

# **Outcrops**

**An Eternally Incomplete  
Compendium of Ontario  
Shield Climbing Esoterica**



## **Elliot Lake and Little White River Rock Climbing**

**By Danylo Darewych**

“Other than Bon Echo, Rattlesnake Point and the Gattineau, climbing areas in Ontario have been relatively unexplored. Now that winter travel and camping have become more extensive, rock and ice climbing can be found in many places in Ontario, especially along the southern limits of the Canadian Shield. ... we have been able to explore and climb many rock outcrops and faces in the area stretching from Deep River to Lake Superior, from Cobalt to south of Algonquin Park. It seems the more you look the more possibilities crop up, almost by “wishful thinking”. The type of rock varies from the solid red granite of the Shield to limestone and the magnificent white quartzite of Espanola and Killarney Park.”

Uwe Embacher, *Canadian Alpine Journal*, 1977

## Disclaimer

**WARNING!** Rock climbing is, by its very nature, a potentially hazardous activity. Climbing can result in severe injury or death. You do so at your own risk.

Prior and competent knowledge in the use of various rock climbing safety devices is assumed. It is absolutely essential that individuals participating in such activities make themselves aware of the risks and accept these and their responsibility for their own actions and involvement.

The information contained within is NOT climbing instruction. The author of this guide and any contributors to this guide accept no liability whatsoever for actions taken by individuals based upon information presented in this guidebook. Users of this guide must be responsible for learning all the appropriate techniques required to climb the particular route they have chosen to attempt.

**There are no warranties, whether expressed or implied, that this guide is accurate or that the information contained in it is reliable. Your use of this guide indicates your assumption of risk, that it may contain errors, and is an acknowledgement of your own sole responsibility for your climbing safety. By use of this guide, you release the author and any contributors to this guide from liability for any injury, including death, that might result. The user assumes all risks arising from the use of this guide.**

Front Cover: Rooster Rock on Quirke Lake, north of Elliot Lake. Photo by Marco Foladore.

Back Cover: Marco Foladore tiptoeing his way along the detour to the start of the second pitch of *Low Grade Radiation*.

## Table of Contents

|                                                     |    |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----|
| Introduction .....                                  | 2  |
| Stone Ridge (aka Golf Course Cliff or Nordic) ..... | 5  |
| Flat Face Area .....                                | 8  |
| Main Ridge.....                                     | 12 |
| Crow's Nest .....                                   | 19 |
| Small Wall .....                                    | 23 |
| Uranium Boulder .....                               | 23 |
| Horne Lake .....                                    | 24 |
| North Face Area .....                               | 25 |
| Main Face Area.....                                 | 26 |
| South Cliff.....                                    | 28 |
| Schoolroom Area .....                               | 33 |
| Quirke Lake - Rooster Rock .....                    | 38 |
| Boland Road Cliff .....                             | 59 |
| Vampire Hill .....                                  | 67 |
| Little Boland Road Cliff .....                      | 68 |
| Little White River .....                            | 69 |
| Dreamers/Bush Nookies/Gold Mine Bouldering .....    | 67 |
| Bolger's Lake .....                                 | 71 |
| Cottage Cliff/Randy's Knob .....                    | 74 |
| Endikai Lake .....                                  | 75 |
| Other Cliffs in the Area.....                       | 77 |
| Geology .....                                       | 79 |

Many thanks to the climbers who provided information and photos, especially Marco Foladore, Dave Marrone and John Cotgrave. Route descriptions were generally provided by the first ascensionists (their initials appear after the route descriptions). The photos are taken by me, Danylo Darewych, unless otherwise noted.

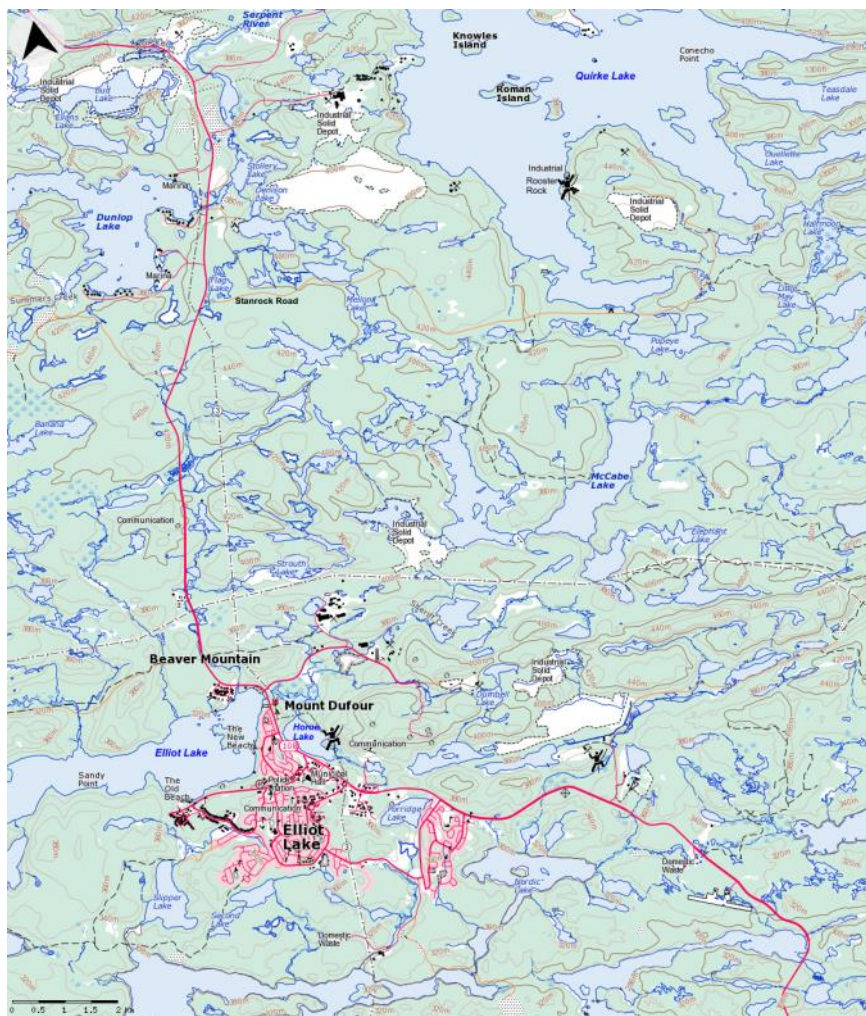
If you have any additions, corrections, questions etc, please feel free to contact me (Danylo Darewych) at [dedokvadratu@yahoo.ca](mailto:dedokvadratu@yahoo.ca)

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# Introduction

This guidebook describes rock climbing areas in the vicinity of the town of Elliot Lake, Ontario and north of it along the Little White River. The information in this guidebook has been compiled from my own explorations and observations; from descriptions provided by various climbers; from various websites, in particular from SudburyClimbing.com and Rockclimbing.com. The rock climbing areas described in this guidebook are:

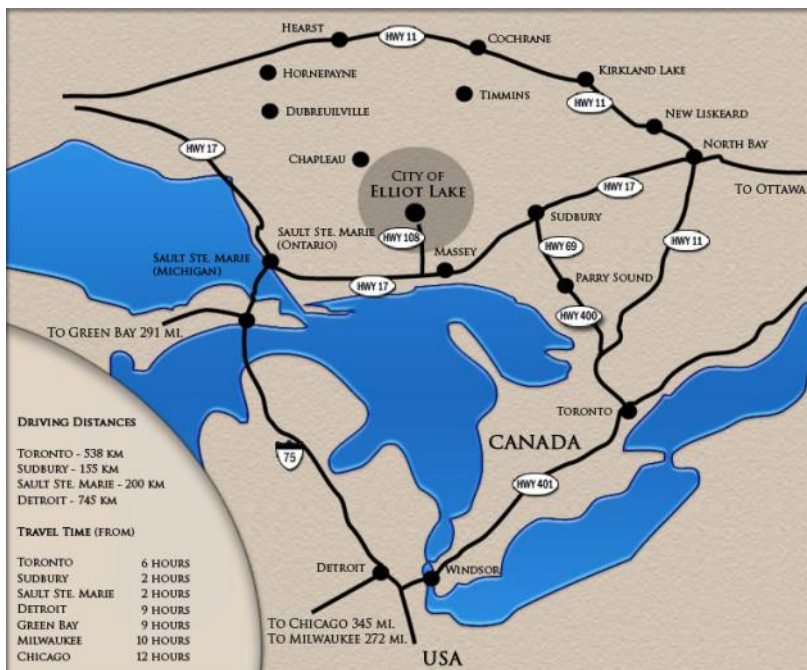
- 1) Stone Ridge (aka Golf Course Cliff or Nordic), just south of Elliot Lake
- 2) Horne Lake, right opposite downtown Elliot Lake
- 3) Rooster Rock on Quirke Lake, north of Elliot Lake
- 4) Boland River Road Cliff, north of Elliot Lake
- 5) Little White River (Bolger's Lake, Cottage Cliff, Endikai Lake)



## Directions to Elliot Lake

The town of Elliot Lake is located midway between Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie in the Algoma District north of Lake Huron. Elliot Lake is an old mining town that has now become a retirement community.

From Toronto head north on Highway 400/69 towards Sudbury for 380 km. Just south of Sudbury turn west on Highway 17 (the Trans-Canada Highway). Head west for 135 km to Highway 108. Elliot Lake lies 27 km north on Highway 108. It's a total of 538 km from Toronto - a 6 hour drive.



**Camping.** Opportunities for free camping on crown land abound — there are old logging and mining roads everywhere. There is a big field just east of Hwy 108 on the way to the boat launch at McCarthy Lake south of Elliot Lake (12.5 km north of Hwy 17). There are also a couple of nice sites 2.5 km along Stanrock Rd on a small lake.

If you want toilets, showers and other facilities, and don't mind paying, here are four options:

- 1) Westview Park in Elliot Lake proper, just north of Horne Lake off Highway 108. 18 sites, \$25 a day for a tentsite. (705) 848-7737
- 2) South Bay Park, located 10 kilometers north of Elliot Lake on Dunlop Lake. 17 daily sites and 95 seasonal sites. \$21 a day for a tentsite. (705) 848-2804.
- 3) Mississagi Provincial Park, located 25 kilometres north of Elliot Lake on Hwy 639. 60 daily sites. \$24 a day for a tentsite. (705) 848-2806 or (705) 865-2021
- 4) Serpent River Campground, located 35 kilometres south of Elliot Lake on Hwy 17. 22 daily sites and 42 seasonal sites. \$25 a day for a tentsite. (705) 849-2210 or 1-877 849-2210

## Some History and a Caveat about First Ascent Information

I have given route descriptions and first ascent information for the routes at the crags in the Elliot Lake area based on the climbing done there by myself and several other friends since 2012. However, climbers from Elliot Lake and Sudbury have been climbing in the Elliot Lake area for longer than that, as shown by posts on rockclimbing.com from 2006 and sudburyclimbing.com.

In particular, a lot of climbing exploration and development was done by local Elliot Lake high school teacher, Ernie Tymeczko (1954-2006), and his wife Karen. Ernie used to take local high school students out climbing. I have had a couple of brief telephone conversations with Karen Tymeczko, in which she said that they did a lot of rock climbing at Horne Lake and Stone Ridge/Nordic, but also made at least one trip out to Rooster Rock on Quirke Lake. They also bouldered on various rock outcrops around town, for ex. behind the now-demolished downtown shopping mall,\* and ice climbed in the area. Apparently there was even a small guidebook put together by a friend of theirs for the routes at Horne Lake. I have not been able to track down this guidebook, nor have I yet had the chance to find out from Ms. Tymeczko exactly what they climbed.

Chris Rogers, a member of the ACC Toronto section, informs me that he climbed at the Nordic/Stone Ridge cliff in the late 80s/early 90s with a friend from Elliot Lake, Alan Morton, who worked as a mechanic in the last operating mine in Elliot Lake.

In Sept. 2008, Shaun Parent, a climbing guide from Batchawana, was invited to check out Stone Ridge by Sarah Ferguson, a client interested in climbing who was living in Elliot Lake at the time. They climbed some routes and installed the bolts at the top of the Flat Face area. Shaun subsequently returned to the cliff on several occasions to climb with clients and friends, but exactly what routes I don't know. Shaun also tells me that are some bolts on one of the other cliff faces near Stone Ridge, put in by unknown climbers.

So, the route names and first ascent information are not writ in stone.

## A Word of Caution

While some of the routes described in this guidebook have seen multiple ascents and are quite clean and on solid rock, many routes have only been climbed once and can be dirty with leftover loose blocks or stones. Bring your own scrub brushes and be prepared to use them (wire brushes are fine).

Use your good judgement, test the rock and the holds, and tread lightly when necessary. Be prepared to retreat — carry extra cordelette, slings, a knife and quicklinks or rap rings. Wear a helmet at all times.

Be careful to get all your gear well away from the base of a route when trundling rocks. At right - the aftereffects of Mike Grainger cleaning the route *Cloven Hoof*.



## Stone Ridge (aka Golf Course or Nordic Cliff)



Stone Ridge. The Crow's Nest area is on the left, the Main Ridge on the right, the Flat Face area is not visible.

### General Description

Stone Ridge is a lovely cliff with good climbing. It is a 450 m long, 15-30 m high escarpment with cracks, buttresses, corners, slabs, ledges, edges and overhangs. The rock is limonized quartzite. It's beautiful, solid rock with good friction.

Climbers often come away raving about the cliff after climbing here for the first time. Here's a typical reaction from John Cotgrave: "Holly shit! How did I not know of this place? Elliot Lake - who would have thought the Gunks would have left a piece there. WOW, right?" Mike Grainger felt that some of the routes would not be "out of place with Squamish Top 100 climbs." Personally, the rock reminds me of the Back of the Lake at Lake Louise. Comparisons, however, are unnecessary\* - the cliff stands on its own merits.

The cliff is called the Stone Ridge because it lies next to the Stone Ridge golf course, immediately south/east of the city of Elliot Lake. It is also called the Nordic Cliff because it's located along the Algom Nordic Mine Rd. which leads to the former Nordic mine site (the property of Rio Algom mining company).

This crag has been partially developed by Shaun Parent of the Superior Exploration, Adventure and Climbing Company (based in Batchawana Bay, north of Sault Ste. Marie). He has put in protection bolts and anchors on some routes. Many of the routes are still a work in progress - there are occasional missing hangers on bolts mid-route, and frequently missing hangers on the anchors at the top of routes (because locals like to take them, so Shaun simply removes them). It's a good idea to bring along a couple of your own hangers and nuts and a wrench or lots of long webbing to reach the trees further back from the cliff edge. Many of the routes start not from the ground, but from belays on ledges at the top lip of a severe overhang that undercuts much of the cliff. Some of these belays have two bolts and webbing, some have one bolt with no hanger, some require trad gear.

As you walk along the cliff edge you will also come across some big iron bolts - apparently leftovers from the mining that used to take place in the area.

\*The jaded guidebook cynic would ask: "Why have you included the comparisons, then?"

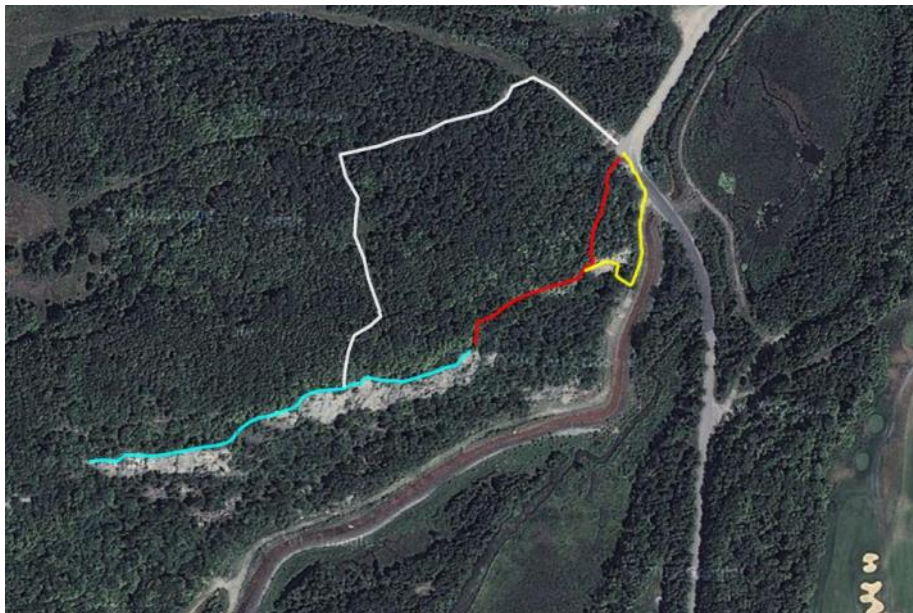
There are currently around 25 routes at the cliff. They are mostly trad and mixed routes with a few sport routes. It's a good idea to bring along a set of nuts and some small cams even on the "pure" sport routes, just in case the bolt spacing should prove not to be to your liking.

Most of the routes are most easily accessed from the top of the cliff by rappelling. You can generally get a good view of the cliff face and routes from above to see what you are getting yourself in for.

## Directions

The Stone Ridge cliff is located about 6 km east of the town of Elliot Lake off Highway 108 or about 20 km north of the junction of Hwys 17 and 108. Look for signs for Algom Nordic Mine Road and Stone Ridge Golf Course on the north (right) side of Hwy 108. Turn down the Algom Nordic Mine Rd.— you'll see the rock face to the left as you drive in. Drive about 1.1 km down the road and park at the side of the road at the first convenient widening/pullout, just after the point where the pavement ends.

## Cliff Approach Paths



Mining road approach in yellow, climbers' path in red, hiking trail in white and cliff top trail in cyan.

There are several ways to access the cliff from the parking spot.

