



AAC Publications

Mt. Spry, Hintersands

Utah, Zion National Park

OVER MULTIPLE TRIPS from December 2017 to February 2018, I established and freed a new route on the steep southeast face of Mt. Spry. Hintersands (900', IV 5.12) is almost completely hidden from view on the tunnel road, and I originally spied the line while climbing Lovelace (a.k.a. Fang Wall, IV 5.12+) on East Temple a year earlier. The new route links multiple overhanging crack systems with a few improbable face connections.

Over Christmas I found myself partnerless, and not wanting to waste precious days away from my desk-based career in Salt Lake City, I decided to head toward Zion with bolts, ropes, and a Silent Partner. Over three days, I rope-soloed Hintersands ground-up at 5.10 A2, establishing three pitches per day and fixing back down to the ground each night. I aided or French-freed as necessary to get the rope up, while cleaning sand and trundling many blocks. Pitch three involved nailing a seam to hand-drill lead bolts; this is the only pitch with fixed protection, and it now allows clean ascents. I left Zion suspecting that my new line might just go free.

Within weeks I had piqued interest in my friend Andy Anderson for a free attempt. Our effort in mid-January left us exhausted, both physical and mentally. We found calorie-intensive wide climbing on every pitch, combined with challenging movement on friable holds. I freed up to the final pitch on this first attempt, but the overhanging 5.12 laybacking to a horizontal roof on the last pitch proved the enduro crux of the day, and I only managed to one-hang this pitch despite multiple tries. We drove home leaving Hintersands nearly free at 5.12- A0.

Weeks of searching for interested partners led to one final attempt before seasonal falcon nesting closed the wall for the season. I teamed up with Zion local Ethan Newman, and we found the route surprisingly more stable than the previous attempt, as many of the most friable holds had peeled away.

I once again arrived at the last pitch with no falls. The first two attempts at the final roof ended when I was unable to keep tension on the undercling with opposing foot smears. I tweaked my sequence and lowered to rest for a third and final try for the day. After the familiar pumpy laybacking up the corner, I found myself at the marginal rest, staring across the roof traverse, trying my best to ignore the deep fatigue. I worked my way into a shallow stem and a thin hand jam, but I couldn't securely reach a jug around the roof. I wound up for a dramatic, feet-cutting deadpoint and stuck the jug, heel hooked the lip, and pressed out a bouldery mantel over the roof. I anxiously moved through the tricky terrain above and topped out the pitch.

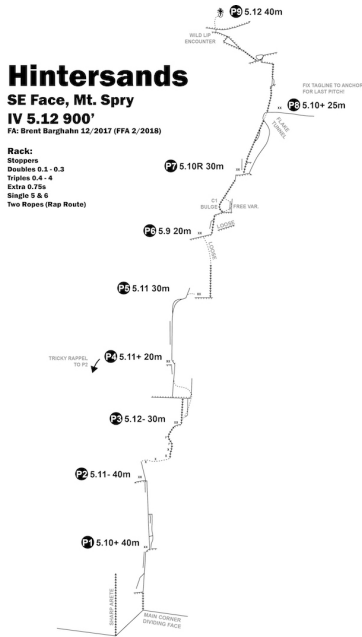
As a free climb, Hintersands presents a wild arrangement of novel movement on soft rock. The steep climbing necessitates multiple heel hooks and knee bars—unique fare for a Zion wall. All pitches have fixed anchors to rappel the route.

– Brent Barghahn

Images



The south face of Mt. Spry in Zion National Park, showing the line of Hintersands (900', IV 5.12) on the tucked-away southeastern aspect. The route features sustained climbing on soft Zion rock and is gently overhanging nearly the entire way.



Topo for Hintersands (900', IV 5.12) on the southeast face of Mt. Spry in Zion National Park. The route is mostly hidden from view on the tunnel road—Brent Barghahn initially spied the line while climbing on the nearby East Temple.



Ethan Newman leads into the Flake Tunnel on pitch eight of Hintersands (900', IV 5.12). Brent Barghahn put up the route rope-solo over three days in late December 2017, and returned twice in early 2018 to free climb the line at 5.12.



Brent Barghahn coming up to the belay on pitch five on Hintersands (900', IV 5.12) during the initial free attempt in mid-January 2018.



Looking down the final pitch of Hintersands (900', IV 5.12), which would prove to be the 5.12 free climbing crux of the route.

Article Details

Author	Brent Barghahn
Publication	AAJ
Volume	60
Issue	92
Page	0
Copyright Date	2018
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions