
Mt. Alice - 6/27/08 - 6/28/08

Posted by jeffmoski - 2008/06/29 21:24

Some people accept summer to mean that the snow is gone and the allure of skiing is dead. Not here. Mr. Dave Reed decided decisively to orchestrate a "balls-out" trip to ski the Mt. Alice (previously known) "S" couloir that rather ruggedly cuts from the summit of this 13,310 Rocky Mountain beaut.

The trip began with Erik's initiative to meet at Dave's place at 4:15 sharp. I arrived shortly thereafter and dumped my gear into the elephant Element. Stashing my car at King Soops, we grabbed some grub and took off for the trail head running. Erik ate a folded up, already cooked totinos pizza, enjoying every bite. I finished what was left of my store bought shushi, washing it down with some refreshing ice cream. Dave frantically tried to get a hold of Rocky Mountain National to reserve a permit for backpacking, but was put on hold till 5 p.m. when the office closed. We however abided by Erik's modo of "Fuck em" (edit: which later became "Love em") and headed to Wild Basin anyways.

Arriving at the Copeland Lake trailhead, we would try our best to find a permit, but ended up leaving a note in the windshield saying: "Just Night Hiking. Please don't ticket. Thanks." Apparently they are very very strict on enforcing overnight parking.

And so the slog began...

Hiking into the night, we gradually made our way towards the Lion lakes. The path was slow and steady and we made great time. Eventually we began to lose the trail and daylight, quickly finding ourselves bushwacking over various terrain, until we found it too dark to traverse the ridge we were on and set up camp.

Camp consisted of couple beers, a really spooky ghost story (urban myth) and (in my opinion) one of the better perches I've ever slept at. I had a bed in a bush, alongside a log that let me dream deep. Oh yeah, this was a minimalist trip, so we didn't bring a tent. Erik guaranteed it wouldn't rain that night and it didn't.

In the morning we woke up to a mid-evil Dave Reed wearing his fleece armor and making a ruckus. We slowly awoke, munching on avocado and burritos and peaches and sandwiches.

We continued navigating the ridge line and waterfalls until reaching a clearing where Mt. Alice herself appeared in full site. And Damn! was the coverage goood. We steadily made our way back navigating brush and bolder fields. Eventually we dropped a load from each of our packs at the level four snow field next to the escalator, and continued through the low lying basin, approaching the apron of this remote mountain. The couloir itself did not come into site until we were directly under it. This required a couple class 4 clever climbing moves in order to reach a shady spot below this mysterious line. The couloir was in!

At this point I was in a frantic dash to drop my pack and catch my breath. Judging from my movement up to this point I didn't quite feel right and thought better to listen to the mountains and not push myself, looking forward to enduring the 8+ miles out. However my fearless co-ventures took a breather and began kicking steps up the line, disappearing around the corner of the canyon-like curve in the mountain. My perch at roughly 13,000 lead me to gain plenty of insight from the day, watching the clouds whip and build over the summit. Thunder bellowed in the distance and the clouds were unlike anything I've ever seen. By the time Dave and Erik finally began their decent, Mt. Alice was covered in luminous clouds and a dim bit of light. This provided me with my first sight of Dave slowly making turns around the S. With a few shouts, I grabbed my camera and began shooting as he carved turns like a turkey on thanksgiving. He released a decent wet slide which crashed to the waterfall below. Erik made his way down, still through the layer of clouds that engulfed the mountain. When we finally all met up for the short down climb out of the couloir, the weather returned to blue bird skies and calm vibes.

After a few careful moves we successfully navigated to the apron below, where suddenly a rock came shooting by Erik, breaking into bits, hitting Dave on the head and making it's way clear of me. Dave was wearing a helmet so no damage was done (well maybe, heh heh). We made our way down the apron, ripping some perfect corn and enjoying our solid descent to the low lying basin below.

From there we hiked, and hiked, and hiked, through (what we thought) was a different planet. Wild Basin, is dare I say Wild! And with every adventure there we take something from the surreal experience. The countless hours traveling out were full of winding streams, fallen logs and eventually a trail that would bypass plenty of folks curious if we found any snow. We wouldn't have gone if we didn't know it would be there, we thought..

