



AAC Publications

Peak 11,300', Wild Goose Chase

Alaska, Central Alaska Range, Ruth Glacier

From April 16 to 18, Zach Dugan and I climbed a probable new route on the east face of Peak 11,300'. During an impeccable weather window, we climbed the route in 39 hours round-trip from our base camp on the Ruth Glacier.

On the evening of the 16th, we started up the main couloir of Night of the Raging Goose (AAJ 2010), and then broke left after a couple of hundred feet. With a windless, cloudless night and a full moon, our travel went smoothly. The bulk of the route was moderate snow and ice of variable quality, representative of so much alpine climbing—physical and demanding but at a moderate grade.

We passed a few rappel anchors on the bottom half of the route. I believe this gear was left by Mark Allen and Philippe Wheelock during an attempt on this line in 2009, the same week James Clapham and Gavin Pike climbed the neighboring Goose. Mark is a good friend, great climber, a bit of a mentor to me, and has done his fair share of Alaska climbing. They retreated from an ice pitch that was "60 feet of vertical cool whip." Fortunately, I only had to deal with a few body lengths of garbage ice. After a few up-down near-bails, I mustered the courage to keep leading above a nest of worthless ice screws and found...névé! Thanking our lucky climbing stars, I pulled over, whooped, and put Zach on belay on a bomber ice anchor. This whole time he was getting pummeled by early morning spindrift—I guess that snowy ledge was created somehow. Crux complete.

After a sunny break, we continued up to the summit ridge. The climbing included your garden variety snow and ice, aiding up a steep serac, faceted snow tunneling over ice on a fluting, and a long traverse that miraculously allowed us to avoid tunneling through the upper cornice. With the last of the lingering evening alpenglow, we topped out the route about 28 hours after starting, forgoing the summit of 11,300' and descending from where the route intersected the south ridge. A lot of rappels and downclimbing through our second moonlit night brought us down the south ridge to our base camp on the Ruth Glacier.

Wanting to keep the name thematic with nearby routes, we had chuckled at all the possible goose puns during our climb, finally deciding on Wild Goose Chase (4,000', V WI5 R M4 A0).

— Mike Pond

Images



The east face of Peak 11,300' showing the line of Wild Goose Chase (4,000', V WI5 R M4 A0). Night of the Raging Goose (Clapham-Pike, 2014) continues up the prominent couloir. Wasabi Concerto (Taniguchi-Wada, 2014) climbs the other right-to-left ramp to the right of Raging Goose.



Zach Dugan climbing on the lower half of the route during the first ascent of Wild Goose Chase (4,000', V WI5 R M4 A0).



Aurora borealis over the Mooses Tooth during a warmup climb of the south ridge of Peak 11,300'.



Descending the south ridge.



Zach Dugan climbing on the lower half of the route during the first ascent of Wild Goose Chase (4,000', V WI5 R M4 A0).



Taking in the team's second sunrise during the final descent to base camp from Peak 11,300'.

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