1) *Hiking Trail Approach*: This is probably the most used approach. It takes you to the top of the Main Ridge area. Head straight from the parking spot (assuming you nosed in; i.e. NW) down a former mine access road, which is now a hiking

trail. You will pass a couple of small signs stating that this is private property of Rio Algom Limited and to please stay on the trail. Go down this fairly wide trail for about 80 m, then turn left (west) onto a narrower hiking path that heads uphill through the forest. It is well marked with plastic trail markers of various colours. Follow it to the top of the cliff (another 350 m). This approach is slightly longer, but easier-angled.

The Hiking Trail comes out on top of the cliff near the tops of the routes *Marlborough Man* and *Hornet's Away*, then continues west along the top of the cliff.

### 2) Mining Road Approach.

This is the shortest approach. It brings you to the base of the small Flat Face area at the far eastern end of Stone Ridge. Walk back along the road about 25 m to a smaller side dirt road/trail that runs along a creek (which is a scary yellow/orange colour). About 100 m down this side road you will come to a gate with signs announcing that this is the private property of Rio Algom Limited and a decommissioned uranium



mine site and that persons entering do so at their own risk. Backtrack from this gate for 15-20 m and head up over the embankment along a faint, very short 25 m trail (there might be some flagging tape) to the base of the Flat Face Area.

To get to the main faces from the Flat Face area you can continue along flagged paths that run from both the base and the top of the Flat Face.

You can, of course, also continue along the dirt road past the gate and bushwalk straight uphill to the base of the cliff wherever you wish. The dirt road runs roughly parallel to the cliff.

3) *Climbers' Path Approach*. This approach takes you first to the top of the Flat Face area, then continues to the Main Ridge. Look across the roadside ditch to the forest on your left (assuming you nosed your car into the parking area; i.e. look SSW). A well-marked path of orange flagging tape and orange spray-paint on tree trunks heads uphill (courtesy of Shaun Parent). This path is fairly steep, but short. It brings you out onto the top of the Flat Face in about 100 m.

From the top of the Flat Face Area, the path continues along to the Main Ridge. Once again, it is well marked with flagging tape and orange spray paint. The path drops slightly down into a gully/slope separating the Flat Face area from the Main Ridge before coming out on top of the Main Ridge. It's about 120 m from the Flat Face area to the Main Ridge. The Climbers' Path joins up with the marked hiking trail at the top of the ridge.

You can drop down the gully/slope separating the Flat Face from the Main Ridge and walk along the base of the escarpment as well, but that is much rougher going. There is no clearly established path along the base.

The Climbers' Path and the Hiking Trail approaches will get you to the same point at the top of the Main Ridge in the same amount of time - 10 minutes.

## Flat Face Area\*

The Flat Face Area is the first part of the cliff that you will come to, if you're coming in along the base. It's at the far east end of the ridge. It's only between 10 -15 m high. It's a good place to warm up before you take on the bigger climbs further down the cliff. It's also a good place for bringing beginners or inexperienced friends because it's not too big, and is just slightly off vertical. There are currently 4 bolted lines on this face.

The easiest way to reach this face is along the Mining Road approach (described on the previous pages).

You can scramble easily up to the top of this section of cliff from the far right side (it's almost as if steps have been cut into the rock).

Routes are described left to right.



### **Crumble Cake, 5.5, 15 m, gear and/or 4 bolts.**

Goes up the slightly higher left side of the Flat Face on good, positive, incut holds and steps. A fun climb. Originally climbed on trad gear.



### **Crumble Cake Variation, 5.?, 15 m.**

There is one bolt right of the starting crack of *Crumble Cakes*. It appears to be a bolt-protected alternative start.

### **Middle Route, 5.? 10 m, 3 bolts.**

Goes up the shorter, but less featured middle of the Flat Face.

### **Butt End, 5.?, 9 m, 3 bolts.**

Scramble 3-4 m up to a ledge on the far right end of the Flat Face area and then traverse left along a crack onto the face and up.

## **Small Faces**

There are a couple of small faces to the left of the Flat Face area with some short bolted and semi-bolted lines on them. Head uphill to the left along the base of the cliff for 20 m to reach the first Small Face, then another 30 m to the second. These routes were put up in the spring/summer of 2020 by Shaun Parent. I haven't climbed them and don't know their names (I'm tempted to call them Sha-La-La-Lee, Itchycoo Park, Tin Soldier, Lazy Sunday). Descriptions are based on observations made from the ground.

### **Small Face 1 (Steve Marriot?)**

#### **Right Side Arete (Sha-La-La-Lee?), 5.?, 12 m, 3? Bolts**

(Shaun Parent and Kohl?, 2020).

Climb up the arete on the right end of the first Small Face.

#### **Face Route (Itchycoo Park?), 5.?, 10 m, 3 bolts?**

(Shaun Parent and Kohl?, 2020).

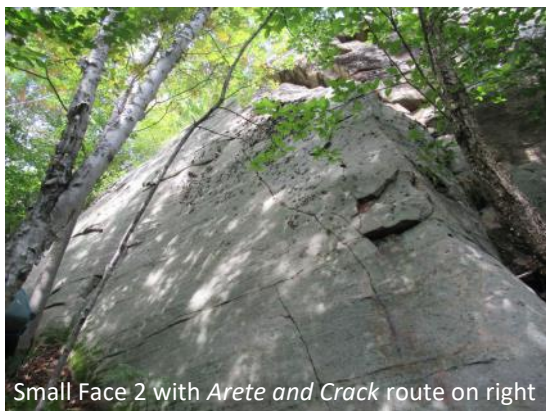
Climbs the face left of the previous route.

### **Small Face 2 (Ronnie Lane?)**

#### **Arete and Crack (Tin Soldier?), 5.?, 14 m, 2? bolts and gear.**

(Shaun Parent and Kohl?, 2020).

Start on the arete on the right side of the second small face, climb up past two bolts, then continue along a left trending crack/corner.

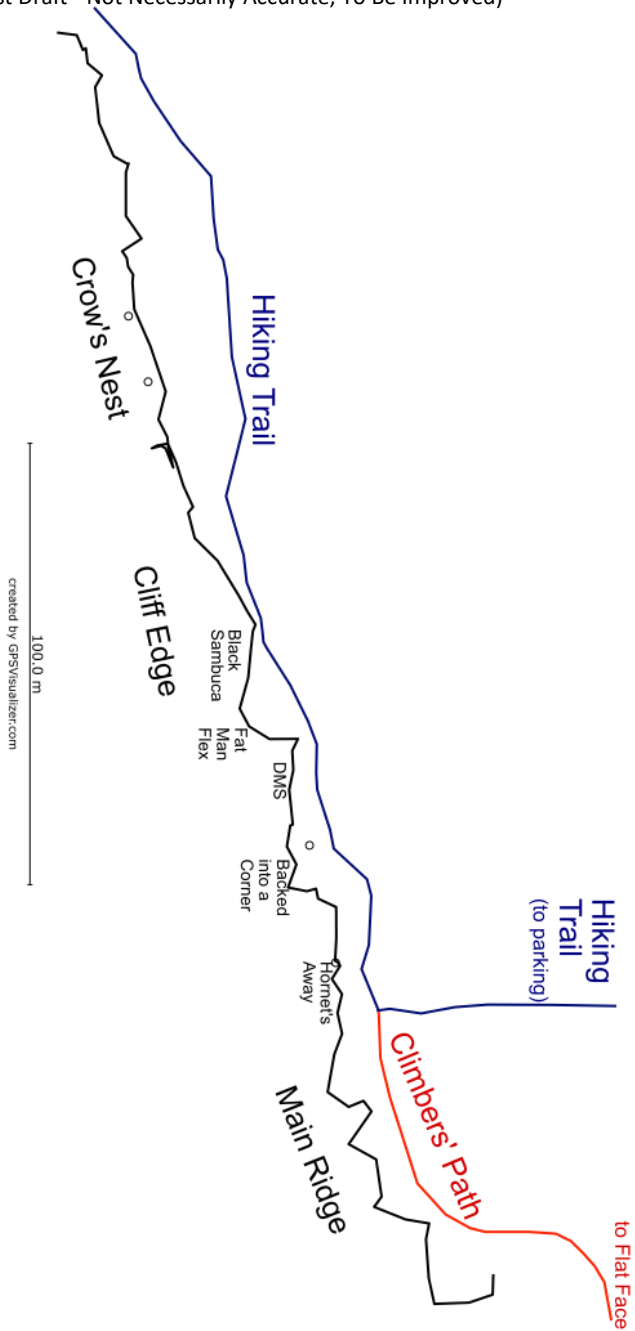


#### **Left-Side Route (Lazy Sunday?), 5.?, 11 m, 5? bolts.**

(Shaun Parent and Kohl?, 2020).

Traverse in from the left side of the second face along three bolts, then head up past another two bolts to anchor bolts (with webbing) up to the right.

**Stone Ridge - Main Ridge and Crow's Nest Areas Drawing**  
(Very Rough First Draft - Not Necessarily Accurate; To Be Improved)



## Stone Ridge/Nordic—Main Ridge



## Main Ridge Routes

The Main Ridge is about 250 m long and 35 m high at its tallest point. You can get there either by following the Hiking Trail Approach or by following the Climbers' Path from the top of Flat Face (as outlined in the previous pages).

Routes are described from west to east (left to right).

**Black Sambuca, 5.7, 30m** (FA Mike Grainger, Danylo Darewych, Aug. 18, 2013).

Located towards the far west (climber's left) end of the Main Ridge, at a wall of darker looking rock (c. 10 m west/left around the corner from *Fat Man Flex*). Climb up the right side of the wall on little ledges and a couple of cracks (first good pro is rather high) to a bigger ledge to the right of a right facing corner. Climb up the corner and finish on a final short headwall with a wide irregular crack that requires a couple of jamming moves (5.7). The final crack can be avoided by heading left along a ledge. Tree belay. *MG, DD*

**Fat Man Flex, 5.9, 30 m** (FA John Cotgrave, Max Pinion, Sept. 6, 2013).

Begin uphill climber's left of *DMS*. Locate a scoop in a right facing corner, with perched blocks on the left ledge. Climb the scoop with thin jams to reach the ledge (crux), and continue to the fist/hand crack. The top was finished in the right side of the block, the cleaner option. Belay from trees. *JC*

**New Beginnings, 5.9, 18 m** (Annamarie Grant, Mike Grainger, Danylo Darewych, July 31, 2018).

Starts about 7 m left of *DMS* at the top of treed slope, which is parallel to the ledge belay stance of *DMS*. There are two corners side-by-side here. *New Beginnings* climbs the right one, which starts slightly higher than the left one (which is *Fat Man Flex*). Climb up a short, steep initial crack and step left 3-4 m up, then continue up a second crack above on the left and exit on the right side of a block to the top (the top half is the same as *Fat Man Flex*).



Left: Mike Grainger on the start of *Black Sambuca*, Aug. 18, 2013. Photo by DD.

Middle: John Cotgrave below *Fat Man Flex*. Right: Danylo Darewych on *DMS* with Mike Grainger at the belay below. Photo by Shaun Parent.



Mike Grainger enjoying the climbing on SnS, Aug. 18, 2013. Photo by Shaun Parent

**DMS, 5.6, 18 m** (Danylo Darewych, Mike Grainger, Shaun Parent, Aug. 18, 2013).

Rappel down to a 2 bolt anchor on a ledge (about 10 m right of a big right-facing corner). Follow a curving crack line up and left (bolt), then another crack back right to another a bigger vertical crack/break/corner with some stumps. Head up this and exit up a short, small (4m) buttress on your left (bolt). The exit moves up the buttress are harder if you're short, but they can be avoided by exiting to the right of the mini-buttress, in which case the routes difficulty is about 5.5.

A more difficult (5.7?) direct exit is possible up the slab below the mini-buttress (bolt). A direct start from the ground is also possible (on 2 bolts; 6-7 m, 5.6). *DD*

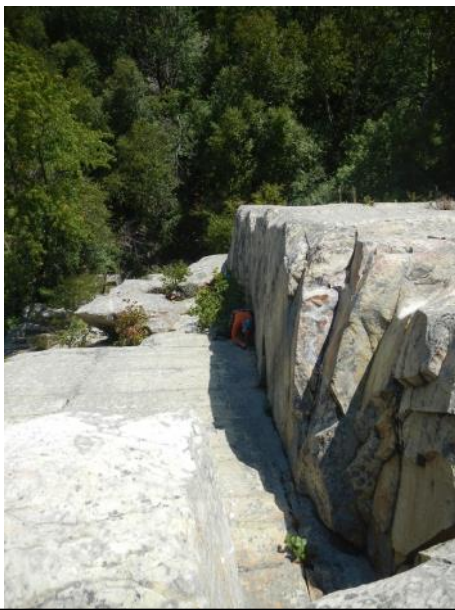
**SnS, 5.8, 18 m** (FA Shaun Parent, Sandra Slater?).

Look for teenage love graffiti at the top of the cliff. Rappel down to a two-bolt anchor at a small triangular ledge at the bottom/right end of vague buttress. From this stance make an awkward initial move (protected by bolt) up a crack at the right end of a block/bulge, then traverse left along a crack (past three bolts) to a small right facing corner/crack (bolt). Two variations are possible from this point:

1) either diagonal up and slightly left following the crack over a small roof (gear), then step further left and exit up a crack to a ledge (5.7?).

2) or go up and slightly right and get over the roof below a very thin crack (bolt) and then straight up to the ledge (5.9/5.10?).

From the ledge it is possible to exit either left or right over easier ground; or surmount the final 3-4 m vertical step above (no pro; 5.8/5.9) to a 2-bolt anchor. *DD*



Left: Randy Kielbasiewicz on *Suicidal Frog*, Aug. 18, 2013. Right: Mike Grainger on the upper crack/corner of *BIAC*, Aug. 17, 2013. Photos by Shaun Parent.

### **H&H?, 5.5?, 20 m** (FA Shaun Parent, ?).

Shares the same belay and opening moves with *SnS*, but where that route traverses left, H&H goes straight up a big crack (with some big shrubs/small trees) in it.

### **Suicidal Frog, 5.10c, 30 m** (FA Randy Kielbasiewicz, Melissa Armstrong, Aug. 18, 2013).

Starts about 10 m left of *BIAC* at the left side of a cave-like feature. Climbs up and slightly left towards the bolt about 10 m up. Three bolts + full rack (yellow & blue master cams or equivalent, #3, 4 brass offset or equivalent). *RK*

### **Backed into a Corner, 5.9, 33 m** (FRA Danylo Darewych, Mike Grainger, Aug. 17, 2013; FFA Randy Kielbasiewicz, Melissa Armstrong, Aug. 18, 2013).

Climbs the long, prominent ramp/right-facing corner in the middle of the crag. If you rappel to the bottom of the route, beware - you will only just get down on rope stretch (use long cord/webbing for the anchor).

Start in a short 4 m corner below



Danylo Darewych looking for a placement at the start of *Butter Tart*. Photo by Erik Dokic.

and slightly right of the main corner above, step left into and around another short corner (stunted young sapling), then climb up an arête and step back right into the main crack system (piton), and onto a ledge above. Belay here, if you wish to break the climb into two pitches. Follow the thin right-facing corner to the top. Exit easily to the left, avoiding a final short roof, or more strenuously to the right over the roof (5.10a? variation). Two anchor bolts.

**Butter Tart, 5.6, 30 m** (FRA Danylo Darewych, Erik Dokic, October 8, 2012).

Located about midway along the crag. If you're walking along the base of the crag, the route is located left (north) of a slabby, less-than-vertical wall and just right of a lovely, steep ramp heading up a corner system (*BIAC*). Look for a short low-angled slab below a ledge with maple trees in a corner, and a steep corner above. If you're walking along the top, the climb is located climber's right of a big right-facing corner (*BIAC*).

- Pitch 1, 5.3, 17 m. Head up some easy blocks and a short crack to the base of the short slabby section. If you're looking for protection, head right along the base of the slab and step around a bit of a corner, then head immediately up and left across the slab to its top and belay on the ledge. If you don't mind running it out, head straight up the slab on scoops and steps. Belay off whichever tree looks most solid to you.
- Pitch 2, 5.6, 13 m. Head up a crack system that starts at the right edge of the ledge (the crux is just above the belay ledge) and follow it to the top. Belay off trees. (*DD*)

**Butterfingers, 5.10+, 35 m** (FA John Cotgrave, Max Pinion, Sept. 8, 2013).

This climb begins to climber's right of *Butter Tart*, shares the same first-pitch belay ledge and then climbs the right-facing dihedral to the left of *Butter Tart*.

- Pitch 1, 5.7, 14 m. Climb a short right facing corner to reach easier slabby ground, trending up and left to the large ledge with trees.



Left: Route of *Butter Tart* from below. *Butterfingers* starts directly up the centre of the photo. Right: Melissa Armstrong on the start of *Marlborough Man*, Aug. 17, 2013. Photo by Shaun Parent.

• Pitch 2, 5.10+, 15 m. At the ledge, climb the striking clean right facing dihedral, with a difficult start. Protection is a bit wonky, and sparse at first. JC

The hiker's approach trail comes out at the top of the cliff at this point. There are three sets of top anchor bolts at the cliff top here, located on three small protrusions. The middle set does not have hangers. The bolts furthest skier's left are at the top of the routes *Marlborough Man* and *Hornet's Away*. Rappelling from the bolts on skier's right will put you at the start of *Rain Delay*, *Pullup Princess* and *Marlborough Man*.

The next three routes are best approached from the top as they start on a ledge system on top of the overhanging roof.

**Rain Delay, 5.7, 22 m** (ACby Danylo Darewych, Rachel Greco and Danielle Johnson, June 31, 2018; partially bolted by Shaun Parent?).

