

Baldcoot Lake Ice

by Danylo Darewych
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Baldcoot Lake is a fairly remote lake south-west of Combermere that has a variety of nice, albeit shorter, ice-climbs. It's about 4 km (an hour's approach) from the closest road, mostly along good snowmobile trails.

Directions:

Driving from Bancroft: Head east on Highway 28 for 26 km to McArthur Mills, turn north (left) onto Boulter Rd., head north along it for 17 km, then turn right onto Highway 517 and head along it for 6.5 km to Craigmont. Park at the corner of Highway 517 and Craigmont Road.



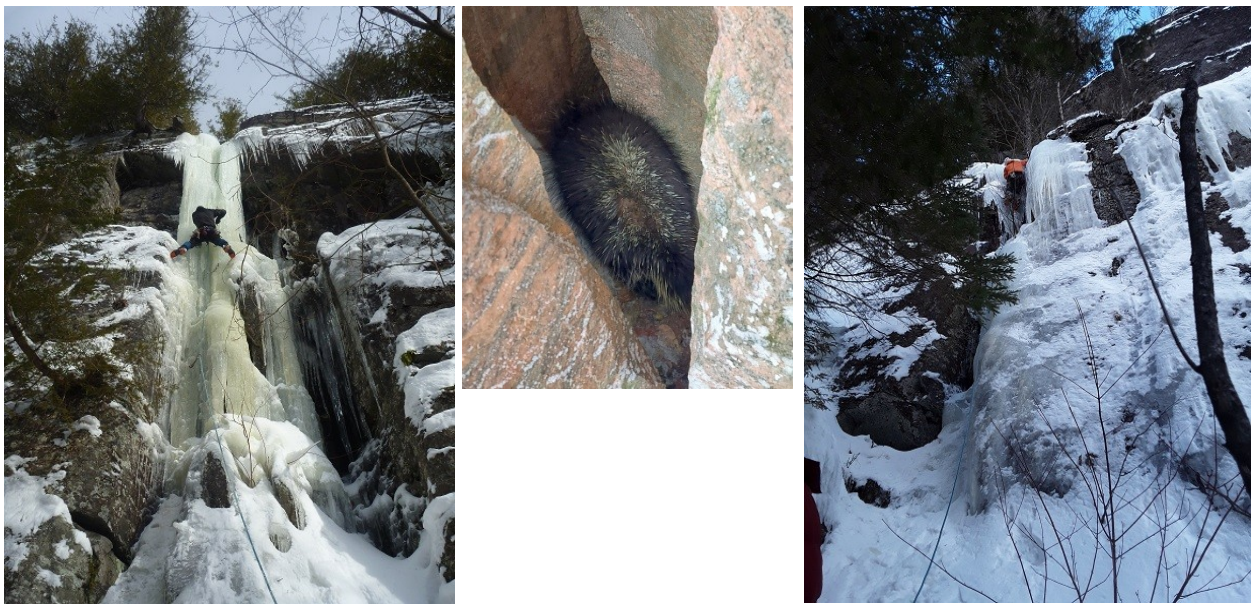
Approach hike:

Almost directly opposite the corner of Highway 517 and Craigmont Road a well-groomed snowmobile trail heads west. Follow the snowmobile trail, crossing the south end of Menzies Pond at about 1.2 km, to about the 2.1 km mark, where you turn right onto a side trail. It's the first right hand trail you cross. It crosses a small creek/beaver pond and then reaches Bangor hunt camp in about 200 m (Unload your gun). Pick up another, narrower side trail (probably also packed down by snowmobiles) that head out from the right side of the hunt camp property. It crosses one open, but narrow creek (a big step across is needed) 100 m from the camp, then

passes left of 3-4 beaver ponds on rolling, hilly terrain for another 1.4 km before dropping into the south-east corner of Baldcoot Lake. Head north along Baldcoot Lake and the cliff and first ice-climb will become visible through the trees on the east side of the lake after 200 m. It's about 4 km of walking distance (1 hour). Snowshoes are recommended; and a sled makes hauling gear easier.

Routes

The cliff line runs in a big, curving arc from south-west to north-east along the bottom of a big dome formation. There are ice climbs along the west face, the north-west face and on the north side. Routes are described from right to left, as they appear when you walk along the lake from the south. All belays are from trees at the top of the cliff.



Left: Mark Hurst leading *Lucky Punk*. Centre: The porcupine. Right: Danylo Darewych on *Porcupine Corner*.

Lucky Punk, WI4, 19 m

(FA Mark Hurst, Cynthia Chung, Danylo Darewych, February 26, 2023).

Lucky Punk is the first climb you will see at the south end of the cliff line. Walk through the trees for about 70 m straight to the base of the climb. It's an aesthetic, narrow ice flow set in a bit of a recess/notch. Climb straight up. There is a good rest stance halfway-up on the left, right before the steepest part of the climb.

Lucky Punk is slightly reminiscent of *Dirty Harry* at the Eagle's Nest. The name *Lucky Punk* is an oblique reference to that climb and to the movie ("You've got to ask yourself one question: 'Do I feel lucky?' Well, do you, punk?")

Porcupine Corner, WI3, 19 m (FA Danylo Darewych, Mark Hurst, February 26, 2023).

