Mt. Beulah, Southeast Face, Particle Accelerator Couloir

Utah, Uinta Mountains

The Particle Accelerator Couloir on the southeast face of Mt. Beulah (12,516’). During the ascent, John Climaco stopped climbing approximately 150 feet below the summit, as the terrain above did not look to be skiable. The XXs mark the two short rappels he made during the ski descent of the couloir. Photo by John Climaco

Often overlooked, the Uinta Mountains hold a surprising number of alpine climbing and steep skiing opportunities. In winter and spring, however, when the road is closed many miles from trailheads, access is problematic and snowmobiles are a practical necessity. Searching summer satellite images on Google Earth for new possibilities, I came across a deep gash splitting the southeast face of Mt. Beulah (12,516’), an aspect not visible from any road and, to my knowledge, unclimbed. From space it looked like a rubble pile in summer, but I suspected it might fill in to become a perfect skiing objective.

Even with a snowmobile, the 20-mile approach proved challenging. My first solo attempt to reach Beulah in 2022 nearly resulted in an unplanned bivy when my machine rolled into a stream. On my second attempt, in late spring 2023, I was finally able to see the southeast face, confirming my suspicions that it held an amazing line.

My first two attempts to climb and ski what I named the Particle Accelerator Couloir came in 2024. Both were thwarted by avalanche conditions and the unexpected difficulty of the climbing at mid-height on the face.

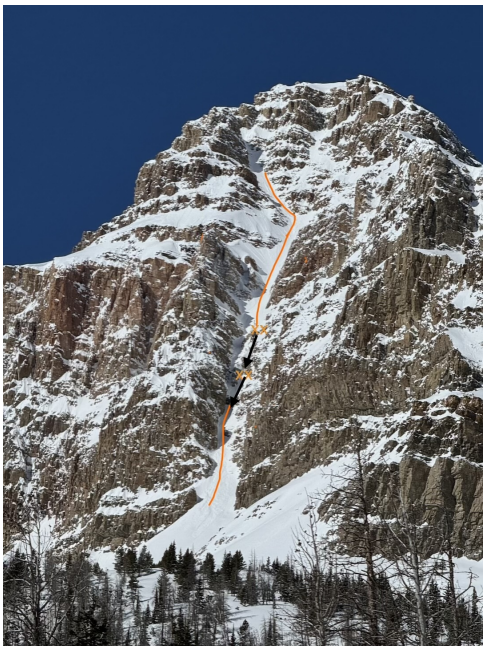
I returned in April 2025, again solo. From a bivy at approximately 10,300 feet, on April 5 I made the probable first ascent of the couloir to the top of the skiable terrain, approximately 150 feet below the summit. The climbing included waist-deep snow and a roped solo of a 100-foot pitch of M4. I then descended the couloir on skis (55+°) with two short raps to avoid the mixed section. The Particle Accelerator drains the whole face, and the debris at the base attests to the significant avalanches that rip through this couloir, one of which roared by me just as I completed my last rappel. Fortunately, I was tucked in safely behind a prominent chockstone.

The face awaits a complete ascent, but there are probably no more than five or six good turns above where I turned around—and “good” assumes one doesn’t clip an edge on the rocks just below the surface of the snow, which would be disastrous.

—John Climaco

Images

John Climaco during the ascent of the Particle Accelerator Couloir on the southeast face of Mt. Beulah (12,516’) in the Uinta Mountains. He subsequently made the first descent of the couloir, starting at the top of the skiable terrain.



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