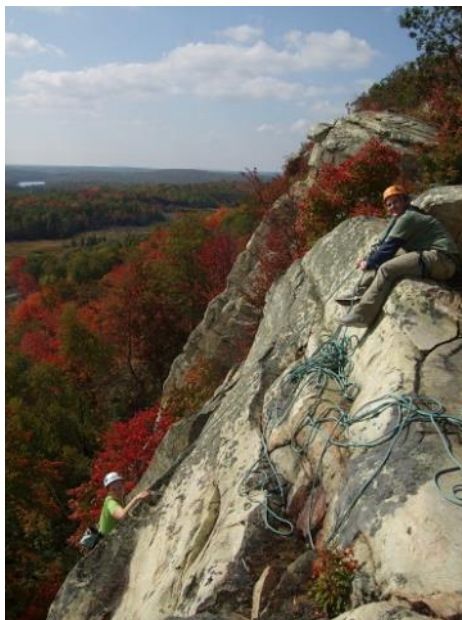
Lower down to the treed platform from the bolts furthest (skier's) right and set up a gear belay. Head up slightly leftward over some small steps/ledges the base of a small slab next to a right facing corner. Climb up the right side of the slab (the corner proper has no pro), then at the top the slab step left back into the corner (bolt), climb the crack in the corner above, then step back right (bolt) and up to exit. DD

**Pull-up Princess, 5.4, 22 m** (ACby Danylo Darewych, Annamarie Grant, September 3, 2017).

Lower down to the treed ledge from the bolts furthest (skier's) right. Set up a gear anchor (there is one hangerless bolt to the left). Climb up a short initial step left of small tree, then pull up on big holds (reachy move) to the left of a thin crack. Continue up the crack at first, but traverse right to the next crack system when you see some big loose stacked blocks above. Follow the right crack to the top over easy ground. The anchors directly above have no hangers - use the ones to the right above *Hornet's Away*. DD

**Marlborough Man, 5.9/10?, 23 m** (FA Shaun Parent, ?).

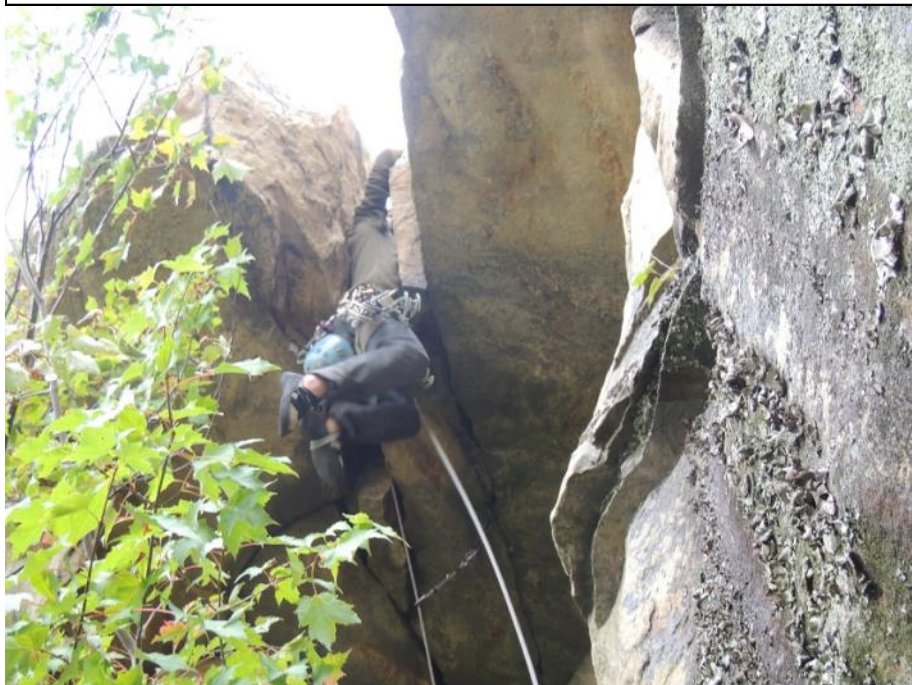
Lower down to the ledge from the top anchor bolts furthest skier's right on this section of cliff. Set up a belay on the ledge next to a tree (1 anchor bolt). From the ledge climb up a steep initial wall (4 bolts, the first of which is hangerless), then trend rightwards over lower-angled ground, crossing *Hornet's Away*, and then exit up a final steep section (2 more bolts). 2 bolt anchors. DD



Sarah Robinson belaying a friend near the top of *Rain Delay/Pull-up Princess*, Sept. 27, 2008. Photo from Sarah R.



Left: Mark at the top of *Marlborough Man*. Right: Shaun Parent leading *Hornet's Away*. Photos from [ontarioclimbing.com](http://ontarioclimbing.com), courtesy of SP. Below: John Cotgrave resorting to Kung-fu, black magic tactics on *The Hatchet*, Sept. 21, 2013. Photo by Scott Ross.



**Hornet's Away, 5.7, 22 m** (FA Shaun Parent, ?).

From the right end of the ledge climb up a wide left-facing open book (bolt; harder, if you're short), then up a short, blocky left-facing corner (good rest on top). Step right and head up following a thin crack that arches to the left, then up a final short crack to a ledge. 2 bolts anchors. *DD*

**The Hatchet, 5.11, A2, 40 m** (FA John Cotgrave, Max Pinion, Scott Ross, Sept. 21, 2013).

Locate a roof with a slot, about 20 m left of the high roof at the far east end of the cliff.

- Pitch 1, 5.11 A2, 15 m: Gain a thin corner with a Bugaboo pin under a blocky roof (often wet). Head out to the right, circumventing the roof. Reach up to the real roof, Kung-fu, black magic, get your whole body stuck, cry...

- Pitch 2, 5.10, 30 m. Beginning on the same ledge as *Hornet's Away*, climb up to a hand crack roof, to a tree, then rejoin *Hornet's Away* on the slab. *JC*

**The Three Musky-Tears, 5.10+, 35 m** (FA John Cotgrave, Max Pinion, Scott Ross, Sept. 21, 2013).

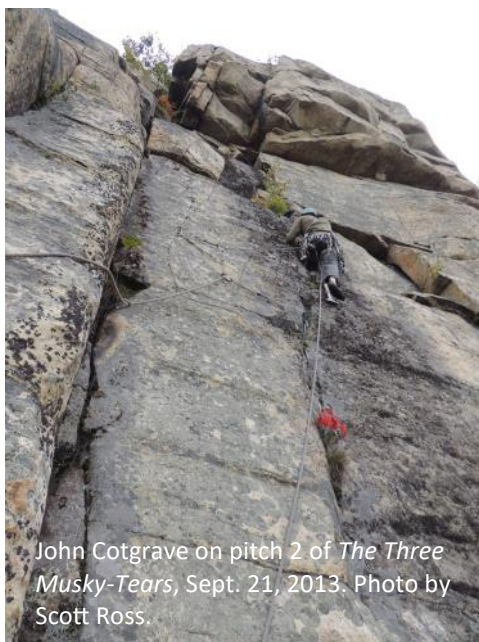
Locate the huge roof above a slab at the far east of the cliff. The climb starts to the left of the roof.

- Pitch 1, 5.9, 15 m. Head up the slab to gain a broken buttress to a ledge, and a right facing corner under a small roof. Mantle to the left to gain a large ledge (same height as *Hornet's Away* tart).

- Pitch 2, 5.10+, 25 m. The second pitch goes up the cracks towards the roofs, an exposed pitch with a tricky start. Switch to the right crack when the left one closes off. *JC*



Base of *The Three Musky-Tears*.



John Cotgrave on pitch 2 of *The Three Musky-Tears*, Sept. 21, 2013. Photo by Scott Ross.

## Crow's Nest Area

By John Cotgrave and Danylo Darewych

The Crow's Nest area is on the west end of the ridge. It's called the Crow's Nest, because there's a crow's nest under the overhang just right of the route *Chimney/Jam*. It's probably best not to climb near this overhang when the crows are nesting (spring/early summer). This section is 25-30 metres high.

To get to Crow's Nest area walk along the ridge-top trail until you reach the last open cliff-top area along the ridge. The face below you will have many appealing cracks running up it. Along the top there are several large metal rings in the rock from the old mining operations - good as anchors too. There are also bolts (currently with no hangers) at the top of several cracks. To get to the base, you can rappel from trees (or the old rings); or you can walk down at the far end of the Crow's Nest Area along a fairly easy gully; or hike in along the base of the ridge all the way from the right; or bushwack in directly from the base road.

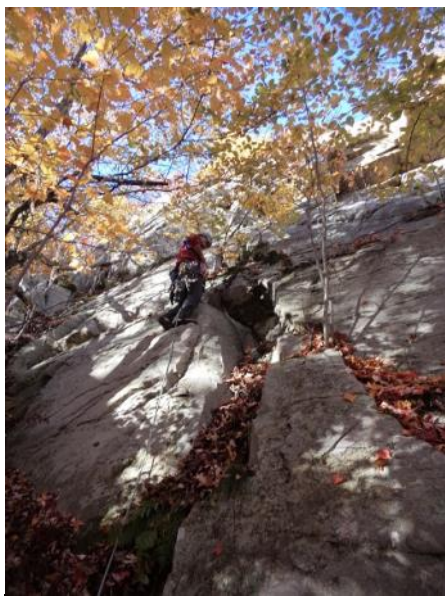
The routes are described from left to right.

**Mass Transit, 5.4, 18 m** (Dan Bandrowski, Danylo Darewych, October 15, 2015).

The far left (west end) of the cliff has several shorter, easy-angled crack/ramp lines. Dan started up one of these (see photo below) and traversed left across the face 8 m to top out. *DD*

**Blue Something, 5.8, 24 m** (Stefan Kloppenborg, Danylo Darewych, October 12, 2015).

Located 15 m right of *Mass Transit* towards the left end of the cliff at the first



Left: Dan Bandrowski starting up *Mass Transit*. Right: Stefan Kloppenborg on the layback of *Blue Something*.

break/right-facing corner in the cliff with no overhang above. Climb 3-4 m of easy-angled, dirty rock to a steep 5 m corner/crack above. Stem and layback the corner/crack to its end, then step left and up (bolt) to the arête above. Continue more easily upwards along the arête to the top (gear and 2 more bolts on the face). *DD*

The next two lines start side by side on a flat ledge atop big stacked boulders underneath the first prominent roof when walking along the base from the west (climber's left) end of the crag. There is a large crow's nest under the right end of the roof. You can scramble up to the ledge easily on its left side.

If rappelling to these routes from the top look for a crack line that tops out just (climber's) left of a stand of cedars that prevent walking along the cliff edge here. There is a pair of (hangerless) bolts at the top of this crack. The rappel down to the ledge is about 25 m.

**Crow-Magnon, 5.7, 20 m** (Mike Grainger, Danylo Darewych, August 26, 2018).

This climb follows the right-facing corner that starts on the ledge. However, this corner begins with small, but very strenuous overlaps/roofs and smooth slab with no footholds, so start the climb instead by heading up the easier slab 3 m to the right and angling up left (no pro) to the right-facing corner 5 m higher up at a narrow ledge. Continue up the right-facing corner for 5 m to its top and step onto the face on the left, then continue up a left-trending crack system on the easier-angled slab above. *DD*

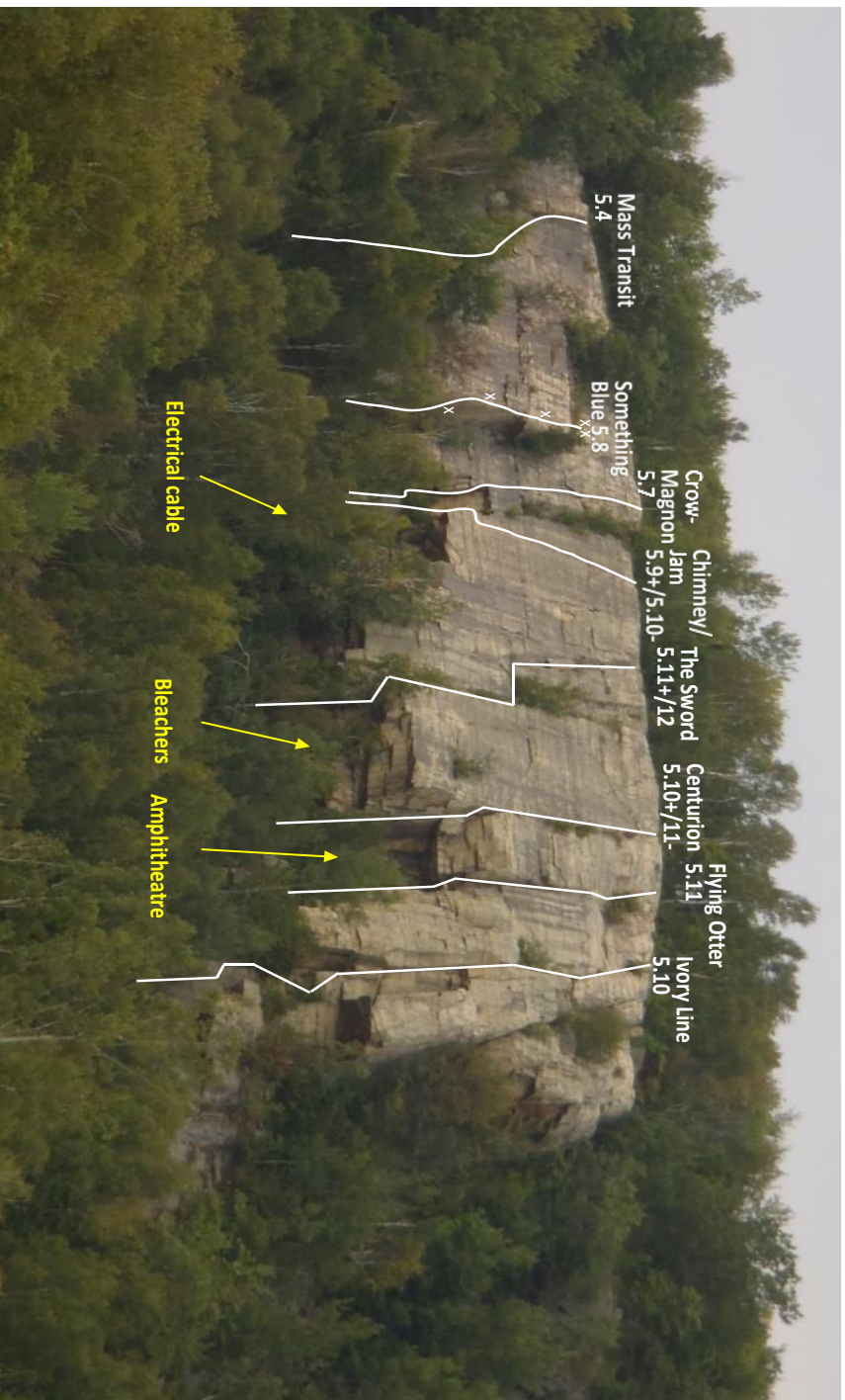
**Chimney/Jam, 5.9+/10-, 30 m.\***

Begin on a flat ledge atop high stacked boulders, just left of a large roof with a crow's nest underneath. Climb easy but hard to protect ledges that lead to the base of the left facing corner. Awkward mantle moves lead to a short roof, which is bypassed to the right to reach the slab. Climb the aesthetic, thin finger crack to the top. *JC*



Left: Mike Grainger leading *Crow-Magnon*. Right: Mike Grainger at the roof of *Chimney/Jam*.

## Stone Ridge/Nordic – Crow's Nest Area



**The Sword, 5.11+/12-, 30 m** (FA John Cotgrave, Max Pinion, Sept. 9, 2013).

Begin on the “Bleachers,” a cave behind a large block. (30 m right of *Chimney/ Jam*). Climb a short wide crack to stand on the Bleachers. Climb the right trending roof crack to a small ledge out right, try to rest, then continue left up the strenuous overhanging crack. Bring a #4 in addition to a standard rack. *JC*

**Centurion, 5.10+/11-, 35 m** (FA John Cotgrave, Max Pinion, Sept. 8, 2013).

Ten metres right of the Bleachers is another large alcove dubbed the Amphitheatre.

- Pitch 1, 5.10+, 15 m. Begin on the left side of the Amphitheatre. Climb out a small overhang to a right facing dihedral and a slab. Head up to the roof, traversing out a flake to the left. Mantle to a good belay ledge.

- Pitch 2, 5.8, 20 m. Climb the handcrack to the slab, finishing right on a large detached flake.

*JC*

**Flying Otter, 5.11-, 35 m** (FA John Cotgrave, Max Pinion, Sept. 7, 2013).

This climb takes the right side corner of the Amphitheatre.

- Pitch 1, 5.11-, 15 m. Climb a left facing corner on a slab to undercling flake, and a series of roofs. Belay at small ledge.

- Pitch 2, 5.7+, 20 m. Continue up the side of the cracks, to the slab, and the forest above. *JC*

**Ivory Line 5.10, 40 m** (FA John Cotgrave, Max Pinion, Sept. 8, 2013).

Begin downhill of the Amphitheatre, on a slabby fingercrack leading to a ledge left of the huge square roof.

- Pitch 1, 5.10, 20 m. Climb the crack to the ledge. From here, choose the chimney (5.9) or mantle a ledge below the overhang between the chimney and the square roof. Tenuous moves lead out the overhang, trending back left to the top of the chimney. Climbing the dihedral proper in the corner is a variation called *Ivory Corner* (only climbed on top rope at this point). Belay at a small ledge above the chimney.

- Pitch 2, 5.8, 20 m. The second pitch continues up the left crack to surmount yet another overhang to reach the slabs 5.8 20m. *JC*



Above: *Chimney/Jam*. From rockclimbing.com. Below: John Cotgrave on *The Sword*, Sept. 9, 2013.



## Small Wall Area

If you continue along the old mining road along the creek past the Rio Algom gate, you will soon see a small cliff located close to the road on your right. This is the Small Wall. One route has been done here.

**A Real Beauty, 5.8, 10 m** (FA Dylan Cumming, Beth Cumming, June 8, 2014). Climb the crack in the middle of the Small Wall. One 5.8 move to get off the ground then an easy 5.4 or 5.5 cruise to the top. Tree at the top for an anchor. *DC*

## Uranium Boulder

The Uranium Boulder is a lovely, solitary boulder located near the Uranium Discovery historical marker just south-east of the town of Elliot Lake. The Tymeczko's and friends used to boulder here. I haven't attempted to climb on it, so I cannot provide any useful information about the bouldering routes, but it looks like there would be some interesting lines.

