



## AAC Publications

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### **Daniels River Valley, Super Unknown, Schneider Quits**

Canada, British Columbia, Coast Mountains, Pacific Ranges

**I returned to British Columbia's Sunshine Coast this summer for another season of exploration and route development in the Daniels River Valley, funded in part by an AAC Live Your Dream grant.** At the end of July, a weather window finally appeared in the Powell River backcountry. John Bolte, Josh Schuh, and I hastily made our way over to the Daniels. We felt the time had come to get on the most striking formation of the valley: Red Alert Wall. First attempted by an American team in the summers of 1998 and '99, Red Alert saw no more climbing until 2017, when Travis Foster and Drew Leiterman opened Jungle Is Massive (1,290m, 25 pitches, VI 5.10 C2). We had scoped a more direct but far less featured line several hundred meters to the right as potential for the formation's second ascent.

We started up the wall with food, fuel, and water for five days, plus 35 bolts (not nearly enough and we knew it). After three days of climbing, with difficulties up to 5.10+ and A2, we decided to bail from a pitch and a half above Halfway Highway—a large ledge about halfway up the face. We drilled eight two-bolt rappel anchors and hiked back to camp by headlamp.

John had to go back to the States, but Josh and I had time for another objective. We got in contact with Ari Schneider, who had made a trip to the Daniels early in the season and attempted a route on the Super Unknown formation. With his permission, we decided to attempt to push his route to the summit.

We began climbing on August 26, following the first pitch of Evan Guilbault and my 2017 route Sacred Stone (1,200m, 27 pitches, 5.10 A1) and a variation on the second pitch opened by Guilbault. At this point we broke left and, for five more pitches, ascended a large right-facing corner system that we believed to be the system Ari had attempted. These pitches consisted mostly of moderate free climbing and brief sections of aid as the apron of the formation ramped up to the steeper climbing above. That evening we established our portaledge camp just under the massive "Coastal Ledge" atop pitch nine of Sacred Stone.

On day two we skirted the final roof below the ledge via a short bolt ladder begging to be freed on the next ascent. Josh put up two steep pitches in a deep corner just right of our 2018 route (The Prow, 1,200m, 26 pitches 5.10 A1) and then we suddenly found ourselves in familiar terrain: Josh and I had explored this way in 2018, attempting a variation finish to Sacred Stone before climbing the Prow. We repeated a five-star pitch of free climbing and then executed a quick traverse left and into unknown terrain once again. Fixing our ropes, we descended 60m to an adequate ledge for our second night. Day three dawned sunny and we started out early, excited for the climbing ahead. On the upper north buttress of Super Unknown is a band of rock about 400m high with some of the most beautiful, continuous, clean corners and splitters of the southern Coast Mountains. We have named this zone La Linea Blanca. The Prow followed one of these systems, and at least a dozen more remain untouched. The pitches on our new line turned out to be just as great as we'd hoped: layback corners and splitter hand cracks, aid seams and pendulums, all on pristine white granite with minimal need for the cleaning tools. This section also contained the steepest and most difficult pitches we encountered, and by evening we knew we'd need an extra day to finish the line. Fortunately, our food and water supply looked like it would hold out.

We spent two more days making our way up the feature we call the Golden Headwall. The final pitches were generally lower angle and could clean up to be fun free climbing—for us, it was

alternating hand cracks and C2 corners joining into the last 20m of the Prow, and depositing us on the summit at 1 p.m. on August 30.

After several visits, this summit is still one of the most remote, powerful, divine places I have ever been; the presence of the remaining old-growth ancient rises up the colossal granite behemoths and soars into the vast skies above with a palpable force. I howled the names of my loved ones into the void. On our descent the same evening, we completed our multi-season rappel route project: Starting from the massive cairn west of the true summit, two 70m ropes will take you past 21 two-bolt stations down to the approach slabs.

We named our route Schneider Quits (1,200m, 27 pitches, 5.10+ A2+) in honor of those who quested up this line before us. We hope our friendly jab will inspire a return trip from the only other party in the DRV this season. The vast majority of the aid on the route will clean up into stellar free climbing. Several thin cruxes will exist, but we estimate an overall grade of 5.11+. The Super Unknown holds potential for plenty more of these massive, moderate big wall climbs if you're willing to put in the effort. Over the next few years, we hope to see a significant increase in recreation here, thereby securing access for all who wish to explore the beauty and experience the grandeur of these mighty mountains.

– Colin Landeck, USA

## Images



Colin Landeck weaves up the first of three 5.7 R/X pitches at the beginning of an attempted new route on the impressive Red Alert Wall in the Daniels Valley. (They climbed 700m, with difficulties to 5.10+ A2.) Their attempted line is several hundred meters right of Jungle Is Massive (2017), the only complete line on the formation.



Josh Schuh seconds pitch 14 of Schneider Quits (1,200m, 27 pitches, 5.10+ A2+), a 5.9+ face traverse, as the evening light begins to fade at the end of his and Colin Landeck's second day on the Super Unknown in the Daniels River Valley.



Josh Schuh cleans pitch 17 of Schneider Quits (1,200m, 27 pitches, 5.10+ A2+) on the Super Unknown, one of the four main granite walls in the Daniels River Valley. They established the fourth complete line on the formation over five days in August 2019. This and nearby pitches held the most difficult and exciting free climbing of their route, epitomized by clean white granite, forming just off-vertical corners and splitters.



Completed routes, attempts, and variations on the Super Unknown, one of four large granite walls in the Daniels River Valley of coastal British Columbia. Colin Landeck and Josh Schuh established Schneider Quits (1,200m, 27 pitches 5.10+ A2+)—the fourth complete line on the formation—over five days in August 2019.

## Article Details

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