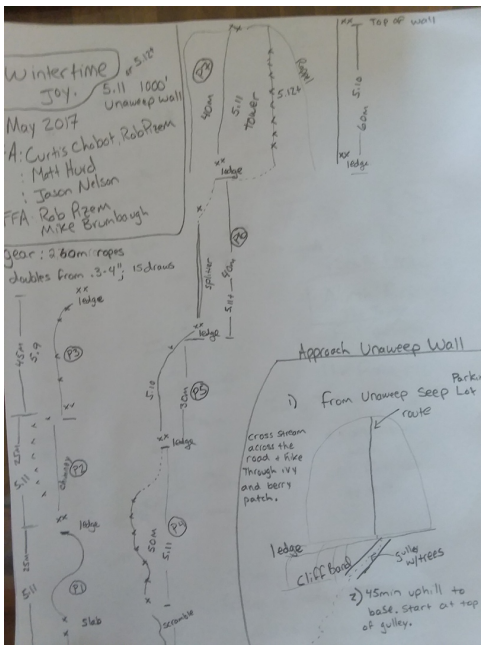
I returned a few weeks later with Mike Brumbaugh, and we freed the route on a perfectly sunny day in ideal conditions. The route begins with a bolted slab move that leads to awkward dihedral climbing. It then ascends a slightly overhanging face with incredible incuts all the way to the next ledge belay. After a pleasant wide crack and a long adventure slab comes a 130'-plus pitch that goes from four inches to fingers. You then climb a tower through a well-protected roof and finish with what I call a workingman's push for 200' to the summit.

– Rob Pizem

## Images



Rob Pizem coming up the 5.11 second pitch of Wintertime Joy (5.11+).



Topo for Wintertime Joy (5.11+ or 5.12+) on the Unaweep Wall in western Colorado's Unaweep Canyon. Rob Pizem and various partners spent several days preparing the route in the spring of 2017, before redpointing the climb in May. Rob Pizem

## Article Details

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