*Location/directions.* Drive another 500-600 m west of the Nordic Golf course turnoff along Highway 108 (towards Elliot Lake; the highway runs more east-west here than south-north).. On the left (south) side of the highway there will be a sign for the Uranium Discovery historical marker/plaque. Turn in here and park at the small parking area.

Several trails head out from here. The one that leads to the memorial plaque is on the left. The trail that leads to the boulder is straight ahead—there is an ineffective locked gate across it (looks like some folks simply drive around it). Walk down this trail for about 300 m. It's quite wide at first. There will be a fork in the trail.

You can take either fork. The left one seems to end in a small clearing used for campfires, but bushwack through the trees along an ill-defined path for 50 m until you see the boulder ahead. When in doubt simply head uphill to a small rise of land. The boulder will be perched at the top of this small rise of land.



Beth Cumming in front of her namesake, *A Real Beauty*, June 8, 2014. Photo by Dylan Cumming.



## Horne Lake Cliff



The Horne Lake Cliff is another excellent cliff with great climbing. It is located directly opposite downtown Elliot Lake on the far side of Horne Lake. The cliff is around 40 metres at its highest point and about 225 m long. It's split into two halves by a large treed gully. The northern section is free of trees at the base, has little moss and generally solid rock. The southern section has trees along the base, much more vegetation and moss, and some sections with lots of loose blocks. The sun hits the rock face for the better part of the day.

The cliff is more consistently steep than Stone Ridge. The rock is beautiful and fairly solid. There's a pretty good variety of climbs. "There's at least 5 to 10 good routes..., but there are plenty more to discover"\*. All can be top-roped from trees at the top of the cliff. There are 3 bolted routes.

### Approach Directions:

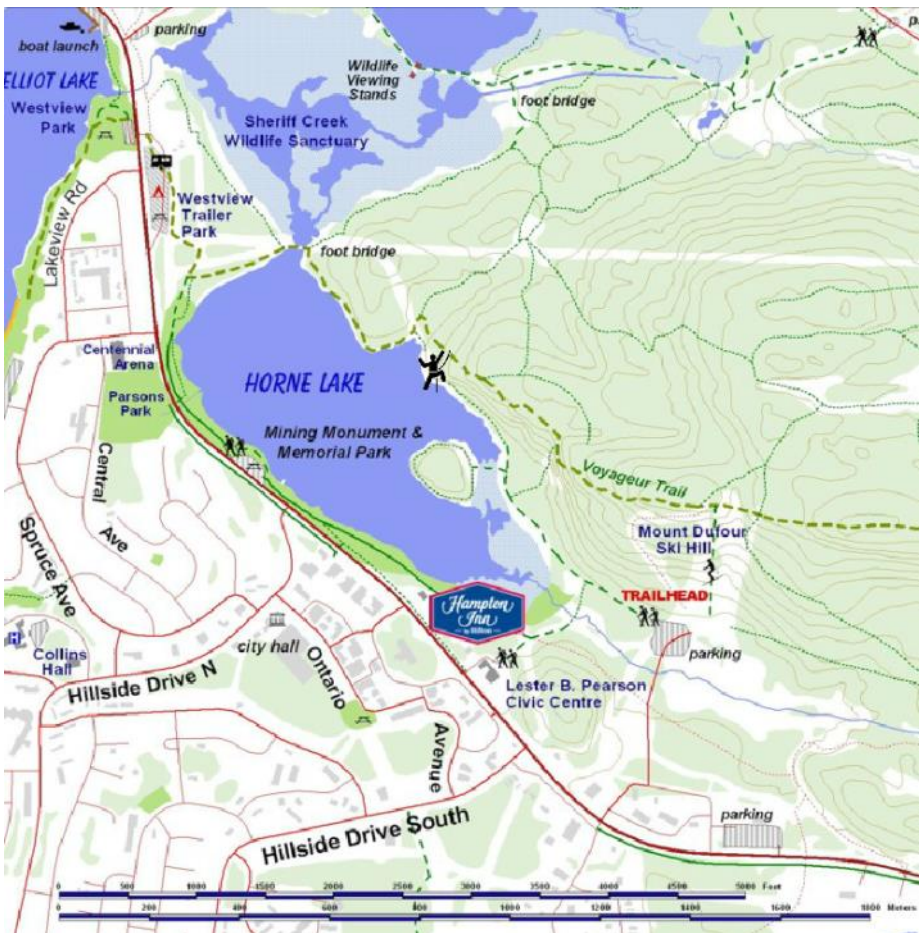
As you are driving into Elliot Lake on Highway 108 you will pass on your right in quick succession, Tim Horton's, McDonald's and the Hampton In. A little further along you will see the Mining Monument & Memorial Park on the shore of Horne Lake. The cliff will be clearly visible across the lake from here.

A trail goes around Horne Lake. It makes a 4 km loop. You can access the cliff by heading either north or south on the trail around the lake. If you're approaching from the north, you can park at the Mining Monument (or a little farther north at the municipal Westview Trailer Park on Simpson Rd). If you're approaching from

the south, then it's best to park in the parking lot before Tim Horton's (where the Civic Centre/Visitor Centre used to stand).

*North end approach.* Follow the Horne Lake hiking trail along the north side of the lake. You will cross a bridge over a small creek (Sheriff Creek). The trail will branch in 2 places - stick to the right on the Horne Lake Trail, closest to the lake. The second branch-off crosses a very short boggy section, then heads up a steep, short hill leading right to the top of the cliff. The distance is close to 2 km (25 min).

*South end approach.* Take the trail that heads downhill from the parking lot behind the Civic Centre. Follow the trail across a boggy section on a boardwalk and then turn left (north) at the end of the boggy section. Head north along the trail through the woods — after a few minutes you'll see a trail veer off to the right up-hill (this is the main Horne Lake Trail; the branch that heads left takes you to the Horne Lake "Island"). From here you can bushwack your way across to the south end of the cliff, but it's easier to access the main part of the cliff from the top. Fol-



low the trail uphill, then turn left (north) at the top and follow the trail to the cliff top. It's approximately 1.5 km (25 minutes) to the top of the main cliff face.

The most pleasant option, of course, would be to bring a canoe and paddle across the lake. Don't forget your swimming trunks - there's plenty of spots to jump into the lake to cool off.

**Descent to the base of the cliff.** There is a convenient natural staircase along the rock face which will bring you right down to the main climbing area. It's located below the power line pole at the north end of the cliff. Wind your way down 3-4 small rock steps/ledges and look also for a small red commemorative plaque to Ernie Tymeczko (a local teacher and climber; see page 4) glued into the rock at the top of the cliff. The "staircase" starts skier's left of the plaque. It traverses skier's left across the cliff face before heading down to the base of the cliff. It is exposed and narrow in places, but the handholds are solid and the ledges level - just make sure your pack is well-balanced.



The commemorative plaque in honour of Elliot Lake teacher and climber Ernie Tymeczko (1954-2006) put up by his wife and sons.

## North Face Area

The North Face area is a shorter section of cliff at the northern end of the Horne Lake cliff (below the start of the natural staircase descent). To get to the North Face section, search around on top until you find some top-rope anchor bolts along the edge of the rock. They are located one ledge down and about 5 m right of the Ernie Tymeczko memorial plaque.

There are 2 bolted lines here.

### Main Route, 5.10?, 10 m, 3 bolts.

"It is bolted, and can be top roped. It's about 10 to 12 meters high, and is made up mostly of small holds, which makes it a great spot to practice form and technique. Whenever we go to Horne, it's the first spot we head to. Two huge and easy ledges to start. Stay to the left, most of the holds are small and slanted. There is a sweet pinch hold before a small jam, then a nice Thank God hold before the top."\*

If you stay well left of the bolts, the line goes at around 5.8; if you stay next to the bolts then it is harder - 5.10a.

### Right Route, 5.11?, 10 m, 5 bolts.

Consists almost entirely of sloping crimpers.



Above: JF going for the Thank God hold on the *Main Route*. Photo from rockclimbing.com. Below: Mike Grainger tying in below the North Face Area.



## Main Face Area



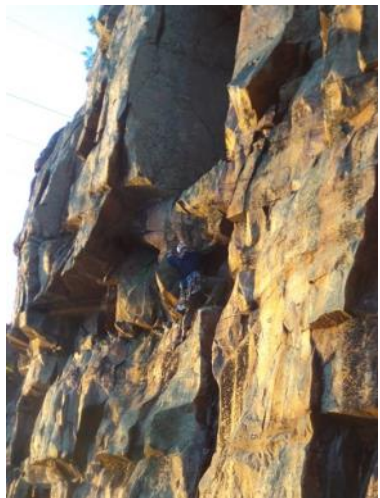
The Main Face at Horne Lake with *Paddlin'* at the very far left end of the photo and *T-Bone* left-of-centre. Photo from rockclimbing.com.

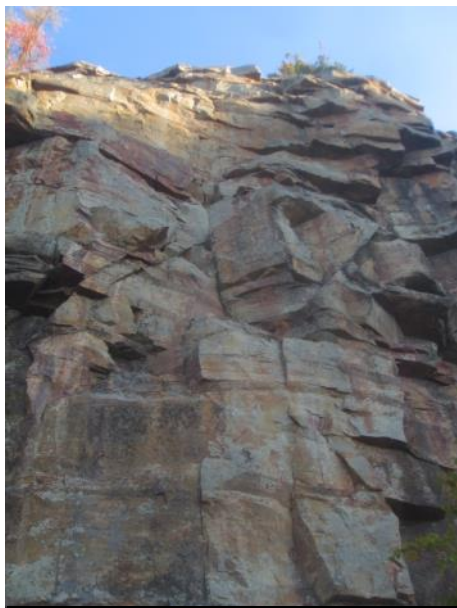
Below: Randy Kilebasiewicz leading *Paddlin'*, October 8, 2016.

The main face of the Horne Lake Cliff is located between the natural staircase descent and the treed gully that splits the cliff. It is characterized by nice, clean, mostly solid tan-coloured rock. It is between 25 and 30 m high at its tallest point. To get there, walk down the natural staircase (starts near the top of north face) on the rock face to the jagged rocks at the bottom.

**Paddlin', 5.10, 25 m** (FRA Randy Kielbasiewicz, Wade Graham, October 8, 2016).

Located at the far left end of the Main Face, about 10 m right of the bottom of the descent staircase. Look for a clean right-facing corner 12 m up. Climb up a crack to start, pull up and step onto a big flake/block, pull over a lip to a stance blow a big right facing corner. Climb the corner, then the wall on its left to by-pass a roof and head for the top past another smaller roof.





Left: *Mixed Route*. Right: *T-Bone* (from [sudburyclimbing.com](http://sudburyclimbing.com))

### **Mixed Route, 5.12?, 25+ m.**

Looks like there are two bolts to start on a steep section, then a blocky mid-section with trad protection, then 3 or 4 more bolts up another steep section, and anchors with chains at the top. Looks difficult.

### **T-Bone, 5.11b, 25+ m. (FA Ernie Tymeczko, Karen Houle-Tymeczko?)**

This is one of the most fun and most challenging climbs at Horne Lake. It is located in a right-facing corner in the middle of the Main Face.

Climb the corner to the top. Most of the climb is a good solid challenge and it has some pretty difficult sections. There are some easy parts and a couple of large ledges to take a break. A lot of jamming mixed into this route. Stay close to the corner and be creative if you want to get to the top.\*

(Originally simply called the *Corner Route*, this route was renamed *T-Bone* in honour of Ernie Tymeczko. *T-Bone* was the nickname given to Ernie Tymeczko by his students.)

## South Cliff

The south cliff extends from the treed gully all the way to the end of the cliff. It is twice as long as the main face and higher (up to 45m in places). It has trees along the base, much more vegetation and moss, and some sections with lots of loose blocks. However, there are some excellent crack and corner lines here. Some routes here have definitely been climbed before. We found some flagging tape on the top of the cliff in one place and a home-made prybar/crowbar at the base of one steep corner.

*Descent/Rappel:* As of October 2015 there was a rappel station consisting of locking biners on long slings wrapped around trees above the Chipotle/Serrano wall. A 60 m rope will get you down (not sure about a 50 m).

Here are descriptions for the routes we've climbed on this section of the cliff.

**No Work, All Play, 5.5, 30 m** (FRA Danylo Darewych, Christian Theoret, Anna Grant, Sept. 24, 2015).

Located 13 m right of the treed gully at the second vague crack/corner system. Follow the line of weakness to a big ledge 18 m up (belay possible), then up a crack in the final, shorter, steeper step above.

**CrackKing, 5.9, 35 m, 2 pitches** (Brent Elliot, Laura Duncan, June 29, 2020).

Located 20 m right of the treed gully. Look for a right-facing corner with a small overhang and crack in the left wall. The route climbs the crack in the steeper left wall.

- Pitch 1, 5.9, 21 m. Climb up the initial corner (tiny gear at about 5 m - medium ball nut, #5 DMM brass offset), then move left to the crack. Up this to a good stance on a slab. Up the slab, then left slightly. Up a #3BD crack, then some runout easy slab to a ledge. There are some weird flakes on the first pitch, but they seem really wedged Pine tree or gear in cracks for a belay.

- Pitch 1, 5.8, 15 m. From the belay, head up to a ledge then follow a layback crack up and right. Face climb to the top. *BE*

**No Guts, No Glory, 5.8, 35 m** (Danylo Darewych, Mike Grainger, July 29, 2017)

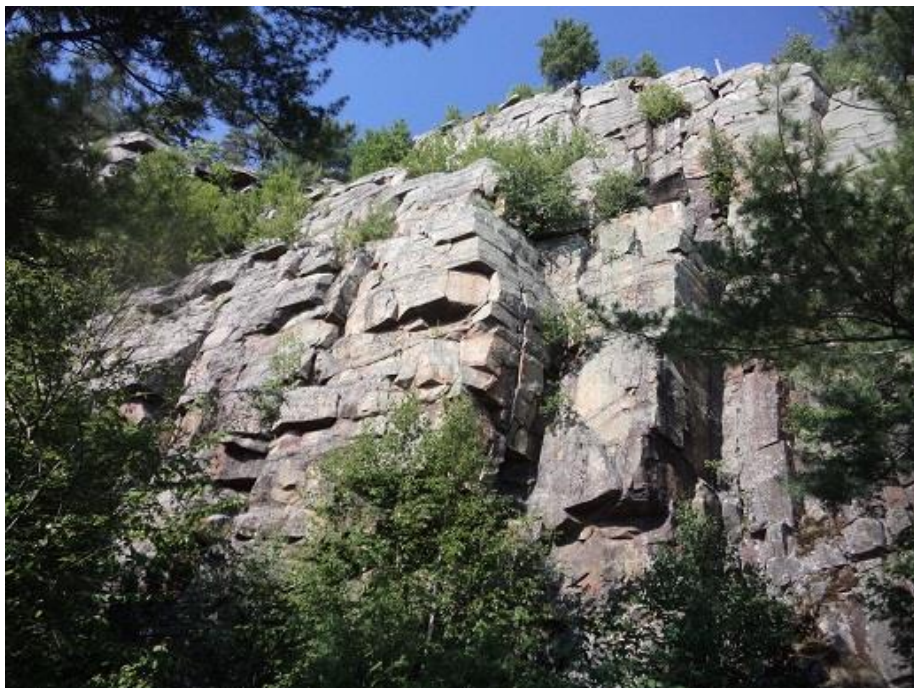
Starts in the same corner as *CrackKing*. The route climbs the main corner/crack. Proper.

- Pitch 1, 5.7, 21 m. Start up some easier angled broken rock and pull up onto a small ledge at the base of the corner (no decent pro at the start). Climb up the corner past a small sapling, then continue up the left-trending corner past another, bigger, more annoying tree to a ledge with a couple of big blocks and birch sapling.

- Pitch 2, 5.8, 14 m. Climb the crack above the ledge straight to the top. Big tree for belay/



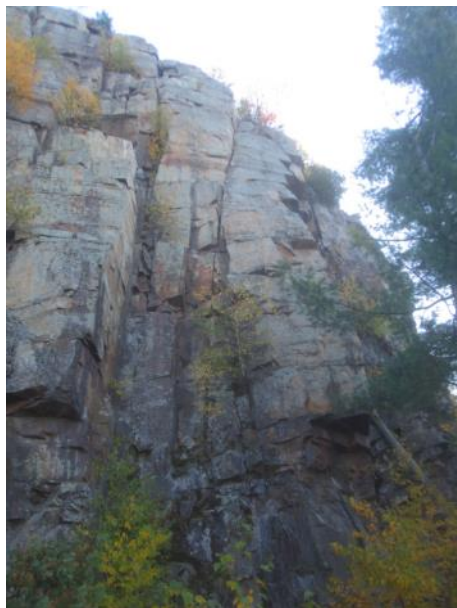
Left: Christian Theoret on *No Work, All Play*.



Above: The left end of the South Cliff. Below left: Laura Duncan on *No Guts, No Glory*. Below right: Laura Duncan on the 2nd pitch of *CrackKing*. Photo by Brent Elliot.



rappel (it's a 35 m rappel to the ground from this tree).



Below left: A view of the slight alcove with *Cloven Hoof* and *Leaky Brake Line*. Below right: Mike Grainger on *Cloven Hoof*, August 23, 2015.

