



## AAC Publications

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### **Storm Dome, Northeast Face, Pika Paradise**

Idaho, Salmon River Mountains

**In September 2023, I returned to Storm Dome, eight miles into the backcountry outside of McCall, Idaho, after having established two long free routes there in 2021 and 2022 (see AAJ 2023).**

Accompanied first by my wife, Erin, and later by several friends (Christina Garcia, Tim Greenwood, Ethan McKay, Duncan Ralph, and Abe Rigeby), I wanted to check out a line right of Heart of Diamond that went through a major roof system high on the wall. We managed to equip and partly clean the route before freezing temperatures shut us down for the season.

Storm Dome topo. The new route Pika Paradise is on the right. Photo: Michal Matyjasik.

Returning in September 2024, Duncan and I fixed lines and got to work cleaning and working out the cruxes. For the first time ever, we were not the only ones out there; friends were simultaneously piecing together their own futuristic (and closed) project between Heart of Diamond and our new line.

Following days of relentless storms at camp and a smoke-induced sinus infection, the weather cleared. A few hours of patchy sunlight dried out our waterlogged gear and clothes. Duncan and I decided to make a push to free the route, starting just after 3 p.m. Right before we began hiking up to the wall, Abe came charging into camp with a pack full of fresh food. Perfect timing!

We freed the route up to the crux fifth pitch, but cold weather, damp rock, and lingering fatigue shut me down there. We left lines fixed to try again the next day. In the morning, Abe and I juggled the lines and I fired the 5.13b crux. I can't recall being more pumped in my life. We easily climbed the last two pitches, and Pika Paradise (200m, 7 pitches, IV 5.13b) was born. The route is a little more than half bolt-protected (39 lead bolts and bolted anchors).

Storm Dome now has three seven-to eight-pitch routes that, in my opinion, are comparable in quality to the best alpine granite climbs in the Lower 48. I think my tenure here has come to a close, but there are still opportunities for awesome new routes.

—Michal Matyjasik

## Images



The northeast face of Storm Dome as seen from above Storm Lake.



(Left to right) Milwaukee's Best (9 pitches, IV 5.12 PG-13), Heart of Diamond (7 pitches, IV 5.13 PG-13), and Pika Paradise (200m, 7 pitches, IV 5.13b) on the northeast face of Storm Dome. Michal Matyjasik and friends put up the former two routes in 2021 and 2022 – the first two full-length routes on the face – and added Pika Paradise in 2024.



Michal Matyjasik starting up pitch one on Pika Paradise (200m, 7 pitches, IV 5.13b) on Storm Dome.



Michal Matyjasik attempting the crux fifth pitch (5.13b) of Pika Paradise on a cold day.

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