



AAC Publications

Sinopah Mountain, East Face

Montana, Lewis Range, Glacier National Park

The east face of Sinopah Mountain.

The east face of Sinopah Mountain. Photo by Seth Anderson Collection. Finding quality rock in Glacier National Park is a challenge, yet the plentiful steep faces provide endless potential for adventure climbing. In August, as I drove into the Two Medicine area of the park, a beam of light pierced the clouds, illuminating Sinopah Mountain (8,271') and its multi-gendarmed summit—highlighting a number of crack systems that promised a classic Glacier experience.

Departing in the morning to beat a potential afternoon storm, I worked my way up to the base of the east face with a light rack and short bail rope, intending to scout a potential line and come back another time. Following the path of least resistance, I reached an auditorium made up of quality red rock near 6,300'. At this point I switched to climbing shoes and decided to attempt a new route to the summit, solo.

Steep stemming and loose jamming, about 5.8, deposited me into the main depression on the left-hand side of the east face. Fourth- and fifth-class climbing on decent rock for 400' brought me to the base of an intimidating headwall. I continued up and soon reached the bottom of a left-facing corner I had spotted during the approach. I jammed up this to some face climbing and a tenuous hand traverse, after which the rock quality began to deteriorate. Another left-facing corner with great hand and fist jams through two steep bulges led to an airy hand traverse back toward the middle of the headwall (5.9).

At a big ledge about 7,700' up and 200' below the top of the headwall, I drank some water and ate a snack (and have since referred to this as "Lunch Ledge".) Refueled, I thrutched up a steep chimney of loose blocks, traversed a wide ledge, and cruised up a final finger crack to reach the last few hundred feet of scrambling and, finally, the summit.

Scrambling down the standard southwest face, I reached the trail just as the predicted afternoon storm began to fill the skies with deep purple clouds and thunderous lightning.

After combing through articles and consulting with the older generations of Glacier climbers, I could find no record or knowledge of any prior ascents of this face. That said, climbing in Glacier has always been shrouded in secrecy, so I cannot rule out the potential of a previous ascent. Either way, I believe the line probably climbs through new ground. The East Face (1,800', IV 5.9) of Sinopah was a great adventure—definitely worth venturing back with a partner and a rope.

—Seth Anderson

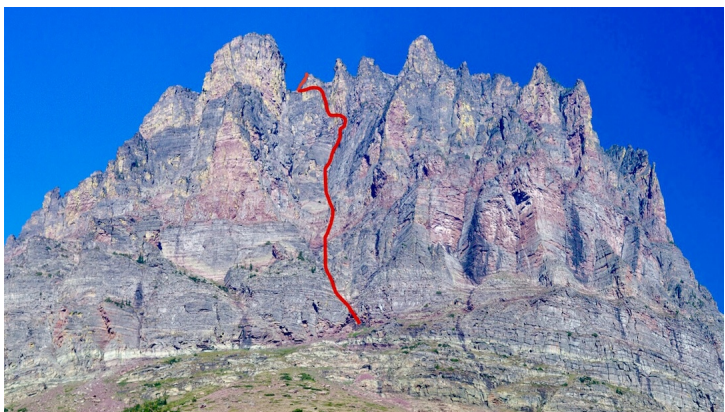
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Looking down at the fourth- and fifth-class terrain leading to the headwall of solid red rock on the east face (1,800', IV 5.9) of Sinopah Mountain.



The final pitches of the headwall, from just below "Lunch Ledge" on the east face of Sinopah Mountain. The route stays right of the major corner.



The east face (1,800', IV 5.9) of Sinopah Mountain.

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