**Drag Queen, 5.8, 40 m** (FRA Laura Duncan, Danylo Darewych, Anna Grant, October 8, 2016).

Start as for *No Guts, No Glory* and follow it to the big ledge. From the ledge follow a leftward leading ramp to its end (past some trees), start up a crack, ignore the obvious crack top-out above and traverse right and up to top out

**Cloven Hoof, 5.7, 30 m** (FRA Mike Grainger and Danylo Darewych, August 23, 2015).

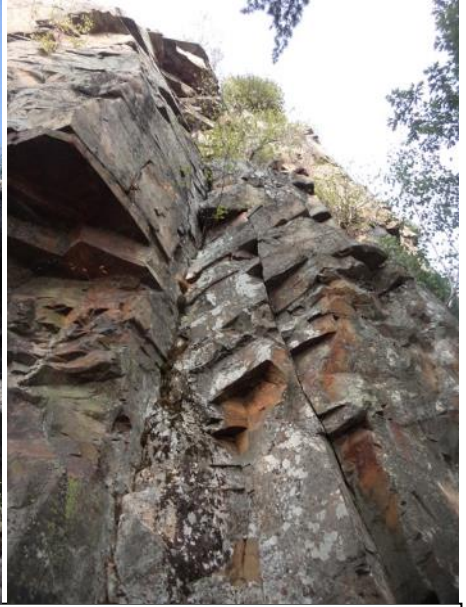
Located 75 m right of *T-Bone*, past the treed gully in a bit of an alcove with a couple of prominent crack lines. Look for a clean, angling crack in a right-facing wall next to a corner. Climb the crack/corner to its end at the top of a small pillar and step left onto a ledge at the top of the pillar. Continue up the left crack above to the top.

**Leaky Brake Line, 5.8/5.9, 25 m** (FRA Randy Kielbasiewicz and Danylo Darewych\*, June 29, 2015).

Located 4 m, right of *Cloven Hoof* on the right side of the alcove. Climb the right hand corner/crack line. Start on small moss-covered ledges and climb past a clump of small birches to vertical ground above and finish up the right-ward arching crack.

**Saturday Stroll, 5.5/5.6, 30 m** (FRA Danylo Darewych & Mike Grainger, August 22, 2015).

Located 10 m right of *Leaky Break Line*. Climb the groove/crack/corner that heads up and slightly right. Mostly 5.4, except for two harder mantles.



Above left: Randy Kielbasiewicz chucking some moss off the start of *LBL*, June 29, 2015.  
 Right: The base of *Saturday Stroll*. Below: Mike Grainger heading up *Chipotle*, July 18, 2014, with the line of *Serrano* also visible in the corner to the right.



\* I didn't make a clean ascent. I pulled on a piece at the crux while seconding. DD

**Chipotle, 5.7 25 m** (FRA Mike Grainger & Danylo Darewych, July 18, 2014).

Located 100 m right of *T-Bone*, or 10 m right of *Saturday Stroll*, past a bit of an arête. Look for a left facing corner with big roofs above and ferns at the base. Climb the groove heading up the middle of the face to the left of the corner, over two small roofs, then step left around the corner to a ledge with cedars and continue to the top through trees.

The route has “a lot of big, committing moves on big holds that are usually well protected. The inspiration for the route name came from the Chipotle Rib potato chips I had bought at Shoppers Drug Mart earlier in the day. Like the climb, mildly spicy and very satisfying!” *MG*

**Serrano, 5.7, 30 m** (FRA Danylo Darewych & Mike Grainger, August 23, 2015).

Chipotle’s hotter, skinnier sister. Climb the thin corner to the right of *Chipotle*, going over one small roof and dodging left of the bigger ones higher up to exit left onto the cedar ledge of *Chipotle*. One pin low down in the thin crack. Frequently wet.



Danylo Darewych on the first pitch of the *Great Escape*, May 21, 2016. Photo by Mike Grainger.

**Great Escape, 5.6/5.7, 45 m** (Danylo Darewych, Mike Grainger, May 21, 2016).

Located 7 m right of *Serrano* around the corner.

- Pitch 1, 5.6, 15 m. Start up a crack in the middle of the small face. Climb up to a ledge 7 m up and step right into the left-facing corner. Climb the corner (suspect gear behind small blocks) to another ledge 8 m higher up. Belay on gear.
- Pitch 2, 5.0, 15 m. Traverse right for 15 m to a big tree (We tried to continue straight up through the overhangs above the first belay, but were stymied by some loose-looking blocks).
- Pitch 3, 5.7, 15 m. Climb up and left to the base of a right-facing corner system (no pro for the first 6 m) and then up the corner to the top. Quite wet and dirty when we did it. Belay off tree.

*Descent:* Walk left 20 m along the top of the cliff to the rappel slings above *Chipotle*.

## Schoolroom Area

The Schoolroom Area is located about 75 m right of the Chipotle/Serrano Face at the far right end of the South Cliff. To get there from the Chipotle/Serrano Face, head right into the trees, staying close to the cliff base as it angles upward, past a face of darker, more broken rock (no recorded routes yet), until you arrive at a wide ledge/bench system below an area of clean rock with several corner/crack systems. There is a prominent right-facing corner of clean, tan-coloured rock capped by roofs at the left end of the Schoolroom Area. The right side of the Schoolroom Area consists of a several lower-angled aretes/ramps and corners of greyer rock. You can walk along the bench at the base of the face fairly easily, although you have to do 2 moves of hands-on scrambling at the narrowest part at the base of an arête near a tree. There is a short, 10 m cliff band below the right side of the ledge system.

Once you know where it is, it is faster to approach the Schoolroom Area from the south, starting from the parking lot behind the Civic Centre.

*Descent:* There is a two-bolt rappel station, the Brain Bucket Rappel, on the left end of the ledge above the prominent corner of orange rock. A single rope rap will get you down to the ground (a 60 m definitely; a 50 m should, but I don't know for sure; a shortened gym rope won't – keep your helmet on).

Routes are described from left to right.



Left: *Recess*, Oct. 8, 2012. Right: Randy Kielbasiewicz on *Newton Was Right*, Nov. 2, 2015.

**Recess, 5.4, 13 m** (FA Danylo Darewych, Mike Granger, Randy Kielbasiewicz November 2, 2015).

Located left of the Schoolroom Area proper. Head back down the slope from the ledge and left of the clean tan-coloured corner to a shorter right-facing section of cliff. There is a short, wide semi-chimney/recess at the right end of the wall with a massive tree on top. Start either several metres down and left of the chimney proper (slightly harder) or simply from the base of the chimney (easier). Large protection needed (two #4 Camalots and one #5). Calculated stupidity on a wet day.

**Newton Was Right, 5.10c, 22 m, trad gear + 3 bolts.** (FA Randy Kielbasiewicz, Jon Gullett, May 21, 2016). Located just left of the left end of the left wall of the



Left: Laura Duncan on *Something Red*, October 8, 2016.

Right: Dan Bandrowski below *The New Math*, October 18, 2015.

prominent tan-coloured corner at a small pinnacle of big stacked blocks. Climb the crack on the right side of the pinnacle to a small ledge at it's top, step up and left around the corner above (bolt), then continue up the thin discontinuous seam (2nd bolt) and small ledges above. Doubles in small cams.

**Explained Variance, 5.10b, 20 m** (FA Stefan Kloppenborg, October 8, 2016; belayed by Danielle Johnson over multiple days).

The beautiful right-facing corner of tan-coloured rock. Start by climbing the corner (thin gear), then traverse out left across the face before reaching the roofs, following a line of bolts towards the left arête and up to the top. Anchor bolts.

**The New Math, 5.7+, 20 m** (FRA Danylo Darewych, Dan Bandrowski, Graeme Taylor, Randy Kielbasiewicz, October 18, 2015).

Start at the first crack system 10 m right of the prominent clean right-facing corner, below a pine on a ledge 15 m up. Step into the initial crack from a ledge on the left. Continue up the crack and the open book above to the ledge with the pine tree, past that and up a final short vertical section on the right. Tree belay from a solid tree set 7 m back from the cliff edge.

**Primer, 5.5, 25 m** (FRA Mike Grainger, Randy Kielbasiewicz, Danylo Darewych, November 2, 2015).

Located 5 m right of the *New Math*. Start at a pair of cracks, follow the line of weakness to the top. Straightforward climbing with some moments of consideration. Protects well. Stay alert for loose blocks which are easily avoided. Convenient and solid tree belay at top.



Left: Graeme Taylor heading up *Extra Help*. Right: Dan Bandrowski on *Practise What You Preach*, October 18, 2015.

**Extra Help or Practice Makes Perfect, 5.9 A0 (?), 20 m** (FRA Graeme Taylor, Randy Kielbasiewicz, October 18, 2015).

Climb up the continuous, clean corner system located just above the narrow part of the Schoolroom Bench. One pin where the crack pinches down (Graeme pulled on, then stepped on this pin while leading – that’s the A0).

**Practise What You Preach, 5.4, 20 m** (FRA Dan Bandrowski, Danylo Darewych, October 18, 2015).

Located at the far right end of the Schoolroom bench where it ends at a wide corner system (you can actually go further right but the cliff becomes very broken and ledgy above here). Climb the wide corner system, heading left of the large pine tree  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way up and onto the face to the left to top out.

# Rooster Rock, Quirke Lake

By Danylo Darewych, Dave Marrone, Marco Foladore, John Cotgrave

Rooster Rock is an impressive cliff (75m tall) rising from Quirke Lake north of Elliot Lake. It's one of the few cliffs in the Southern Ontario/Near North area where you can find longer and multi-pitch routes (the others being Bon Echo, Devil Rock, Eyeball). There are currently a dozen routes on the cliff, but there is potential for many more. It was discovered for climbing purposes by Marco Foladore from Sudbury who spotted it from the air during his day job on Emergency Response helicopters.



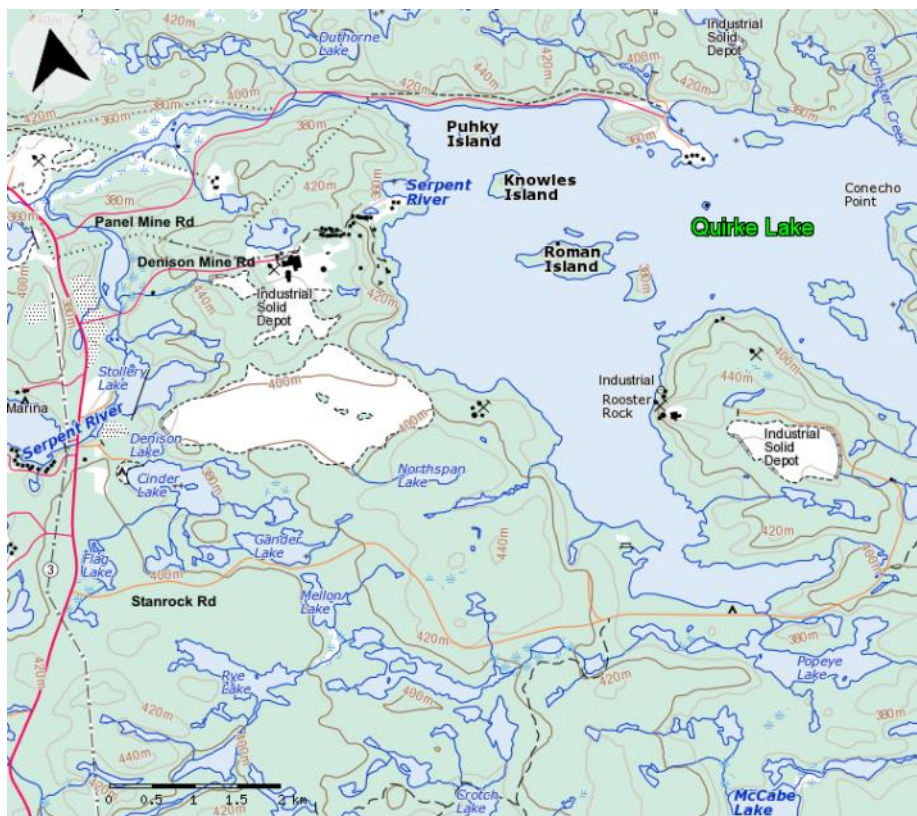
The west face of the impressive Rooster Rock in winter (March 9, 2011).

## Directions

From Elliot Lake head north on Highway 108 for 10 km to Stanrock Rd. Turn east on Stanrock Road. At about the 8km mark you might be able to see the cliff from the road across one of the bays of Quirke Lake. Keep going on Stanrock Road all the way around the bay until you come to a closed gate for the now abandoned Stanrock Uranium Mine (total distance about 12 km). Park here.

There are signs on the gate that warn that the area is the private property of Denison Mines and not to remove any material because the site may contain low grade radioactive material. There didn't use to be any no "No Trespassing" signs, only "use at your own risk" notices. However, in 2018 "No Trespassing" signs were





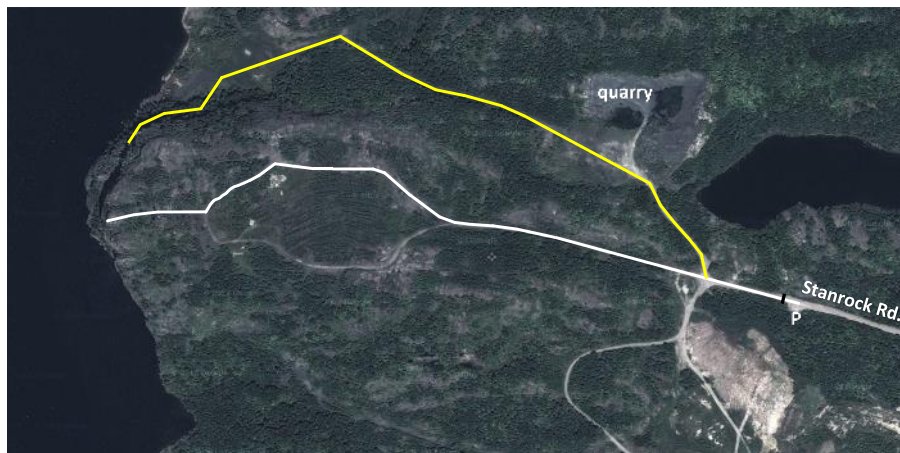
added to the gate, along with a warning letter posted on the notice board. The “use at your own risk” sign is still there, so the message provided by the various signs is confusing. In the past, we have bumped into locals out for a hike to the top of the cliff on many occasions. One of the people we met was an employee of Denison Environmental Services, a local company that specializes in cleaning up and de-commissioning old mine sites. Apparently they monitor and test the site regularly, including the water in Quirke Lake, and it’s clean.\* Nonetheless, I would not want to camp anywhere near the tailings ponds they have in the area.

You can get to the base of the cliff either by rappelling from the top or by walking down around the northern side of Rooster Rock.

### Clifftop Approach.

Go around the gate and follow the road straight ahead. About 75 m after the gate you will come to a fork/intersection in the dirt road – keep going straight ahead. Some 350 m further along you will come to another fork where the trail actually forms a big loop – go straight ahead (on the right hand branch of the loop). Keep going to approximately the far point of the loop (the communication antenna will be almost directly behind you) where a fainter side path veers away from the main path towards the cliff edge across some black gravel. You should come out on a

\*For more information on radiation levels check out this newsletter put out by Denison Environmental services: <http://www.denisonenvironmental.com/pdf/Rio-DES%202012%20Newsletter.pdf>



rocky point with a small juniper bush on it very close to the cliff edge - Juniper Bush Point (GPS coordinates N46 28.336 W82 33.785).

**Rappelling:** There are currently two rappel points to get to the bottom of the cliff.

*Rappel Point #1:* From Juniper Bush Point head over to the next rocky point over to skier's right - Boulder Point (easily identifiable by a small round boulder sitting on top). Walk below the boulder on slab/grass towards a line of cedar trees and look for webbing and rap rings on the last tree in the line, on a ledge about 4m below the top of the cliff. The rap station is a bit hard to spot. The rap is located where an ice flow forms in winter – look for some cleaner black-streaked rock. Your rope will invariably land in a puddle when you toss it. It's two raps – the first is shorter (20 m) and not so vertical to a large cedar. The second is almost a full 30m from the cedar to the base of the cliff.

*Rappel Point #2:* This is a longer, more involved rappel. Walk down the slope/gully immediately to skier's left of Juniper Bush Point. There is a clearly visible pair of rap bolts there on the wall below Juniper Bush Point. Make a short rappel down to Bellyful Ledge - the long, wide upper ledge where *Low Grade Radiation*, *Critical Mass*, *U-235* and the second pitch of *Lichen It Up* all top out. You will be rappelling directly over the short exit route *Enriched Uranium*. There are two bolts at the base of *Enriched Uranium*,



Danylo at the top of rappel route #1. Photo by E. Dokic.

but pass by these and continue rappelling across Bellyful Ledge, angling slightly to climber's right, to reach the rappel station on the cliff face at the top of *U-235*. From this station it's a 50 m rappel to the ground or one single rope rappel to another rap station on a ledge midway down *U-235*, from where it's another single rope rappel to the ground. That's a total of 3 single rope rappels from the top. You can also do one full length 70 m rappel from the cliff top, if you have two 70 m ropes.



On Bellyful Ledge. Photo from [lureofthenorth.com](http://lureofthenorth.com)

You can also scramble/climb down to Bellyful Ledge from several places along the cliff top (use your judgement; be careful). Once you're on the ledge, it is safest to use the bolts set 5 m back from the top of *Critical Mass* to start a rappel. There is also another set of rap bolts on the face at the top of *Critical Mass*, but to clip these from Bellyful Ledge you have to step carefully down onto a chockstone.

These various rappel bolts were installed both by Marco Foladore and David Marrone. Thank them if you see them.

**Walking Descent Route.** You can also walk down and around to the base of the cliff. This takes longer, but gives you a chance to scope out much off the cliff along the way. 75 m after crossing the Denison Mine gate you'll come to a fork/intersection in the dirt road. Take the right-hand fork all the way downhill past a small quarry to where the road ends in a grassy field. The capped mineshaft of Stanrock #2 is located in the middle of this field. Head towards the cliff (on your left) across the top of a slope of crushed rock. Don't drop down to the lake too much, as this puts you on a lower ledge system that ends under an overhang at the lake's edge. Staying higher puts you on big, wide, treed ledge system – the Dead Bird Ledge – that winds around the cliff and eventually slopes down to the water's edge in the centre of the cliff (the rest of the cliff base would have to be accessed by boat). The walking isn't that bushwacky, as long as you walk right along the cliff face. The whole approach takes between 30-40 minutes once you know where you are going.

