



AAC Publications

Heart Mountain, Heart Line

Canada, Alberta, Canadian Rockies, Bow Valley

HEART MOUNTAIN is a very popular scrambling peak along the Bow Valley, just an hour's drive from Calgary. I'd often wondered whether a worthwhile line could go from Heart Creek at the base all the way to the summit. There had been activity on the middle portion of the line (Black Roll Over, 5.6, MacLeod-Sampson, 2002) and on the attractive upper headwall (St. Pierres' Summit, 5.7, DeMaio-St. Pierre-St. Pierre, 1995). There had also been an attempt at a traditional ascent of a full-length route by Dwayne Congdon and partner in 1995; they made it up to the midpoint of the second step before bailing, about two-thirds of the way up the mountain. Their two-bolt rappel point was the only clue to where they had climbed. I realized parts of these climbs could be integrated into a full-length route, though, in the end, they would form less than 10 percent of the route I envisioned.

I started working on the route in earnest in March 2017, carting ropes and gear up the Heart Mountain scramblers' trail and then working from the top downward, with many long days. Once, I came out at midnight under moonlight after a bit of an epic (heavier snow in April certainly upped the ante). Chris Perry and I finally made the first ascent in June 2017.

The full route, which we dubbed the Heart Line (1,100m, 17 pitches plus scrambling, 5.9 C1) begins on new terrain immediately left of a watercourse cum ice climb adjacent to the Bunny Hill crag, with six pitches and a short scramble leading up to a broad ridge. From here, 350m of pleasant, airy hiking and scrambling and a single 5.1 pitch bring you to a notch below the stacked walls that form the upper part of the route.

From the notch, we established another new pitch before meeting up with Black Roll Over for two pitches. A little bit of new terrain led past Congdon's old self-drive bolts. Breaking new ground (using bolts), the pitch above proved to be excellent, requiring a delicate start (5.9), a jug haul, laybacking, and traversing. The next wall entailed a six-bolt swing up what I dubbed the "unclimbable wall;" Perry and I climbed this at C1, aiding off the bolts, but guess it might go free at 5.13. Three more pitches and a short scramble bring you to the final sporty exit moves of the St. Pierres' Summit route and a quick walk to the summit of Heart Mountain.

– Chas Yonge, Canada

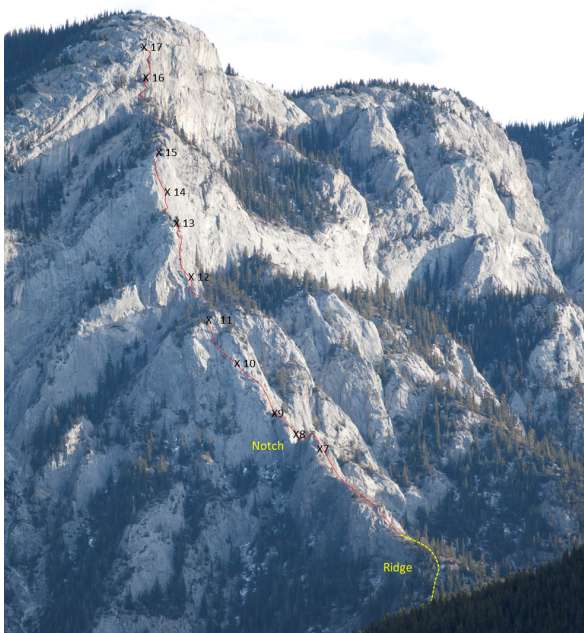
Images



The pitch detail on the lower half of the Heart Line (1,100m, 5.9 C1) on Heart Mountain.



An overview of the Heart Line (1,100m, 5.9 C1) on Heart Mountain.



The upper half of the Heart Line (1,100m, 5.9 C1) on Heart Mountain.

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