



AAC Publications

Choral Peak, Northwest Face

Washington, North Cascades

Eric Gilbertson leading the first pitch on the northwest face (300m, WI3 M3 steep snow) of Choral Peak. Photo by Nick Roy.

Choral Peak (7,972'), in the Entiat Mountains, is one of the 200 highest peaks in Washington, with a popular scramble on its east face. It also has a steep northwest face below a large snow bowl—the perfect combination to form an alpine ice route.

In April 2020, while skiing in the area, I noticed a long ice line on this face and filed it away for the future. After a failed attempt in November 2023 when the ice was too thin, I returned in the spring of 2024. Nick Roy and I left the Cottonwood trailhead at midnight on May 5. We mountain biked up the Entiat River Trail to snowline, then bushwhacked and snowshoed to the face. En route, still in darkness, we had to throw snowballs at a curious mountain lion to scare it away.

The ice was much thicker this time, and we swung leads up three pitches of fun, blue WI3. We first climbed up the right edge of the ten-meter-wide flow, then traversed to the left edge. Steep snow in the upper bowl led to the base of the rocky upper face. Two mixed pitches (up to M3) brought us to the ridge, topping out just left of the summit cornice. A short scramble led to the top (300m, WI3 M3, steep snow). To descend, we walked off the east ridge and back to the base, then snowshoed and biked back out.

—Eric Gilbertson

Images



Eric Gilbertson following the second pitch on the northwest face of Choral Peak.



Eric Gilbertson leading the first pitch on the northwest face (300m, WI3 M3 steep snow) of Choral Peak.



The northwest face (300m, WI3 M3 steep snow), Choral Peak, Entiat Mountains, North Cascades, Washington.

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