**A Note on Peregrine Falcons.** I named the wide ledge system that traverses the cliff Dead Bird Ledge because the first time we visited Rooster Rock Mike Grainiger and I found lots of dead bird corpses (usually just the wings) littering the approach ledge - victims of the cliff's peregrine falcons. You will likely hear the peregrines screeching away as you climb at Rooster Rock, but they generally don't bother climbers. However, please be aware that the peregrine falcon incubating/nesting/rearing season can run from April to the end of July/early August and that it's a good idea to stay far away from their nest, should it be in the vicinity of a climb. *DD*

## North Face of Rooster Rock

The North Face of Rooster Rock is the section of cliff that rises above the grassy field where the capped mineshaft of Stanrock #2 is located. It is generally easier-angled and slabbie than the West Face routes, but it does have several roofs and interesting crack lines. Two of these crack lines has been climbed.

To get to the North Face it is easiest to simply take the descent trail that goes past the quarry and ends at the grassy field where the capped mineshaft of Stanrock #2 is located. The walk takes 15 minutes.



Above: The North Face of Rooster Rock with the lines of *Deadline* (left) and *Y-Not* (right) marked out. Sept. 2, 2011.

### **Deadline, 5.6, 27 m** (Danylo Darewych, Mike Grainger, August 3, 2017)

Best approached from a short scree field on the left side of the wall. Walk up the scree field and then traverse right through the trees for about 10m. Starts about 20 m left of *Y Not?* (see below) on the same treed ledge system at a short, 3 m, right-facing corner, capped with a roof and cedar tree.

Climb the short initial corner, step left onto the face, head up left of the cedar tree and then right 5 m along a grassy ledge to a short, left facing corner, Stem and mantle out of the corner onto another ledge and up a final left-facing corner. Walk right and up the mossy slope above to trees for belay. Rappel from the *Y-Not?* anchor 6 m to the right.

Gear: Lots of small nuts and cams, and long slings to prevent rope drag. The only decent pro for the final corner was a purple Metolius TCU (#0).



Left: Y-Not?, just left of centre. Right: A butt-shot of Danylo Darewych on the lower thin crack of Y-Not?. Photos by Mike Grainger, July 19, 2014.

**Y Not?, 5.9+, 23 m.** (FA Danylo Darewych and Mike Grainger, July 19, 2014).\*

Look for a Y-shaped crack, the leftmost one of a group of three towards the right side of the face. This is the line. Walk up a very small talus field on the right and traverse left along a treed ledge to the base of the route at a small right-facing corner. Climb up the crack/corner which heads slightly leftwards, to a ledge. The crack (and pro) gets very thin before the ledge. The face above the ledge is steep and composed of very solid conglomerate rock with stones and pebbles for feet. Climb up to a small pod from where two cracks diverge slightly, forming the Y-shape. Jam and stem up the two cracks to easier-angled, moss covered slab above. Belay from a pine tree (blue webbing with two rap rings).

Gear: Nuts and a wide assortment of cams - everything from a #0 Mastercam to a #4 Camalot.

\* Neither I nor Mike climbed the route cleanly. We tried again, and failed again, in 2017. The grade might be closer to 5.10b. Climb it and let us know.

## Main Wall Route Descriptions

Routes are described from left to right (north to south). The first climbs, from *The Cryptkeeper* to *Heap of Humble Pie*, are all climber's left of the first rappel line.

**The Cryptkeeper, 5.9, 35 m.** (John Cotgrave, Max Pinion, Scott Ross, Sept. 22, 2013).

Located about 120 m left (north) of rappel line #1, past the point where the cliff line turns and faces north. Look for a left facing corner with a big cave/opening 15 m up in the right wall of the corner. Climb the left facing corner to the cave, and then the amazing handcrack above to easier ground. This climb will need some traffic to clean the moss. Belay at a tree on a big ledge. Scramble up another 10 m to the climber's left to exit. *JC*

**Contemplation, 5.10c, 35 m** (Marco Foladore, Laura Schmidt, July 2017).

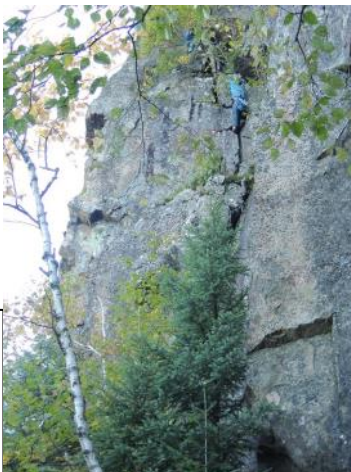
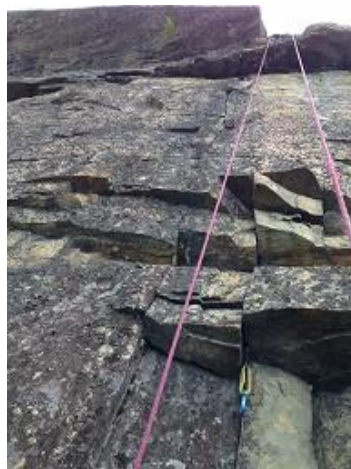
Located between *Cryptkeeper* and *Plumber's Crack* (look for a rock with the name scratched on it). Follow the crack. Two cruxes: one down low not too far off of the ground and the second at the roof. After that the climbing eases off to 5.6. Anchors. *MF*

**Plumber's Crack, 5.10+, 60 m** (John Cotgrave, Max Pinion, Scott Ross, Sept. 22, 2013).

Located about 100 m north of the first rap line.

- Pitch 1, 5.10+, 25 m: Ascends the right facing dihedral to a short, wide roof and off-width corner to a ledge, escaping out left to avoid blocks (cleaned later), followed by a wide 5" crack, to a birch tree and a good belay ledge above.
- Pitch 2, 5.8, 35 m: The next pitch (not visible from ground as it hides behind the birch) starts with a right facing corner, to a clean hand crack

Top: The start of *The Cryptkeeper*. The cave is just barely visible above, the upper handcrack isn't. Photo by Scott Ross. Middle: The start of *Contemplation*. Photo by Marco Foladore. Bottom: John Cotgrave on *Plumber's Crack*. Photo by Scott Ross.





1) Cryptkeeper, 5.9    2) Plumber's Crack, 5.10+    3) Rebirth, 5.8    4) Huffing and Puffing, 5.8    5) Falcon's Folly, 5.7  
 6) Dry Ice (rap Route #1), 5.5    7) Lichen It Up, 5.7    7a) Lichen It Up Variation, 5.5    8) Enriched Uranium, 5.10c  
 9) U-235, 5.10a    10) Critical Mass, 5.10b    11) Seagull Alley, 5.8    12) Air Boreal, 5.10+  
 Aerial photo by Marco Foladore.

and slabs above. Either belay at the first ledge, or continue up the mossy slabs to twin huge pine trees. *JC*

**Rebirth, 5.8, 28 m.** (Top rope ascent, Marco Foladore, Danylo Darewych, October 6, 2012; FFA Dave Marrone, Kielyn Marrone, Mat Masin, May 18, 2013 ).

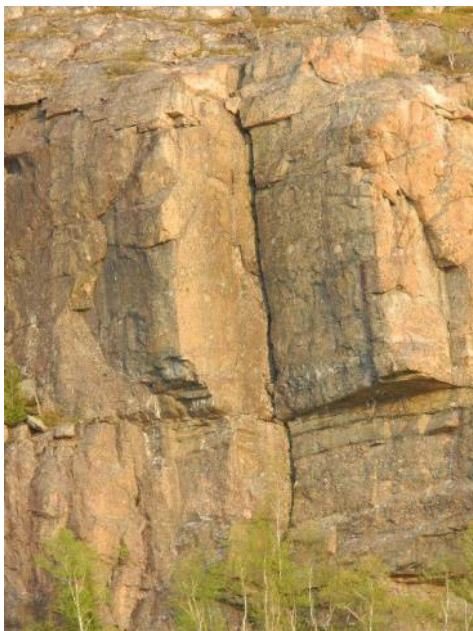
Located about 70 m north of the rappel line. The route starts below a big, slightly-wider-than-body crack in a dihedral above.

- Pitch 1, 15m, 5.8/5.9: Climb up a big crack past a small birch tree. If the crack below the tree is wet, then a harder (5.9) alternate start is possible on the left, but pro is very thin (brassies). Past the birch the crack gets progressively wider. At the top of the crack, pull awkwardly up onto some blocks to your left and step into the base of the big, slightly-wider-than-body crack – the “birth canal” – above. There is a 2 bolt anchor at the top of pitch one, just outside the “birth canal”.

- Pitch 2, 5.7, 14 m: Squirm and chimney your way strenuously up and out of the “birth canal” - a deep slot that is barely wider than body width at the bottom. No protection if you squirm your way up the middle of the slot. Decent protection at the very back, where the slot is slightly wider. Anchor bolts at the top.

**The Big O, 5.9, 5m** (Dave Marrone, Kielyn Marrone, Mat Masin, May 18, 2013). This is the left variation start to the initial crack leading up to the *Huffing Roof*. It's an awkward, strenuous offwidth – not as nice as the original start, but a worthwhile alternative. *DM*

**Huffing Roof 5.10a, 16 m** (FA Marco Foladore, Sept. 2011; FFA Dave Marrone, Oct. 1, 2011). Located



Above: Upper part of *Rebirth* as viewed from lake. Photo by Kielyn Marrone.

Below: View of *Rebirth* from the base of the route.





*Huffing Roof*. Photo from Lureofthenorth.com.



*Huffing* comes up from under the roof on the bottom left. *Puffing* ascends the big blocks in the wide chimney feature. *Falcon's Folly* goes behind the buttress on the right side of the photo (the one split by a big crack). Photo by Kielyn Marrone.

about 45 m north of the first rappel line. Look for a roof above with a wide crack leading up to it. Climb up the crack, traverse out right below the roof, turn the corner and climb up to a belay on a ledge. *MF*

**Puffing, 5.8/5.9, 20 m** (FA Dave and Kielyn Marrone, Oct. 16 2011).

From the *Huffing* belay continue up a wide crack/slot to the top of a pillar, then up another corner with an off-width slot on the left. Hard to protect – needs very big pro.

**Falcon's Folly, 5.7, 35 m** (FA Marco Foladore and Iain Miller).

Located about 35 m north (climber's left) of the rappel line or 10 m right of *Huffing Roof*. The letters *FF* have been scratched into the rock at the base.

- Pitch 1, 5.7, 15 m? The first pitch goes pretty straight up onto a ledge shared with *Huffing and Puffing*. An alternate start begins 3 m to the left and diagonals up to the right.
- Pitch 2, 5.5, 20 m? Climb past a semi-bare tree through a giant slot that takes you over a bulge onto a ramp. From the ramp up it gets pretty easy. *MF*

**Heap of Humble Pie, 5.9, 35 m** (Hudson Mayhew, Danylo Darewych, Marco Foladore, May 25, 2016).

Start half way between *Falcon's Folly* and the rap line. Look for twin vertical cracks leading up to a ledge.

Climb your way up the cracks on some slippery jams and a nice lay back with good pro to the ledge. Look up to a slightly overhanging wide-looking crack straight ahead. Pull your way up the crack with some cool jams and holds. At the top of the wide section traverse slightly right over the bulge (or go straight up if you want to make it hard on yourself). Continue up to the left for a belay off a tree. *HM*

**Rappel Line #1.** Is located here in the order of routes.

**Dry Ice, 5.5, 50 m** (FA Danylo



Above: The 2nd pitch of *Falcon's Folly*. Below: Hudson Mayhew leading *Heap of Humble Pie*, May 25, 2016. Photos by Marco Foladore.



Darewych, Erik Dokic, October 7, 2012).

Located right underneath the rappel route.

- Pitch 1, 5.5, 30 m: From the base of the rap route head up and slightly right following the path of least resistance, then straight up, over a short dead vertical section of 3-4 m (characterized by a crack in broken-looking rock), followed by easier terrain to a small platform with two cedars and a stunted birch (possible belay).

From the small platform make an airy traverse right and up to a ledge, then up smooth step-like rock to a belay at the tree that serves as the midway rap anchor.

- Pitch 2, 5.5 20 m: Head up in any direction you like, initially over a short steep step, then over easy angled tree and grass-covered slab to a final steep crack (5.5), just below the top rappel tree (the final steep crack can be easily by-passed on the right). This route would probably be harder for someone shorter. *DD*

**1 Bro Wonder, 5.7 (or V0), 8 m.** (FA David Marrone, Mat Masin, Aug. 17, 2013).

A low-angle slab route on one of the boulders near the base of the original rappel line. Named for the gear placed on it. *DM*

**Lichen It Up, 5.7, 50 m.** (FA Marco Foladore, Andy Hunt, Chris Lill, 2011).



Located 50 m south (climber's right) from the rappel base. Look for a corner as the ledge system starts to slope downhill.

- Pitch 1, 5.6, 13 m. Climb up the corner to a ledge. Tree belay (on the left).
- Pitch 2, 5.7, 20 m. Climb the beautiful offwidth to a big wide, treed ledge system (the left end of *Bellyful Ledge*).
- Pitch 3, 5.5, 15 m. Above the ledge there is a final short cliff band. Walk 15-20 m right along *Bellyful Ledge* and climb up a bit of a corner. MF

**Lichen It Up, Pitch 2 Variation, 5.5, 20 m** (FA Danylo Darewych, Marco Foladore, Oct. 10, 2011).

From the first belay stance of *Lichen It Up* traverse up and rightwards around a corner, then step up and back left slightly, and follow a crack past a tree to the big ledge system. Great exposure. Finish up the third pitch of *Lichen It Up*, or chose from any number of alternative exits up the short final wall. DD



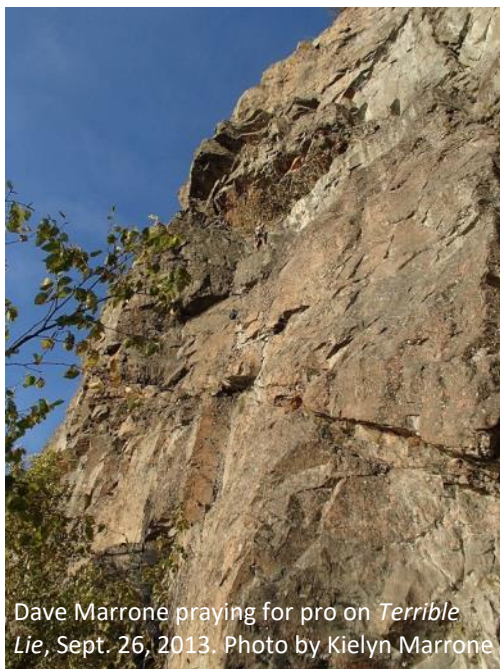
Chris Lill on pitch 2 of *Lichen It Up*.  
Photo by Marco Foladore.

**Terrible Lie, 5.8, 20 m** (FA Dave Marrone, Sept. 26, 2013).

This route starts ~ 10 m left of U-235, on a nice grassy area under the shade of a birch. Look for a nice right-facing corner to a roof.

Climb the initial crack and traverse left under the small roof to a ledge (bolt). Continue up a shallow, low-angled, right-leaning corner to another ledge (small micro-nut placement). Traverse left on the second ledge and up another shallow, low-angled, right-leaning corner on deteriorating rock (bolt at the top of this corner). The final 10' up the steep crack to the roof above has terrible rock, so traverse right on easier ground over some ledges (also bad, blocky rock) to the roof (2 bolts). DM

Dave still intends to go finish this



Dave Marrone praying for pro on *Terrible Lie*, Sept. 26, 2013. Photo by Kielyn Marrone

route properly up the steep crack to the roof and beyond.

The next 6 climbs all end at or start at the right end of *Bellyful Ledge*, a wide, somewhat treed, rubble-strewn ledge that runs about 12-15 metres below the cliff top. It also happens to be full of blueberries. You can reach *Bellyful Ledge* from the top by scrambling down to it at various points through trees or by rappelling in from rappel point #2, as described earlier.

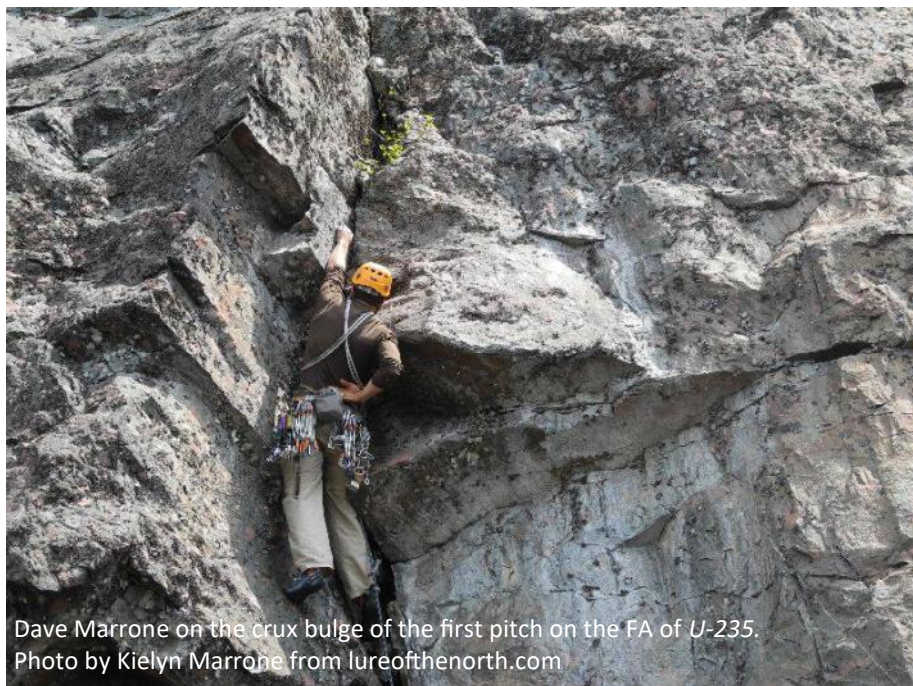
**Give Thanks for Cheap Labor, 5.7, 35 m** (FA Andrew Moores, Jeff Girard, Oct. 12, 2013).

