



AAC Publications

Langille Peak, The Prodigy; Cyclorama Wall, Extraterrestrial Vortex

California, Kings Canyon National Park

In 2013, Scotty Nelson, Jon Griffin and I slogged 18 miles back to the "netherworld between the Palisades and LeConte Canyon" in Kings Canyon National Park, home to the Cyclorama Wall [37.001365, -118.506994]. The only recorded route on the wall was established by Vern Clevenger, Claude Fiddler and Galen Rowell in 1979 (see AAJ 1980) and has a vague and intriguing description. Our goal was either to free their route or establish a new route of our own. We picked a route near the center of the wall and found a fixed hex around the fifth pitch. It must be their route! We added a two-bolt anchor on top of the first pitch, and a piton on pitch five (above the fixed hex), but otherwise added no other hardware. Despite our best efforts, we did not free the route.

This past summer, I recruited Vitaliy Musiyenko to join me for another free attempt of the 1979 route. I told him I had freed all the moves individually and that there was one really good pitch that probably would go at 5.12a. My memory served me well, and we were able to free the route in a push to establish Extraterrestrial Vortex (1,000', 9 pitches, 5.12a).

On our way to the Cyclorama Wall, Vitaliy and I stopped by Langille Peak to check out a potential new route. Previously, he and Brian Prince made an attempt to repeat the East Buttress Direct (IV 5.10b, Rowell-Wilson, see AAJ 1989), but as reported in AAJ 2019, they were shut down by blank rock five pitches up, and later determined they were likely on new terrain.

Armed this time with a few bolts, Vitaliy and I were able to equip and free the blank section at 5.11. In all, we climbed 18 pitches, encountering one more section of 5.11 and several pitches of 5.10, followed by endless simul-climbing to join the Beckey-Jones route (see AAJ 1972) to the top of Langille's southeastern summit. The rock quality was excellent on the entire route, which we called the Prodigy (3,000', 5.11).

— Shaun Reed

Images



Shaun Reed following the fourth pitch of the Prodigy (3,000', 18 pitches, 5.11) on Langille Peak.



Shaun Reed starting up the first pitch of Extraterrestrial Vortex (1,000', 9 pitches, 5.12a), the free version of the original route on the Cyclorama Wall in Kings Canyon National Park.



Vitaliy Musiyenko copping a creative rest in the midst of the crux pitch of Extraterrestrial Vortex (1,000', 9 pitches, 5.12a), the free version of the original route on the Cyclorama Wall in Kings Canyon National Park.



Vitaliy Musiyenko starting up the first pitch of the Prodigy (3,000', 18 pitches, 5.11) on Langille Peak. Musiyenko and Brian Prince had previously attempted this line, believing they were repeating the East Buttress Direct (IV 5.10b, Rowell-Wilson) but were shut down by blank rock and later learned they were on new terrain. Musiyenko and Shaun Reed returned in 2020 to complete the route.

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