



## AAC Publications

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### **Mt. Cleator, Northwest Face, Tubby Needs Cheese**

Washington, North Cascades

**On September 1, Rolf Larson and I pioneered a nine-pitch, 1,000+' line on the turreted massif of Mt. Cleator (7,625'), the north side of which offers many ribs and ridges that are probably unclimbed.**

After a pleasant trail tramp past Buck Mountain in the Glacier Peak Wilderness and establishing camp in the Buck Creek drainage, we debated several possible lines and provisionally settled on the cleanest looking one. The line emanates from near the main summit (not the north tower), and is a northwest rib that appears to share the granitic character of the pluton on nearby Mt. Berge. Very little of the grubby schist, otherwise predominant in the area, was encountered.

For the full Cascades subalpinism experience, we approached directly from camp by romping up pleasant slopes to a band of cliffy terrain, then passed a waterfall by jungle-pulling up vertical alder. This approach grants access to the upper basin and the several lines on the northwestern quadrant of the mountain. For the descent, we enjoyed the longer but more gentlemanly and scenic trail return via Buck Creek Pass.

The climb's technical and mental challenges are concentrated in pitches two, three, eight, and nine. Pitch two involved an insecure traverse to a steep, sod-choked shallow corner—now clean—that provided one of the 5.8+ cruxes of the route. The middle pitches were more scrambly, mostly mid-fifth and easier. Pitch eight offered a sweet, relatively steep, cleanish, and juggy corner. The last long pitch, pitch nine, interspersed short splitters, blocky terrain, a chimney, and other varied climbing on a beautifully exposed ridge.

Overall, we enjoyed this line positioned in a beautiful area with abundant wildlife. Concluding the trip, our dialectic climbing duo, comprised of an ascetic and a hedonist, arrived at an amusing raw truth and the climb's appellation: Tubby Needs Cheese (1,000', III 5.8+).

– Eric Wehrly

## Images



The north-northwest face of Mt. Cleator (7,625'), showing the line of Tubby Needs Cheese (1,000', III 5.8+). The route, climbed by Rolf Larson and Eric Wehrly, follows a prominent rib for nine pitches.



A view of Mt. Cleator, below and from the north. Tubby Needs Cheese (1,000', III 5.8+) begins to the left of the shaded reddish streak on the far right, and climbs up to and along the right skyline. Other possibilities exist for new routes on this aspect. The true summit is out of view.



The north side of Mt. Cleator (7,625') from the Buck Creek drainage below the peak.



Rolf Larson heading up the first pitch of Tubby Needs Cheese (1,000', III 5.8+), which follows a prominent rib on the northwest face of Mt. Cleator (7,625').





Rolf Larson on pitch three of Tubby Needs Cheese (1,000', III 5.8+), a new route on the northwest face of Mt. Cleator (7,625').



Rolf Larson on the pleasant descent toward Buck Creek Pass from the summit of Mt. Cleator after making the first ascent of Tubby Needs Cheese (1,000', III 5.8+). Glacier Peak (10,541') is in the background.

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