



AAC Publications

Huntington Ravine, Pinnacle Buttress, The Resistance

New Hampshire, Presidential Range, Mt. Washington

Huntington Ravine on Mt. Washington, with its numerous icy gullies, is a renowned winter playground. The classic ice climb of Pinnacle Gully (WI3), in particular, makes for a fantastic alpine outing. Over the years, winter climbers have also explored the mixed-climbing potential on the rock of Huntington Ravine, notably on Central Buttress, climber's right of Pinnacle Gully, home to underground classics such as Life Will Find a Way (300', M6), put up by Ryan Driscoll and Justin Guarino, and Misty (300', M6), put up by Driscoll and Michael Wejchert.

However, Pinnacle Buttress, on climber's left of Pinnacle Gully, hasn't seen much winter activity, with only two known winter aid routes. In December 2020, Adam Bidwell and I headed up into the overhanging walls on the right side of the buttress in search of a new line, picking the first seam we found after climbing the intro ice pitch of Pinnacle Gully. I tried to free that initial steep pick seam, whipping off the tenuous slab mantel at its end a couple of times before making it through the moves. We ended the day beneath a 45° to 60° roof, spanning about three body lengths and split by a thin crack that widened to offwidth-size near the lip. I hand-drilled a bolt and pounded in a couple mediocre pins to bring Adam up, and we rapped from there.

We later discovered, through the scant descriptions and photos we tracked down, that we had been on one of the existing aid routes, the Shuruyev-Mirkina-Dynkin Route (5.9 WI3 A2, 2002). Knowing that it was first climbed in winter, we felt comfortable attempting to free the route as a mixed climb rather than a rock climb.

In January 2021 we returned and added a bolted belay at the top of that first pitch and slightly to the left. (While we could have built a gear belay right at the base of the roof, neither Adam nor I fancied a crampon to the face if the leader pitched off the roof.) I attempted to free the roof, but didn't come close, and quickly resorted to aiding through it to check out the gear, the moves, and where it would lead us. Weather and travel plans kept us away from Huntington Ravine for the remainder of the winter.

In February 2022, Adam and I returned to the line once more. I sent the first pitch (M7), but again couldn't solve the offwidth roof problem.

On March 23, Pat Cooke and I made the long approach up into the ravine with hopes of putting this project to bed. I again sent the first mixed pitch, and this time sent the offwidth roof on my first attempt as well. The pitch started with steep yet secure pick slots, which petered out as the crack widened. This section required offwidth technique, deep tool torques, and absurd core tension. At the lip of the roof, big lock-offs on shallow pick slots got me established into the crack above, which is used as part of a downclimb on Primal Scream (III 5.10d R). I climbed up it with tools and built a belay beneath the next overhang. The length of the pitch-two roof, in combination with its steepness and the insecurity of the climbing, merit M10, as it felt harder than the M9s in the region.

Next up was a short, burly overhang (M6), which, continuing the theme, once again led to a slab with nice cracks in it. Pat led this pitch quickly to find we were near the top of the Northeast Ridge of Pinnacle Buttress. We did one easy fifth-class pitch to the top.

The roofs comprising the right side of Pinnacle Buttress—steep and unrelenting until they give way to smooth emerald slabs laced with fine cracks and alpine turf—now have one free route: The Resistance (360', III WI3 M10), my name for the free version of the old aid climb. There are certainly others waiting to be climbed in this imposing arena for those looking for an adventurous winter outing.

— **Jon Nicolodi**

Images



The Resistance (360', III M10) climbs the steep rock above Pinnacle Gully, the classic ice route in Huntington Ravine, Mt. Washington, New Hampshire.



Jon Nicolodi about to pull the tenuous slab mantel on pitch one of The Resistance (360', III M10), in Huntington Ravine, in March 2022.



Jon Nicolodi attempting the crux M10 pitch of The Resistance (360', III M10) in Huntington Ravine, Mt. Washington, New Hampshire, in February 2022.



While following the third pitch The Resistance (360', III M10) in March 2022, Jon Nicolodi scopes the huge roofs off to his right for other potential routes.

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