



AAC Publications

Notch Peak, Southwest Face, Witch Doctor

Utah, House Range

On April 9, Matt Meinzer and I made the first free ascent of Witch Doctor (1,400', IV 5.11+ R) on the southwest face of Notch Peak, after numerous earlier trips to establish the line. The route is located to the right of (and is independent of) the route Southwest Face Left (AAJ 2019), which Matt and I free climbed in 2018, and left of the route Airavata (AAJ 2017).

I made five trips to the wall to complete this route, the first in fall 2019. The bottom half was established ground-up with help from Jackson Marvell, Matt Meinzer, and Matt Tuttle. Initial explorations on the lower portion involved stressful leading and belaying while managing loose rock. It should be noted that Marvell made a bold lead of the crux second pitch, before a few bolts were subsequently added to protect this difficult section. The upper half of the route was established solo and top-down with Micro Trax and trundle-and-clean tactics.

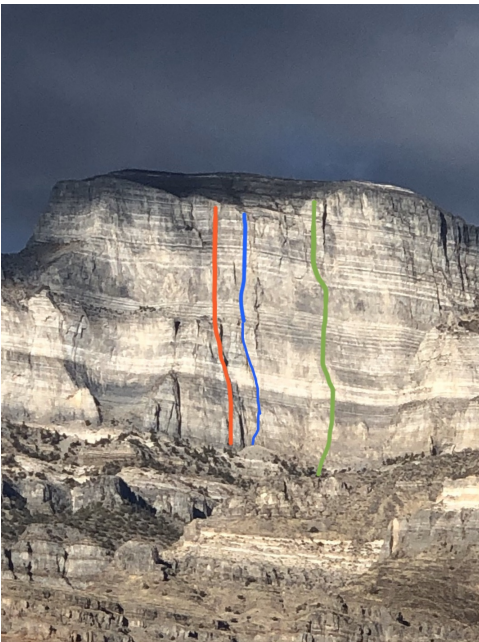
With four distinct 5.11 cruxes, this 13-pitch, majority-trad route provides a "desert-alpine" challenge, and much run-out climbing remains. There are bolted anchors throughout, with additional rappel stations on the lower half to facilitate descent. Establishing this route required a good deal of money, time, labor, and help from sturdy partners. In all, I logged 3,500 miles of driving, approximately 80 miles of hiking, roughly 6,000' of climbing, six books on tape, and one otherworldly trip to Mars with the Witch Doctor.

— Nathan Brown

Images



Matt Meinzer on the 5.11 section of pitch six of Witch Doctor (1,400', IV 5.11+ R) on the south side of Notch Peak.



The southwest face of Notch Peak, showing the routes Southwest Face Left (red), Witch Doctor (blue), and the approximate line of Airavata (green).



The southwest face of Notch Peak as viewed from the southeast, with the routes Southwest Face Left (red) and Witch Doctor (blue).

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