



AAC Publications

Canadian Rockies Alpine Summary

Canada, Alberta, Canadian Rockies

This year's review comes among the author's growing awareness of the importance of respecting previous use of the land that we climb on. Whether it is appropriate to name and claim climbs will occupy more of the author's thoughts and efforts in years to come. Having said that, but there were a few outstanding alpine efforts in the 2022 summer season.

In August, Sam Wall took advantage of what he thought might be the last summer of access to the increasingly restricted Tonquin Valley. A major controversy in Jasper, Parks Canada has restricted winter access and has removed traditional outfitters from the valley permanently—measures to attempt to save a dwindling mountain caribou population in the area. With Cam Mahler, Wall attempted to repeat, likely for the first time, the Ramparts Traverse (Ruddy-Slawinski-Walsh, 2010), though they did not summit Oubliette Mountain. Then, with Shep Howatt, he climbed the central buttress of the northeast face of Oubliette (900m, 5.10-) and continued through the Rampart Traverse and up the north ridge of Bennington Peak, also a new route. See Wall's AAJ report [here](#).

The second big alpine route was an overlooked gem on Mt. Temple. To climber's right of all of the north face routes, Ryan Richardson and Dane Steadman climbed the massive two-tiered northwest buttress (1,000m, 5.11-). See Steadman's [AAJ](#) report [here](#).

A previously unreported alpine moderate was climbed at the Alpine Club of Canada's 2021 General Mountaineering Camp. James Gudjonson led a party up the prominent east ridge that flanks the southeast Mummery Glacier, separating the south and north peaks when looking up at Mt. Mummery (3,331m) from the valley. They were seeking the easiest path to the north summit (misabeled as Karakal on some maps) and found mostly 4th class with a few pitches of low 5th class.

In the mini-alpine vein, there were a few proud efforts. On May 22, on the north buttress of Crowfoot Mountain (3,055m), Nick Baggaley and Greg Barrett established Where the Sidewalk Ends (350m, M4). Weaving a moderate path up the buttress left of the cirque containing the route C-Train (Berg-Welsted, 2019), it makes for a fine non-committing outing with bolted rap anchors.

A similar mini-alpine route, Fist Fight (180m, M6), was established in October by Merrick Montemurro and Kevin Sevalrud. The route ascends the prominent gash to the left of The Manhole (Berg-Slawinski, 2017) on the east face of the Fist (2,630m); it is bolted for rappels. The Manhole saw its first repeat by Ripley Boulianne, Jonathan Sage, and Nat Walkom—they confirmed quality climbing that went into the night.

Montemurro was active on the rock front as well. With Chris Petrauskas, he climbed The Black Labyrinth (235m, 5.10d) in the Rockbound Lake cirque to the southeast of Castle Mountain (2,766m). However, the biggest alpine rock news of the year was the completion by Raphael Slawinski (with multiple partners) of a 20-year, ground-up project on the northeast face of the Windtower (2,695m) in Bow Valley Wildland Park, home to the mythical unrepeated Iron Butterfly (DeMaio-Marshall, 1988). Slawinski and Danny Poceta made the final push to complete Daddy Longlegs (450m, 5.12c) with a combination of bolts and trad gear, and some questionable rock. This is in contrast to the rap-bolted route established nearby by Mark Carlson over 37 days of work; that route was equipped by August 2022 but has yet to be freed.

A number of mixed climbing routes were also established. From the previous season, Ethan Berman and Grant Stewart climbed the first two pitches of Scar Tissue (Hamill-Walsh, 2018) on the Storm Creek Headwall, then veered left onto two new pitches for Naga (WI5+ M8). In February, with Drew Smith, Alik Berg climbed Smash Burger (60m, WI4+ M6+) on the left side of the basin above the sport dry-tooling crag named Alcatraz, which is on Grotto Mountain. In November, he and Raphael Slawinski climbed Rastapopolous (100m, WI4 M6 R), to the left of Cryogenics and directly below Le Lotus Bleu. Berg, along with Juan Henriquez and Kevin Sevelrud, also finished a long-known project, the wide crack left of Sinus Gully, on the Stanley Headwall. The Void (two pitches, M8+/M9) was climbed on gear; the easier crack to its right, ending at the same point, is The Avoidance (M7). Also at a well-established venue was Slawinski's pitch above the usual belay spot for Whiteman Falls, named Whiteman Flakes (40m, M7).

Jasmin Fauteux and Sebastian Taborszky established two new routes that saw action. Below and left of the classic Bourgeau Right (Auger-Greenwood-Homer-Wood, 1974), a fine single pitch sprouted: Petit Bourgeois (55m, WI4+ M5). Also at a popular ice venue, the duo climbed a rock corner just to the right of Field of Dreams (Buhler-Burger-Lacelle, 1995) on the Yoho Valley road. Blackened (45m, WI4 M5) climbs in two pitches to what is typically the top of the Field of Dreams climb.

Montemurro also established a fine mixed ice line that was repeated quickly. With Kevin Sevalrud he climbed Liquid Swords (95m, WI5 M5+) on Mt. Inglismaldie, 3.5km to the east from the Lake Minnewanka parking area. Also around Lake Minnewanka, but this time 18km along the north side of the lake from the parking lot, Marc Godbout and Maison Leitch climbed The Meanderthal (210m, WI3+), adding to the number of moderate routes now above the lake.

— Ian Welsted, Canada

Images



Greg Barrett questing between corners on pitch four of Where the Sidewalk Ends (350m, M4).



Nick Baggaley tapping into the thin ice on pitch five of Where the Sidewalk Ends (350m, M4).



Kevin Sevalrud heading up the steep first pitch of the Fist Fight (180m, M6).



Merrick Montemurro traversing toward thin ice on the first ascent of Liquid Swords (95m, WI5 M5+).



Alik Berg taking a peaceful moment before attacking the crux of The Void (55m, M8+/9). The route dry-tools up the burly, overhanging five- to six-inch splitter crack. A variation, The Avoidance (M7), takes the pumpy hanging corner to the right.



Ethan Berman launching into the crux of Naga (WI5+ M8) on the first ascent. The route is on the Storm Creek Headwall.



Greg Barrett seconding pitch two of Where the Sidewalk Ends (350m, M4).

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