



AAC Publications

Cirque of the Moon, Holding Out for a Hero and Other Routes

Wyoming Wind River Range

Devin Schneid following pitch four of Two Left Feet on Sumac Point. Photo by Stefanos Apostle

During the months of August and September, I spent a total of 24 days with four different partners in the Wind Rivers' Cirque of the Moon (42.75610, -109.13711), repeating previously established routes and putting up four new ones. All four routes were climbed ground-up, with no bolts, employing only natural protection and gear belays; all but Holding Out for a Hero were established onsite.

First, Devin Schneid and I climbed an independent new route on the west face of lower Sumac Point that we called Brokeback Mountain (600', 5.8 PG-13). Along with Jack Leitner, we added Reginald's Roar (500', 5.9 PG-13), just to the right.

Next, Devin and I climbed a five-pitch variation to Chicken Talk (1,100', 5.10+), established by Lane Mathis and Dakota Walz on Sumac Point in 2020. Our variation, called Two Left Feet (1,100', 5.10), tackled the major dihedral in the middle of the wall. After branching left from the second pitch of Chicken Talk, we linked a series of dihedrals—including the big left-facing one—and unprotected face climbing before regaining the last pitch of Chicken Talk.

The final new route rose up the unexplored left side of the east face of Sunset Wall. Working ground-up, Mitchell Steinman and I fixed the first four pitches to clean and redpoint them, finding high-quality free climbing. [The new line is far to the left of Moonrise Kingdom, an eight-pitch unfinished route established by Steinman and the author in 2024; see AAJ 2025.] **On September 6, Mitchell and I aimed for the top plateau, establishing five more pitches past our fixed lines, free climbing when possible and employing aid where necessary, encountering slabs interspersed with overhangs and flakes on often dubious rock.**

Just 30 meters from the summit plateau, on what would have been our tenth pitch, all the cracks turned into seams surrounded by rounded edges and a slightly overhanging face that appeared difficult to aid or free. Unwilling to add bolts and running out of options in the dark, we rappelled, leaving the last 30 meters unclimbed. The route to this point is called Holding Out for a Hero (1,000', 5.12- C1); we plan on returning in summer 2026 to complete the last unclimbed section. Parties interested in rappelling after climbing the first four, high-quality pitches can reach the ground with just two 60-meter rappels. [The initial Cirque of the Moon trip in 2025 was supported by an AAC Live Your Dream grant. More information on these routes is at Mountain Project.]

—Stefanos Apostle

Images



The lines of Brokeback Mountain and Reginald's Roar on the west face of Sumac Point.



The line of Two Left Feet on Sumac Point. The 1,100-foot route shares the first few pitches with Chicken Talk, established in 2020 (yellow dashed line), then continues independently for five pitches, then finishes with the last pitch of Chicken Talk.



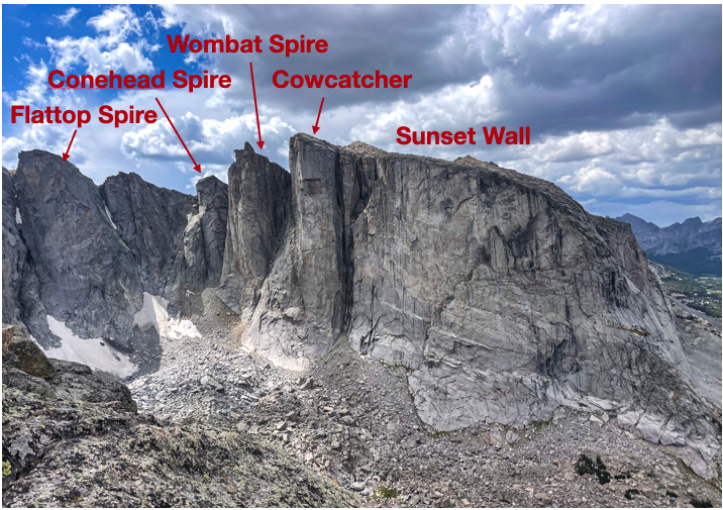
Devin Schneid following pitch four of Two Left Feet on Sumac Point.



Sunset Wall with the line of Holding Out for a Hero (1,000', 5.12- C1) as of the end of 2025. The prow at the left end of the wall is Cowcatcher, with Wombat Spire just to its left.



Stefanos Apostle contends with the tips section of the first pitch of Holding Out for a Hero.



Various named formations in the Cirque of the Moon.

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