



AAC Publications

Wolf Mountain, Northeast Face, Petrified Songs

Montana, Beartooth Mountains

Adrien Costa leading the fourth pitch of Petrified Songs on the northeast face of Wolf Mountain.

Photo by Earl Lunceford

On November 8, Adrien Costa and I parked our truck at the intersection of Lulu Pass and the Goose Lake 4x4 road. Nine miles of skiing carried us past Goose Lake, up Goose Pass, and onto the Grasshopper Glacier. We made camp under a waxing gibbous moon on the southeast side of Sawtooth Mountain.

The next morning we skied another mile to reach the Wolf Glacier, heading for a narrow couloir on the northeast side of Wolf Mountain (ca 11,820', 45.15113, -109.91242). This is on the left of a prominent rock buttress that splits the north side of Wolf Mountain; to the right of the buttress is the Northwest Couloir (1,700', IV AI4 M5), climbed in October 2022 by Justin Willis and Rusty Willis (see AAJ 2023) and rumored to have been skied as well.

At 10 a.m. we began climbing. We encountered sustained M4 and M5 terrain on the first three pitches, where unconsolidated snow hampered our speed. At 5 p.m. we donned our headlamps. Three more pitches, ranging from M4 to M6, climbed over steep chockstones before taking us to the couloir's exit and a 200-foot chute of 70° snow. It was 2:45 in the morning, and we stopped here to brew miso soup.

After dispatching the snow pitch, I led an M6 corner system to the top of a tower. Adrien hooked around the side of a gendarme that stood between us and the main body of the mountain, jamming a splitter hand crack that topped out with a difficult mantel. Finally, a short offwidth chimney delivered us directly to the north prow of the summit at 5:22 a.m. We began downclimbing to reach the Wolf Glacier, and four hours later we were back in camp.

While driving through Yellowstone National Park on our way to the climb, I recalled the embellished yarns fur trapper Jim Bridger had spun when telling of Yellowstone in the early days. He described walking through "petrified forests, where petrified birds sang petrified songs."

Petrified Songs (1,700', 10 pitches, IV M6) has high-quality granite, good protection, and excellent turf sticks, but very little ice.

—Earl Lunceford

Images



The north side of Wolf Mountain (ca 11,820'). (1) Petrified Songs (1,700', IV M6), linking the couloir to the upper northeast face and the summit, with a descent to Wolf Glacier on the left. (2) Northwest Couloir (Willis-Willis, 2022 to summit, with possible earlier ski descents of the couloir).



Climbing on the lower northeast face of Wolf Mountain.



Tricky mixed ground and frozen turf on the northeast face of Wolf Mountain.



Adrien Costa leading the fourth pitch of Petrified Songs on the northeast face of Wolf Mountain.



Warming up with a dance party at high camp near Wolf Mountain.

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