Start 15 m north (climber's left) of the base of rappel line #2.

- Pitch 1, 5.7, 15 m. Climb up right crack to belay ledge.
- Pitch 2, 5.7, 25 m. Climb left facing corner to off-width crack, which turns to hands. Finish left on low angle rock at cedar tree.



Andrew Moores finishing pitch 1 of *Give Thanks for Cheap Labour*. Photo by Jeff Girard.



Dave Marrone on the crux bulge of the first pitch on the FA of *U-235*. Photo by Kielyn Marrone from [lureofthenorth.com](http://lureofthenorth.com)



Kim Jean seconding on an attempt on *U-235* at Quirke Lake with Stefan Kloppenborg belaying from above (June 30, 2012). *Critical Mass* heads up the right hand crack.

Note: There is potential for two alternate finishes either side of the original second pitch. The left follows a narrow dihedral to a crack (this finish looks slightly more difficult, but very promising with some cleaning). The right continues up a right trending ramp to a blocky finish (not as attractive). *JG*

Toward the lower right (south) end of the *Dead Bird Ledge* you will come across two parallel cracks shooting straight up the wall about 10 m apart. This is also where rappel line #2 reaches the base of the cliff.

**U-235, 5.9-5.10b, 50 m** (FA Dave Marrone, Mat Masin, May 19, 2013).

The left crack.

- Pitch 1, 5.8, 20 m. Climb up the right facing corner, surmount a small roof/bulge and continue on slightly easier ground to a belay anchor (two rap bolts) on a ledge to your right.
- Pitch 2, 5.9 or 5.10b, 28 m. Follow the crack to the top. Very sustained climbing, with lots of challenging sections to be worked out.

*NB* There are two rap bolts at the top of the route (also 2 bolts in the rock about 12 m back from the top of the climb at the base of the route *Enriched Uranium*). *DM*

Beware of the small bushes of poison ivy beneath *U-235* and *Critical Mass*!!



Dave Marrone looking down *Critical Mass* from a good stance about 2/3 of the way up pitch 1.



Marco Foladore on *Enriched Uranium*.

**Critical Mass, 5.10b, 50 m** (FA Dave Marrone, Mat Masin, Aug. 17, 2013).

*Critical Mass* is the right hand crack. It is harder and more sustained than *U-235*.

- Pitch 1, 5.9, 30 m. Climb straight up the crack to a two-bolt belay anchor (not rap anchors). Standard rack to #4 BD cam for pitch 1.
- Pitch 2, 5.910b, 18 m. It's a shorter second pitch, but the final steep headwall is a bruiser. Triple BD #4 cams and 1 BD #5 cam needed for second pitch! (Or 2 BD #4s and 2 BD #5s). There is a bolted rap anchor on the face.

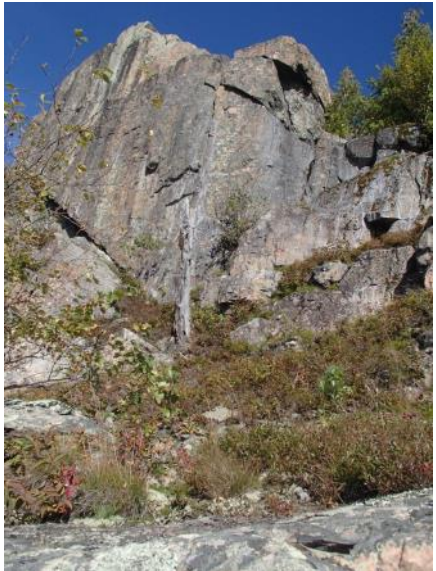
*NB* These bolts can be reached from above from *Bellyful Ledge* by stepping carefully down onto a chockstone. Otherwise there's a second set of belay bolts 5 m back on the wall above the route. *DM*

**Enriched Uranium, 5.10c, 7 m** (FA Dave Marrone, Marco Foladore; FFA Dave Marrone, Sept. 26, 2013).

This is a short extension to *U-235* that climbs from the ledge to the top of the cliff along a finger crack. The FA was done without the protection bolt (but it was added because the initial gear placements are really strenuous). Two bolt anchor at the bottom of the pitch and 2 bolt rap anchor at the top. *DM*

**Low Grade Radiation, 5.6, 55 m**  
(FA Pitch 1: Danylo Darewych, Mike Grainger, Sept 1, 2011; FA Whole route: Marco Foladore, Chris Lill, Danylo Darewych, Oct. 9, 2011).

The route starts almost where the rocky



*Enriched Uranium* (hiding behind the dead tree). Photo by Dave Marrone.

talus slope ends (in the centre off the cliff) on a vague buttress of what looks to be shattered rock.

- Pitch 1, 5.6, 20-25 m. Head up and right over the shattered-looking rock (actually quite solid; pro is sparse at first) to a short kind-of-chimney, up over that, then traverse right several metres on easier, but more shattered rock (beware of loose rock; poor pro) before topping out onto a vegetated ledge. Belay at the shrubby ledge (cam placements at feet).

- Pitch 2, 5.6, 25-30 m. From the belay on the grassy ledge head up and left over a short, steep rock step (pin; might be a 5.7 move) up to a tree in the corner system. Then continue up the corner/ramp system above, stepping out of the corner/crack onto the face/ramp when needed, following the line of least resistance. Watch out for loose rock near the top out. Two anchor bolts 5 m back (or scramble 10 m higher up to tree). DD

**Air Boreal, 5.10+, 12 m** (FA John Cotgrave, Max Pinion, Sept. 22, 2013).

From the top of *Low Grade Radiation* traverse 20 m right along *Bellyful Ledge* to a cedar tree perched over the overhanging wall above *Low Grade Radiation* and climb the crack above it. The crack trends left and has another small cedar growing out of the middle of it. It starts as a handcrack, narrows to fingers, then widens back to hands with some crimpers. JC

**Top Hat, 5.4, 15 m** (FA Danylo Darewych, Mike Grainger, Sept 2, 2011).

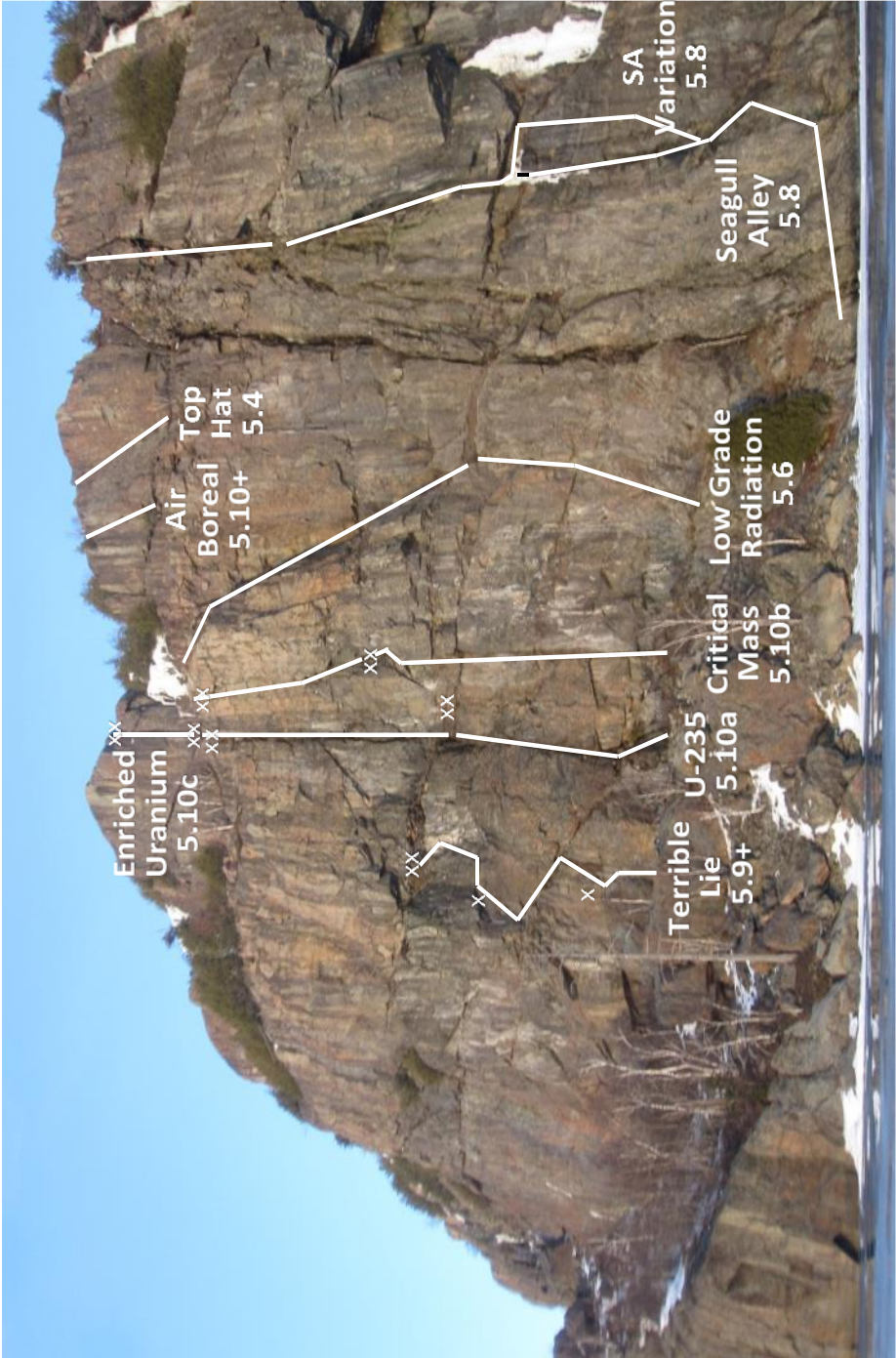
This is a short route at the top of the cliff. Walk skier's left (south) of Juniper Point along the top of the cliff for about 40 m. Look over the cliff edge for a small grassy ledge with a birch tree before you reach the big corner where the Grand Central Chimney splits the cliff. Rap down to the ledge and climb back up along a nice corner crack on an easy ramp. DD



Chris Lill in the kind-of-chimney on the first pitch of *Low-Grade Radiation*, Oct. 9, 2011.



*Air Boreal*. The diagonal crack on the upper face. Photo by Dave Marrone.



**Seagull Alley, 5.8, 60 m** (FA Marco Foladore, Dave Marrone, Jordan Cull, Oct. 2, 2011).

Traverse over the water to the tree. Small ledge at the tree to start climb. We didn't rope up for the traverse but very possible if desired.

- Pitch 1 - Climb obvious crack to cave. Good rock.
- Pitch 2 - Beautiful off-width to start the pitch on solid rock that leads to a ramp (lots of guano, really smelly to boot). Follow ramp to the roof, step to the left and up onto a small ledge. Tread lightly - lots of loose stuff. Poor gear for belay (one solid nut).
- Pitch 3 - Continue up the crack, easy climbing here but lots of loose blocks, not the greatest pro at first but easy climbing. Rock gets better towards half way up the pitch. Nice exposed mini roof towards the top. *MF*

**Seagull Alley, Pitch 1 Variation.** (FA Dave and Kielyn Marrone, Oct. 15 2011).

Instead of trending left to follow the corner/crack system, climb more directly to the first belay ledge, entering the belay ledge from the climber's right, rather than the climber's left as FA had. There is less pro in this variation, and climbing is slightly harder, but it is a really nice variant which is more exposed/direct/enjoyable. *DM*



Looking down the *Top Hat* corner at Mike Grainger on the ledge below, Sep. 2, 2011.



*Seagull Alley* (with pitch 1 variation on right). Photo and route drawing by Marco Foladore.

## **Boland Road Cliff**



The Boland Road Cliff is an underdeveloped cliff north of Elliot Lake. The cliff is 30-50 meters tall and about 225 m long. The cliff does not have many natural crack features and would require lots of bolting and likely much trundling to make it climbable. It is, however, located on Crown Land conveniently close to a well-travelled logging road, which should be a fair enough enticement for someone to start developing it.

### **Directions**

From Elliot Lake head north for 32 km on Highway 108/639 to the Boland River logging road (not signed), just north of the Mississagi Provincial Park Boundary. Turn right. Head 4.3 km down this wide and well-maintained road until you see a cliff through the tree on the left (north) side of the road. It's about 100 m from the road to the cliff through a sparse, planted forest.

### **Overview**

The main part of the cliff is a steep, 50 m high, exposed face above a talus slope in the middle of the crag, but there is also a shorter 20-30 m cliff band that extends to the left of the main face, up a slope behind trees and a shorter cliff band that extends to the right of the main face, also behind trees. A side logging road runs left

of the cliff and curves to the west.

## Camping

There is a flat open area for camping some 500--600 m down the side logging road. Camping is possible almost everywhere along the main logging road as the planted pine forest on either side of the logging road is quite open. Bring your own water, as there is not an easily accessible water source nearby. It's about 350 m from the road to the Boland River, but the going is slow as there is lots of deadfall closer to the river. The river bank is quite vegetated.

Frankly, we prefer camping another north of the Boland Road on the Little White River. Head 5 km north of the Boland Road along Highway 639 to its end, turn right onto Highway 546 for 300 m towards the bridge over the Little White River. There are short access roads leading down to the river on both sides of the bridge. The ones before the bridge are shorter and easier driving. You'll likely be sharing the sites with partying RV folk from Elliot Lake if you're there on the weekend, but it's good fun.

## Trail to Top

Head down the side logging road for 80 m to the start of a flagged trail on the right side of the road. Head uphill along the trail for another 80-100 m. The trail hits the cliff at the far left side of the shorter uphill section of the cliff. Right where the trail reaches the first broken rocks there will be a big pine. Turn left up the broken slopes 3-4 m past the big pine. A fairly easy walk up will bring you above the left side of the cliff. From here you can walk across the top of the cliff over mostly open terrain. It's approximately another 300 m distance across the top to the right side of the cliff. The walk from the parking on the side road to the top of the right side of the cliff is about 500 m or 15 minutes in total.

## Routes

Five routes have been climbed at the Boland Road Cliff thus far. There is room for many more. Routes are described from left to right.

The first three climbs are located on the shorter cliff band at the left end of the crag above a treed slope. The easiest way to reach this face is along the flagged trail from the side logging road and then right along the base for 40 m. Or scramble up the left margin



Above: *Aidfestish*. Photo by Brent Elliott.



Laura Duncan leading *Little Butterfly*. Photo by Brent Elliott.

of the talus slope to the base of the main face and then head uphill to the left along the base of the cliff. Hiking up in a straight line directly to this face is not possible because a short 8 m cliff band lies in the way at the base of the slope. Once you have gained the upper cliff band head along its base to its far right end and then scramble 10 m right along broken ledges to a small ledge between two corners to reach *Little Butterfly* and *Shedding*.

### **Aidfestish, 5.9, A1, 16 m**

(FA Brent Elliott, Laura Duncan, May 8, 2021).

*Aidfestish* climbs a crack located around to the left of *Little Butterfly*. Start on small holds (#5 brass offset) and climb to a small rest with a finger crack. Further above the crack opens to #6 BD Camalot size and becomes flaring with moss in the back. Climb flakes above this to an awkward roof formed by a large boulder. Climb the nice crack (#2-4 Camalot.) for a few moves, then climb down the back side of the boulder to get to the *Little Butterfly* anchors (awkward).

### **Little Butterfly, 5.10+, 14 m**

(FA Laura Duncan, Danylo Darewych, Brent Elliott, April 4, 2021; FFA Laura Duncan, Brent Elliott, May 8, 2021 ).

At the left end of the small edge lies a steep right-facing corner with a thin crack. Clamber over a small pine to the top of a block. Stem and layback up the corner to a two-bolt anchor on a ledge. The route does not go to the top of the crag. May be easier for those with smaller hands.

**Shedding, 5.7, 28 m, trad.**

(FA Brent Elliott, Laura Duncan, Danylo Darewych, April 4, 2021).

At the right end of the small ledge lies a less-steep corner with a wider crack. Climb up the corner and the face to its right, clip a bolt, step left into the wider upper crack, clip a second bolt and pull up onto a block. Climb to the top up easier steps. Tree anchor. Big cams (#5 and #6 Camalots) are helpful.



Brent Elliott leading *Shedding*.

**The Muffler, 5.9, 45 m, 2 pitches**

(Mark Hurst, Danylo Darewych, September 3, 2022).

- Pitch 1, 5.8, 25 m. Find a break in the rock and poison ivy to gain a low ledge and step left along it until you can head up and left over blocks to a prominent right-facing slab corner with a crack. Climb the corner crack onto a large ledge situated right of an off-width crack. Gear anchor.



Left line: *The Muffler*. Center: *Pinky and the Brawn*. Right: *Wallenda Way*.



Left: Danylo Darewych about stepping into the offwidth chimney on pitch 1 of *Pinky and the Brawn*. Photo by Mark Hurst.

Right: Looking down on Mike Grainger starting up the upper corner of pitch 2 of *Pinky and the Brawn*.

- Pitch 1, 5.9, 20 m. Head left up the off-width crack. Continue across slab to a steep corner. Head up the corner on small gear to the top and belay off a tree. Note: at time of writing there were 2 bolts near the top, although they were not used in the first ascent.

**Pinky and the Brawn, 5.9+, 45 m, 2 pitches (*PROJECT - Please don't climb*)**  
(Danylo Darewych, Mike Grainger, Mark Hurst, August 24, 2022).\*

The first pitch is bolted, while the second pitch, which follows a crack and a corner, is trad. In our opinion, it is fully worth hauling a rack up the first pitch to climb the trad pitch above. Make sure you have a plan for getting a large trad rack up the offwidth slot of the first pitch.

