



AAC Publications

Peak 8,010', First Ascent and Ski Descent

Alaska, Chugach Mountains

Peak 8,010' is located on the eastern shore of the Copper River, upstream of the Bremner River and within Wrangell-St. Elias National Park. It's notable for the outstanding prominence of its western flank, going from the summit at 8,010' to the Copper River, at about 300', in a single fall line, over two and a half miles of horizontal distance.

As one of the taller peaks in the region, 8,010 is visible from many of the summits around the Thompson Pass area. The heli-ski operators get an especially good view of it when operating east of the pass. Some of them have even informally given it the name Spirit Peak, which is a somewhat confusing name since there is a peak 12 miles to the north called Spirit Mountain. Since Peak 8,010' lies inside a designated wilderness, helicopter operations on the peak are prohibited.

I am unaware of any previous ascents of 8,010, though several people have tried it in the past, including me. [Editor's note: On Bivouac.com, this mountain is called Dewey Peak, though it's unknown who gave it this name. It was one of the most prominent previously unclimbed summits in the state.] There is an old tale of Chet Simmons landing Doug Coombs somewhere on Peak 8,010' back in the early days of Thompson Pass heli-skiing, but details are sparse. There are also rumors of a popular air taxi operator landing in the high glaciated basin to the east of 8,010 and skiing something on the eastern aspect, however it's unknown if this party summited.

On March 5, Tobey Carman, Jon Cobb, Tim Stephens, and I launched on snow machines down the Copper River from the town of Chitina, arriving at the base of Peak 8,010' that evening. After camping out on the river ice, we began skinning up a large and obvious alluvial fan draining the northwest aspect. Amazingly, we were able to skin through 3,500' of alders without touching a single bush, due to the nice drainage we were following.

Some roped route-finding through crevasses led us to the bergschrund, where Jon Cobb elected to stay. Tim, Tobey, and I continued cramponing up through worsening surface conditions, generally staying to the climber's right of a sweeping rock band and finally breaking through it 500' from the top. We changed over on the summit under clear and calm skies, and skied our ascent route, meeting up with Jon midway down. After 7,700' of skiing, we all reached the river and our camp, where we spent another night and then motored back to the truck without incident.

– Ryan Hokanson

Klutina Peak Ascent and Ski Descent: On March 31, near Thompson Pass, Ryan Hokanson and Trevor Grams made the possible first ascent and descent of Klutina Peak (ca. 8,080') via its northwest face. This peak is located off the toe of the Klutina Glacier about 3.2 miles north east of Mt. Schraeder (7,241').

Images



The west face of Peak 8,010' in the Chugach Mountains. Starting in the alluvial fan above the rightmost snow machine, Tobey Carman, Jon Cobb, Ryan Hokanson, and Tim Stephens followed the drainage up and into the glaciated basin. From there they proceeded up and right under the sweeping rock band, taking the first major break in it directly to the summit before skiing down their line of ascent.

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