



AAC Publications

Hayden Peak, The Kennedy Route

Utah, Uinta Mountains

Less than a week after my friend Hayden Kennedy's death, I headed to the Uintas to scout for ice. It had been a good fall and I'd already climbed ice a few days in September. I've been watching Hayden Peak (12,479') for years, as there are many potential winter lines on it, but they come and go, sometimes within a few days' time. This time I was lucky enough to spot a series of smears that linked together for what looked to be around 900' of ice.

A few days later, Julien Baudrand and I were hiking in the predawn. Perfect temps and conditions and low snow on the approach made for fast hiking, and we were at the base in a little over an hour. I took the first pitch: 45' of almost vertical ice with a short M4 topout, which led to a traversing shelf heading right. Julien took pitch two, a full rope length of WI3-. Pitch three was more WI3 to a snowfield and rock outcrop for the belay. We walked left from here to reach an icy smear in a corner—thin ice protected every few feet by bomber gear in the quartzite. A short stretch of M4 then led to a snowfield and a tree belay 160' higher.

Pitch five was a low-angle gully that started just more than body-width and opened up after 40' to rambling ice steps. From here, the ice continued but didn't appear to go far. Wanting to check it out, I soloed 200' or so of WI2 until it ended in talus above.

We decided not to continue up the talus slope to the summit and headed down. We were happy to have put together a fun, moderate alpine line on Hayden Peak that only seemed fitting to name for a great American alpinist and friend—the Kennedy Route (900', WI3+ M4).

– Nikki Smith

Images



Julien Baudrand starting up pitch two of the Kennedy Route (900', WI3+ M4) on Hayden Peak in Utah's Uinta Mountains.



Julien Baudrand nearing the anchor on pitch three of the Kennedy Route (900', WI3+ M4). Thanks to their high elevation, the Uinta Mountains have become a popular early-season ice and alpine climbing destination and have seen a surge in new routing in recent years.



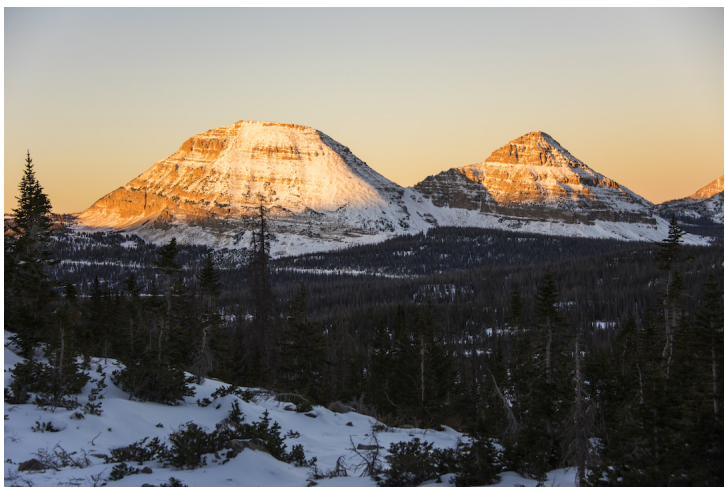
Julien Baudrand climbing the thin drips of the crux fourth pitch of the Kennedy Route (900', WI3+ M4) on Hayden Peak in the Uinta Mountains. The Uintas have been a popular summer cragging destination for years and recently have seen a surge in new ice and mixed routes.



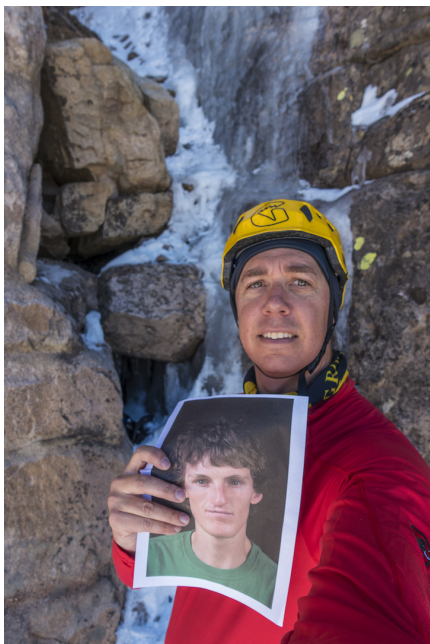
Nikki Smith starting up the narrow ice chimney on pitch five of the Kennedy Route (900', WI3+ M4) on Hayden Peak in the Uinta Mountains.



Nikki Smith climbing thin ice smears on the first pitch of the Kennedy Route (900', WI3+ M4) on Hayden Peak in Utah's Uinta Mountains. The route is best climbed in the early season, before the seasonal Mirror Lake Highway closes and access is limited to snowmobiles.



Sunrise in Utah's Uinta Mountains. Mt. Baldy is on the left and Reids Peak is on the right. The left shoulder of Reids Peak holds several quality mixed lines, including The One Who Knocks (550', WI6 M5 R/X) and Golden Spike (345', WI4 M5 R). See AAJ 2015.



Nikki Smith with a portrait of Hayden Kennedy, who died just a week before the first ascent, and for whom the new route on Hayden Peak was named.

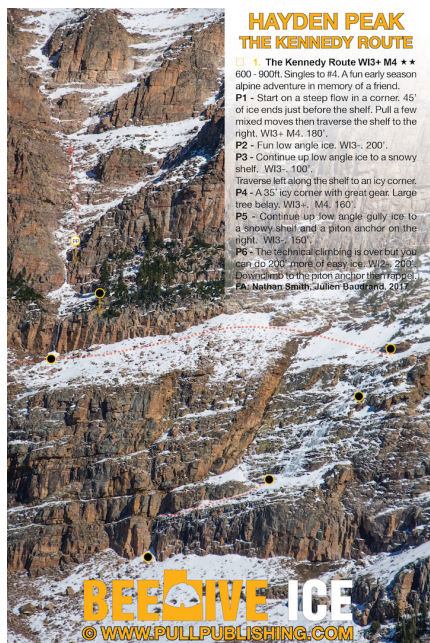


Photo-Topo for the Kennedy Route (900', WI3+ M4) on Hayden Peak in Utah's Uinta Mountains.

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