Alienated with humongous packs and skis and boots dangling we questioned who we were and why we do this, but eventually found the car with NO ticket, and joyfully got the hell out of there.

The trip was fantastic and a total success! I plan to return and ski the re-named "Rabbit Hole" couloir sometime in the future, but there is no rush. As for Dave and Erik, congratulations on a possible first descent of one of the knarliest, most

secretive peaks out there.

We are wild, we can't stop. We won't stop.

Damn it Dave, your consistence to hardcoreness will be missed.

Re: Mt. Alice - 6/27/08 - 6/28/08

Posted by dmandave - 2008/06/29 23:24

Beautifully put Moski, I'm going to miss you guys too.

Here's my take on the trip:

http://lh6.ggpht.com/erikstevens/SGfDtmIARgl/AAAAAAAAAj0/pcY5cYlgNyc/down_the_rabbitt_hole_1.jpg?imgmax=912
Jeff Moskowitz and I had spotted Mount Alice's northeast couloir last summer while hiking the standard route via hourglass ridge. This is what it looked like <http://lh3.ggpht.com/erikstevens/SGfD5bH-a-I/AAAAAAAAAIQ/C2Fkd61KAca/recon.jpg>

We decided that it had to be skied.

http://lh3.ggpht.com/erikstevens/SGfD9jzBRdl/AAAAAAAAAlo/hwpa_W2OIG8/down_the_rabbitt_hole_5.jpg?imgmax=640

So last weekend while skiing Sundance Mountain, I popped the question. It was agreed upon for the following weekend, but only on the condition that we hike in to Wild Basin the night before.

The rest has been very well explained by Mr. Moski- I will just append that the conditions for this couloir were absolutely perfect. The width (about three ski lengths), the length (came within 200 vert of the summit), the pitch (a sustained 45+ degree), the coverage (all except for one minor downclimb), and the weather all added up to one hell of a fine day for skiing. It was the absolute perfect culmination to a great season of skiing.

http://lh4.ggpht.com/erikstevens/SGfEEwGVxAI/AAAAAAAAAmk/URogGWd64V8/down_the_rabbitt_hole_28.jpg?imgmax=640

And now, some \$ shots:

http://lh4.ggpht.com/erikstevens/SGfD2Wxf0ql/AAAAAAAAAkw/0d67OdCvWE0/down_the_rabbitt_hole_16.jpg?imgmax=640
http://lh4.ggpht.com/erikstevens/SGfD2_J1MGI/AAAAAAAAAk4/9yG62hCCpGU/down_the_rabbitt_hole_17.jpg?imgmax=640

http://lh5.ggpht.com/erikstevens/SGfD1Zr0gql/AAAAAAAAAko/VujQSogrp-A/down_the_rabbitt_hole_15.jpg?imgmax=912
http://lh4.ggpht.com/erikstevens/SGfEEEBYyMI/AAAAAAAAAmc/7lr7NGG5yiw/down_the_rabbitt_hole_27.jpg?imgmax=640

Oh, and the last group to sign the register at the top were Robert Kysela, Katie Petrie, Jeff Moskowitz and myself, on October 6 of last year...

http://lh5.ggpht.com/erikstevens/SGfDwtJXdKI/AAAAAAAAAkI/85NxmpTYxvw/down_the_rabbitt_hole_11.jpg?imgmax=912

All the glorious photos.

http://www.backcountryclub.org/1/images/fbfiles/files/Mount_Alice.kmz

Re: Mt. Alice - 6/27/08 - 6/28/08

Posted by uncebanyo - 2008/06/30 07:30

And here's MY take on this wonderful adventure:

..it was pretty WILD.

...Long live summer and long live Dave Reed!

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Re:Mt. Alice - 6/27/08 - 6/28/08

Posted by uncebanyo - 2008/06/30 07:34

one more pic...just 'cause its so epic:

http://lh6.ggpht.com/erikstevens/SGfENlpqj5l/AAAAAAAAAn0/h3z1JcXfli4/down_the_rabbitt_hole_24.jpg?imgmax=640

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Re:Mt. Alice - 6/27/08 - 6/28/08

Posted by primomo - 2008/07/05 13:43

Congrats guys on first descent of this oh so beautiful line! Hit in the head with a rock? Dave when are you leaving for your round the world trip? Good skiing with yall during the epic 07-08

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