



## AAC Publications

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### **The Reaper (Peak 7,425'), Sugar Man**

Alaska, Neacola Mountains

**The summits of the Neacola Mountains are not as high as in the nearby Revelation Mountains or Central Alaska Range, but the glaciers are much lower, meaning the walls still reach heights of 1,000m or more.** With three different projects in mind in the Neacolas, Much Mayr and I headed to Alaska at the beginning of May. We had some pretty unstable weather—this range is well known for that—and only during the first day of our trip did we enjoy blue sky.

We first attempted a warm-up on a rock pillar next to our base camp, on the Pitchfork Glacier, but conditions were pretty bad and we were forced to retreat after around 400m of climbing. Then we got struck by an intense storm. We spent over three days in a whiteout, constantly freeing the tent from snow. I'd begun to think this wouldn't be the luckiest trip. Living on the glacier, hundreds of kilometers away from civilization, demands strong belief and a great friendship to keep high spirits and good vibes.

We focused on the north face of Peak 7,425', which rises from the massive Pitchfork Glacier with a stunning 750m north face. However, the temperatures were warmer than we expected, so our objective was kind of tricky. After a day of checking out the approach, we decided to give it a go. I knew that we needed to be super-light and that we had to try and climb in less than ideal weather, in order to avoid higher temperatures on the face.

On May 17 we climbed the north face in a 12-hour push from camp to summit and back, staying on top for less than five minutes because heavy clouds were coming in. We experienced lots of spindrift due to strong winds higher up, and some really challenging steep pitches with bad protection. While I was leading the crux, where a fall was out of the question, I recognized for the first time that this route might belong under the class of "knife edge." Some of the belays were made only with ice axes, and the ice, mainly just plastered to blank granite, really couldn't have been any thinner, otherwise our alpine-style climb would have ground to a halt.

**Summary:** The first ascent of Mt. Reaper (Peak 7,425') by its north face, via the route Sugar Man (750m, M7 85° A1), by Hansjörg Auer and Much Mayr (both Austria), May 17, 2015.

## Images



The 750m north face of Mt. Reaper (Peak 7,425'), showing the route Sugar Man.

## Article Details

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