This climb is another narrow route hidden in a corner about 40 m left of *Lucky Punk*. The climb consists of several short, steeper sections, broken up by good stances/ledges. The top third of the climb is not visible from the ground. The climb exits through trees at the top. Tree belay. You can also descend/downclimb the gully to climber's left of the climb.

The climb is named after a porcupine we found sheltering behind a flake of rock 10 m left of the base of the route.

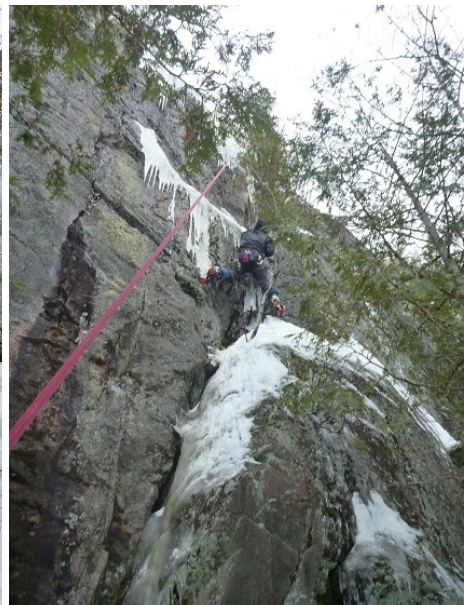
The next climbs are located 75 m north/left of *Porcupine Corner* on a higher ledge system.



Left: The *Bandicoot/Serenity* Ledge. Right: *Wet Baguette* viewed from the lake.

Bandicoot, WI3+, 9 m (FA Mark Hurst, Danylo Darewych, Cynthia Chung, March 5, 2023).

Located midway along the higher ledge system. A short, steep climb, split by a smaller ledge 2/3 of the way up.



Left: Cynthia Chung on *Bandicoot*. Centre: Danylo Darewych searching in vain for a moment of *Serenity*. Photos by Mark Hurst. Right: Mark Hurst on *Double Torque*. Photo by Danylo Darewych.

Serenity, WI3+, 18 m (FA Danylo Darewych, Mark Hurst, Cynthia Chung, March 5, 2023).

Located 6 m left of *Bandicoot*, further left along the higher ledge system. Climb 6 m up to a ledge (very thin ice at the start – didn't quite take a stubby), traverse left 7 m on a ledge until next to a big tree and climb a higher 5 m step. A direct exit is likely possible in a fatter ice year.

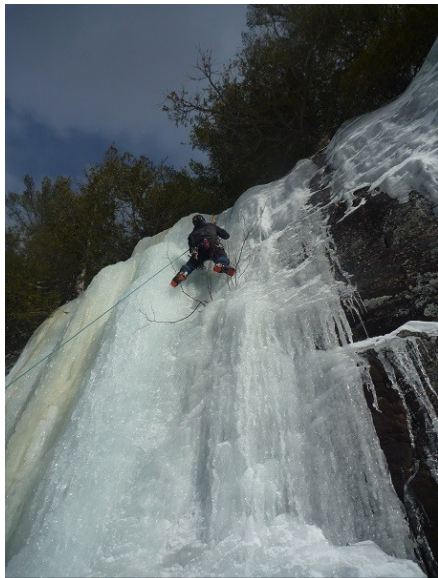
On the FA I had to hack my way through a tangle of obstinate, dead-but-tough-to-break tree branches that impeded upward progress by poking through my jacket and getting caught in my ice-screw clipper. They had me swearing like a trooper. Not a serene experience. The branches are now gone. Enjoy the route with peace of mind.

Double Torque, WI3, M4?, 19 m (Project – please don't climb).

Located 25 m left of *Serenity* is a rightward trending crack system with thin ice at the start, an iced up ledge in the middle and an ice top-out. We only top-roped this route. Mark thinks he can lead it on gear. Please don't climb it until he gives it a shot.

Wet Baguette, WI3, 9 m (Danylo Darewych, Mark Hurst, Cynthia Chung, February 26, 2023).

A big, wide, fat flow, easily visible from the lake, once you get around a point of land. Or about 20 m left of *Double Torque*. Go around a big ice blob on its right to access a ledge where the climb starts. Climb straight up. Easier and longer on the right. It's steeper on the left, but you'd have to exit through shrubbery. The climb fattens up and builds out later in the season, becoming easier.



Left: Mark Hurst on *Wet Baguette*. Right: Cynthia Chung leading *Rosebud*.

I packed in a hurry in the morning. Just threw half of a baguette and some ham in my pack for lunch. Didn't put the baguette in a plastic bag. On the approach I let the sled with my pack on it loose to slide down a small slope and it promptly went in the wrong direction straight into a creek with my pack flying off into the water. Ten minutes later, I let the sled go again and it crashed straight into another open creek hidden at the bottom of a slope.

What a moron! Needless to say everything in the pack got wet, especially the baguette. Wet baguette sandwich for lunch – mmm, yummy.

Rosebud, WI2, 17 m (Cynthia Chung, Mark Hurst, Danylo Darewych, February 26, 2023).

Located at the farthest east end of the cliff line. It faces north. Climb up a wide iced up slab and exit over a steeper bulge at the top.

Named after the sled in *Citizen Kane* (which we watched holed up in a motel room in Nipigon).