



## AAC Publications

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### **Big Chief Buttress, Big Chiefin'**

Wyoming, Wind River Range, Washakie Lake Cirque

Ryan Evans climbing out of the alcove to start the seventh pitch of Big Chiefin'. Photo by Damien Nicodemi.

**In 1993, Norm and Lorna Larson made a brief attempt on the stunning 900' Big Chief Buttress (42.8136, -109.2382).** As far as is known, no one tried it again until 2016, when Norm and Lorna brought Anne Gilbert Chase, Ken Etzel, Kate Rutherford, and Jason Thompson out to the Washakie Lake Cirque to let them have a go. Gilbert Chase and Rutherford established The Non-Obvious Garden Tour (12 pitches, IV 5.11 C1) on the right side of the east face (see AAJ 2017). In late June 2024, Damien Nicodemi and I hiked the 13 miles into the cirque to take a look for ourselves, figuring a route straight up the center would make for a good outing.

We started up on June 29. Norm had told us the 2016 team made two attempts at a line in the center of the formation. Sure enough, we found rappel tat at the top of pitch one and a fixed nut at the end of pitch four (roughly halfway up the wall). Beyond this, we found no sign of previous passage.

We climbed quickly up the first three pitches and found ourselves below an exciting-looking rightward traverse toward the prominent crack system in the center of the wall. To our surprise, pitch four climbed at a moderate grade, and a perfect hand crack lay just beyond—we were now established in said crack system.

Damien took off to battle an overhanging offwidth on pitch six, undoubtedly the crux of the route. Neither of us was able to free this 20' burl-fest, but it will certainly go free for the right person. After this, we climbed a 5.11 roof with double cracks, followed by a long pitch to just below the summit. As the splitter crack system petered out into a vegetated seam, we pressed forward quickly to keep fear at bay. By sheer luck, a horizontal crack presented itself below the final large roof; we used this to traverse left into a slot chimney. Before long we were on top.

We left no fixed gear on Big Chiefin' (1,100', 9 pitches, IV 5.11 C1) except for the fixed nut we found on pitch four.

— Ryan Evans

## Images



The east-facing Big Chief Buttress in the Washakie Lake Cirque, showing (1) Big Chiefin' (2024) and (2) the approximate line of The Non- Obvious Garden Tour (2016).



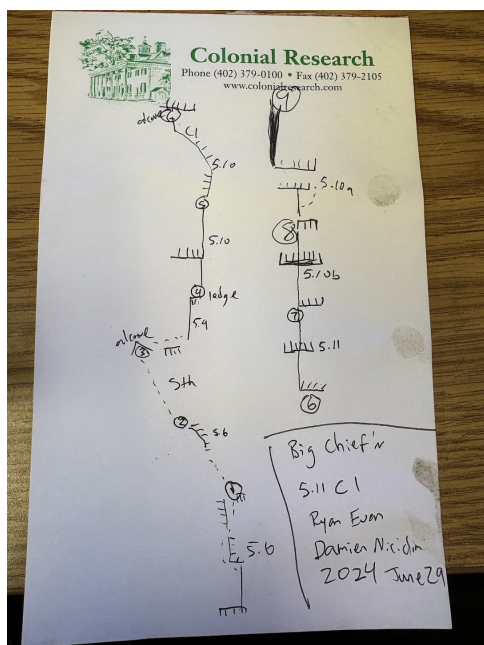
Big Chief Buttress in the Washakie Lake Cirque. The line of The Non-Obvious Garden Tour (2016) is shown. The 2024 route, Big Chiefin', is in the left center of the face.



Damien Nicodemi on the key traverse on pitch four (5.9) of Big Chiefin' (1,100', 9 pitches, IV 5.11 C1).



Ryan Evans climbing out of the alcove to start the seventh pitch of Big Chiefin'.



Topo for Big Chiefin' (9 pitches, 5.11 C0) on the east-facing Big Chief Buttress, Washakie Lake Cirque, Wind River Range.

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