



AAC Publications

Mt. Redoubt, North Ridge, Calcifer's Ridge

United States, Washington, North Cascades

Sam Boyce on Calcifer's Ridge on the north side of Mt. Redoubt. Behind, a pillar of smoke rises from a day-old fire in Perry Creek. The fire and smoke became inspiration for the route's name. Photo by Lani Chapko

On a mission into the Depot Creek zone, Sam Boyce and I had spotted the striking north ridge of Mt. Redoubt (8,963', 48.96472, -121.29847) in the Skagit Range, jutting down from Redoubt's north summit. It looked like a fantastic outing, but after scouring guidebooks and the internet back home, we determined it must be untouched. Perhaps, we surmised, glacial recession had caused the ridge to acquire more prominence than it did back in Beckey's day, turning the once unexceptional into a beautiful feature begging to be climbed.

After camping at Ouzel Lake on the south side of Depot Creek, we took a rising traverse, with no snow travel, to reach Redoubt's north ridge. (We camped at Ouzel Lake because we had a second objective planned, but one could also camp closer to Redoubt's ridge.) We started up a nice-looking crack system directly at the toe of the ridge, but it quickly turned chossy, so we bailed and restarted on moderate terrain on the right side of the buttress.

A mix of soloing and pitched climbing brought us up to the crest, where we mostly stayed from then on. Most of the climb was fourth class and low fifth class; we pitched out around eight 5.5 to 5.7 pitches. We had to move into a chossy gully to avoid a gendarme, but we found a steep 5.7 pitch on decent rock in the middle of the gully. The gendarme itself would make for a more exciting finish.

The gully brought us to the northern top of Redoubt, then we scrambled to the true summit. The peak's standard south-side descent route was melted out, making it one of the more awful descents I have done.

During the climb, we could see a large pillar of smoke from a fire in Perry Creek, one valley over, inspiring the name for our route: Calcifer's Ridge (about 1,800' of climbing, III 5.7), after the fiery character in Howl's Moving Castle. Given the moderate climbing, beautiful setting, and mostly high-quality alpine rock, this is a route we hope people will repeat.

—Lani Chapko

Images



Approaching the north ridge of Mt. Redoubt. Calcifer's Ridge (III 5.7), the first ascent of the north ridge, had about 1,800 feet of climbing.



At the toe of the north ridge of Mt. Redoubt.



Lani Chapko on the north ridge of Mt. Redoubt.



Sam Boyce on Calcifer's Ridge on the north side of Mt. Redoubt. Behind, a pillar of smoke rises from a day-old fire in Perry Creek. The fire and smoke became inspiration for the route's name.

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