- Pitch 1, 5.9, 20 m. Start at the same spot as *Wallenda Way* (see below), do the same bellyflop onto the first ledge, then climb up and left to a prow, pull up over/ around it, then thrutch up an off-width chimney above (left shoulder in), stepping out left near its top and clambering out onto a ledge. Rappel anchors (they need to be moved higher and to the left).

- Pitch 2, 5.9+, 25 m. Continue up the ledge system to a right facing corner with an initially thin 6 m crack (with a bonus tree/bush halfway up), layback up it to a stance, then stem, jam and layback up the final 10 m corner crack above with strenuous and awkward exit moves. Rappel anchors.

*Gear:* Nuts, double rack of cams, three #1 and #2 Camalots (reserve a #1 for the exit), two #3 Camalots and one #4.

*Descent:* Rappel the route - two rappels with a 60 m rope.

\* We didn't climb the route cleanly. I hung leading the first pitch off-width chimney, Mike took while leading the second pitch. We would like to try again. DD

**Wallenda Way, 5.9, 35 m, 2 pitches, bolted**

(FA Mike Grainger, Danylo Darewych, July 30, 2021)

This route does not reach the top of the cliff. It is located on the right side of the main face. Look for a black chimney feature about 15-20 m up. Start about 8 left of the chimney feature on some ledges/blocks. Watch out for poison ivy.

- Pitch 1, 5.6, 15 m. From the bottom ledge belly-flop awkwardly onto the next short ledge, clip a bolt and then climb up to and traverse rightwards along the next higher, bigger ledge, then follow a rightward trending ramp to a belay at the base of the chimney (two bolt anchor).

- Pitch 2, 5.8, 20 m. Step out of the chimney onto the face to its right and climb up to and over some small grassy ledges to a bigger ledge with a big, detached pyramidal block. Climb the right side of this block and then step left to a final ledge. Traverse 5 m left to a two-bolt rappel anchor on the back wall. The wall above is overhanging and not within our abilities to c limb. You can exit on *Teddy Bear's Picnic* to the right (see below).

*Rappel:* A single rappel with a 70 m rope will get you back to the ground easily; a 60 m should work as well (but I don't remember if we did the rappel with a 60 m rope). The rappel runs through a juniper at the top, but the rope pulls cleanly.

*Historical Note:* There are the remnants of old, tattered tubular webbing on a block to the right of the base of the pyramidal block, likely used to rappel. We've no idea who put it there.

**Teddy Bear's Picnic, 5.10d, 10 m, 4 bolts (on exit corner).**

(Mark Hurst, Mike Grainger, Danylo Darewych, Aug. 24, 2022)\*



Above: Mike Grainger leading the first pitch of *Wallenda Way*.

Below: Mark Hurst leading the overhanging exit corner of *Teddy Bear's Picnic*.



64 \* Mark and Mike both climbed this route cleanly. I hung all over it. DD

This a direct continuation of the second pitch of *Wallenda Way* that leads to a short, steep, hard, exit pitch up the final headwall at the top of the cliff.

Start as for *Wallenda Way*. Climb up the first pitch of *Wallenda Way* and most of the second pitch until you are atop the big triangular block. Instead of traversing left to the top of *Wallenda Way*, head up and right to a rightward-diagonalling hand crack, climb this, then scramble up some big blocks to a belay below a corner. Rappel anchors.

Step right and up a sharp, thin fin onto a ledge, then climb the short, overhanging corner with a series of strenuous, boulder moves. Two-bolt anchor (no rap rings).

*Note:* The hanging sword of Damocles in the exit corner is actually solidly fixed in place. We tried to pry it off with a pry-bar, but couldn't,

### **Coda, 5.7, 54 m 3 pitches, trad.**

(FA Mike Grainger, Danylo Darewych, August 13, 2020)

Located at the shorter, right end of the main face of the Boland River Road Crag, approximately 30 m left of the spot where the trees reach the base of the cliff. Look for a broken section of cliff with ledges, junipers and trees. The route climbs a system of ledges from left to right. Start at a mostly vegetation-free area at the base of the cliff (we had to cut down a small batch of poison ivy there) at a small buttress with a birch tree some 15 m up.

- Pitch 1, 5.6, 20 m. Climb up the left side of the buttress to a bolt 4-5 m up, then continue up and right to a belay at the birch tree.

- Pitch 2, 5.7, 20 m. Traverse right along a ledge for 6 m (bolt), then up a crack



The right side of the Boland Road Cliff with the lines *Pinky and the Brawn* (dashed), *Wallenda Way* and *Coda* marked.

on the left side of a huge boulder to its top, make a stretchy, bolt-protected step across to ledge, head up and to the right up a final, short corner to a belay at a big pine.

- Pitch 3, 5.6, 13 m. Climb up the initially pine-needle-covered gully left of the belay pine tree, over a short, steep rock step to a belay at another pine. Or scramble out an easier-angled gully to the right.

*Descent:* It is probably possible to rappel straight to the ground with 2 60 m ropes or make two shorter raps with 1 60 m rope, but you'd probably have to trundle a lot of loose rock on the way down and likely end up rappelling into a patch of poison ivy. We descended by heading down and around the climber's right shoulder of the cliff, at one point veering to its back-side around a section of steep rock. This only took about 15 minutes.



Mike Grainger on the start of *Coda*.

## Vampire Hill



Vampire Hill is a taller, many-tiered cliff located past the Boland Road Cliff. Hike north for about 500 m down the side logging road that starts just left (west) of the Boland Road Cliff. At this point the road will fork. Head down the left fork for another 150 m to its end at an old gravel pit. Bushwack another 150 m west across a small stream to the high knob visible through the trees. This is Vampire Hill. The cliff does not seem particularly large at first, but becomes steadily more impressive as you hike left along its base. One route has been climbed here.

**Fang, 5.8/5.9, 20 m** (Brent Elliott, Laura Duncan, May 8, 2021).

*The Fang* is located about halfway along the cliff line. Look for a pillar with a crack running along its right side. Climb the crack and exit right at the top. The offwidth that leads straight up from the end of the main crack has not been climbed (or cleaned). Mostly hand and fist sized gear (to #4 BD) and maybe a couple finger sized cams at the top. Finish at a large spruce tree.



# Little Boland Road Cliff

The Little Boland River Cliff is, as the name suggests, a smaller, yet not insignificant, cliff located slightly further down the Boland Road. Approximately 400 m past the Boland River Cliff the road crosses a small creek. The cliff is located on the other side of the creek some 150 m south of the road.

The cliff is about 25 m tall and about 150 m wide, overhung in sections and off vertical in other spots. Few cracks, and a bit of loose looking stone, but otherwise similar looking to Boland proper.

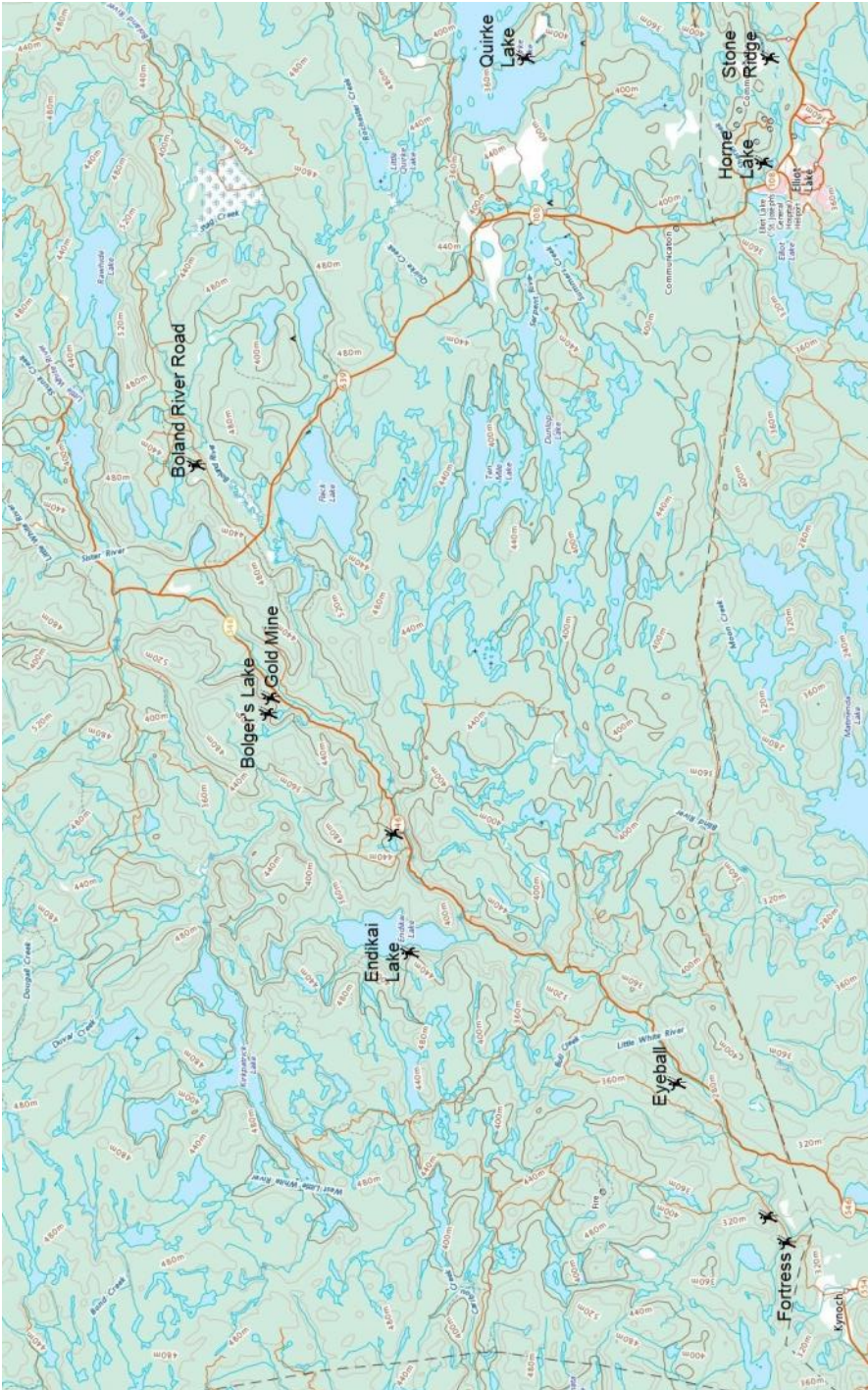


# LITTLE WHITE RIVER AREA

The views of the Little White River valley as one drives along Highway 546 are beautiful. Forested hills drop steeply down to the river on both sides of the river. Cliffs and rocky outcrops come into view around almost every bend in the river and road. More cliffs are hidden out of sight beyond ridges and hills along side logging roads. Many of these cliffs do not hold much potential for rock climbing, being too broken, shattered or easy-angled, but there some that warrant closer attention by rock climbers. Very few have been climbed.

The cliffs that have seen some exploration and/or have been climbed by rock climbers are described below. Others have been explored by ice climbers and are described in the *North of Huron Ice* guidebook.

| <b>Highway 546 Km Markings</b>                     | Distance from Intersection of Highways 554 and 546, Heading North West | Distance from Intersection of Highways 546 and 639, Heading South-East |
|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Location</b>                                    |                                                                        |                                                                        |
| Intersection of Highways 554 and 546               | 0.0 km                                                                 | 53.1 km                                                                |
| Bombsicle Cliff                                    | 2.0 km                                                                 | 51.1 km                                                                |
| Constance Lake, north-west corner (dump parking)   | 8.4 km                                                                 | 44.7 km                                                                |
| Campsite                                           | 17.7 km                                                                | 35.4 km                                                                |
| High bluff gravel pit                              | 17.8 km                                                                | 35.3 km                                                                |
| Eyeball River Crossing Point                       | 19.7 km                                                                | 33.4 km                                                                |
| Eyeball viewpoint from hill on road                | 21.1 km                                                                | 32.0 km                                                                |
| Lajoule Creek                                      | 21.2 km                                                                | 31.9 km                                                                |
| Snowmobile Trail Crossing Point                    | 23.6 km                                                                | 29.5 km                                                                |
| Revelation Crag (north of river)                   | 24.4 km                                                                | 28.7 km                                                                |
| Trapper's House (east of road)                     | 28.1 km                                                                | 25.0 km                                                                |
| Trapper's Cliff (east of road)                     | 28.3 km                                                                | 24.8 km                                                                |
| Endikai Lake Rd.                                   | 31.5 km                                                                | 21.6 km                                                                |
| Endikai Riverside Cliff (north of river)           | 32.1 km                                                                | 21.0 km                                                                |
| White River Lodge                                  | 32.7 km                                                                | 20.4 km                                                                |
| Midway Bridge (Scarbo Bridge)                      | 35.3 km                                                                | 17.8 km                                                                |
| Cottage Cliff/Randy's Knob                         | 37.1 km                                                                | 16.0 km                                                                |
| Side Logging Road (heads north to Stargazer Cliff) | 39.1 km                                                                | 14.0 km                                                                |
| Side road to riverside campground                  | 42.4 km                                                                | 10.7 km                                                                |
| Bush Nookie Boulders/ White Rock Bluff             | 43.3 km                                                                | 9.8 km                                                                 |
| Bolger's Lake Trailhead (north of road)            | 45.1 km                                                                | 8.0 km                                                                 |
| Pastry Crag (north of road)                        | 45.4 km                                                                | 7.7 km                                                                 |
| Gold Mine Boulders (north of road)                 | 45.7 km                                                                | 7.4 km                                                                 |
| Bridge                                             | 51.7 km                                                                | 1.4 km                                                                 |
| Intersection of Highways 546 and 639               | 53.1 km                                                                | 0.0 km                                                                 |



## **Dreamers/Bush Nookie/Gold Mine Boulders**

Dreamers/Bush Nookie/Gold Mine bouldering areas are located along the Little White River in the general vicinity of Bolger's Lake. Detailed descriptions can be found in **The Nooks Bouldering** guidebook by Brendan Baars and on Mountain-project.com and sudburyclimbing.com. Here are GPS coordinates:

Gold Mine: 46°37'07.2"N 82°53'13.1"W      46.618660, -82.886970

Bush Nookies Talus: 46°36'12.5"N 82°54'23.0"W      46.603460, -82.906390

## **Bolger's Lake Cliff**



Bolger's Lake is a small lake with an eye-catching cliffline above its eastern shore.

### **Directions**

Drive north out of Elliot Lake along Highway 108/639 for 38 km to its intersection with Highway 639. Turn left (south-west) on Highway 546 and drive for 8 km. There will be a small plowed out trailhead on the right (north) side of the road. Park here. Hike fairly steeply uphill along a good ATV/snowmobile trail for 550 m to Bolger's Lake. The cliff will be visible on the north-east shore of the lake from here. A fairly well-trodden trail heads to the east (right) along the southern shore of the lake. At a small rise it veers away from the shore and weaves its way up the right side shoulder of the cliff/hill on the east side of the lake to its very top. This part of the trail is less well travelled than the shoreline trail, but it is flagged the whole way (as of 2021). The views from the top are quite spectacular.

To reach the base of the cliff continue walking along the shore of the lake. You will have to veer away from the shoreline proper in a couple of places where it becomes very steep. Once you can see the cliffs above you, make your way uphill. The slope below the cliff is steeper and with more talus below the central part of

the cliff and easier-angled on the left. Expect to hike about 45 minutes to reach the base of the cliff.

## Overview

The Bolger's Lake cliff system is big. The overall vertical gain from the road to the top of the Bolger's Lake Hill is significant. There is 60 m of vertical gain from the road (at 300 m) to Bolger's Lake. From lake level (at 360 m) to the top of the Bolger's Lake Hill (at 520 m) is another 160 m. Even subtracting 40 m of elevation gain on the approach slopes and 20 m of rounded dome at the top, that still leaves a cliff face of close to 100 m height. However, only the central part of the face consists of mostly unbroken, continuously vertical rock. Even here there is a an upper tier of slabbier rock.

The central face is identifiable by cleaner, tan-coloured rock and by a prominent roof. I think it's between 80 and 100 m high. Below the central face lies a large talus field of big blocks. Below and to the right of the main face lies a lower cliff band of 20 m height. To reach the central face hike up to the lower cliff, pass it on its left side, then head up to the lower-reaching right side of the main cliff and walk up and to the left along the cliff base.



The main face at the Bolger's Lake Cliff.

On the left side the cliff breaks down into a series of shorter, steep faces with large ledges between the faces - the Terraces. These terraces ascend gradually up to the left. You can traverse the whole cliff face on these terraces and end up near the top at the far left end. You gain the main traversing Terrace from the top left side of the main talus slope by simply traversing/scrambling left along the main cliff face. In some places you can scramble up and down between different ledges, but be careful when doing so - some cliff out in spots and the drop below is not trivial. Dropping down along the talus slope will lead to the woods on the left.

The upper tier of rock also runs a ways to the right, above long forested slopes. The ice climb *Dancing Fools* is found way up here on the right. This upper tier varies in height from 30-40 m.

As was stated in the approach directions there is a flagged trail that runs across the top of the cliff system down the right shoulder of the hill. You can also hike down fairly easily down the left shoulder. In fact, this is probably the better way to go, if you have left gear at the base of the cliff.

**Must Recreate, 5.9 A0, 82 m, 4 pitches** (Brent Elliott, Laura Duncan, Danylo Darewych, April 5, 2021).

This route is located in the Terraces - the left end of the Bolger's Lake cliff, some 200 m left of the main, exposed wall and of the main talus slope. Look for a small talus field in the woods below the Terraces. The climb starts above this small talus field on a short cliff band with two cracks: a thin, steep one on the left and a wider, easy-angled one with a birch tree on the right.

- Pitch 1, 5.1, 9 m. Climb the wider, easy-angled crack on the right to a ledge. Sling the tree half-way up for pro. Or climb the harder, steeper crack on the left to start (5.8). Walk another 8 m across the boulder strewn ledge and belay from a slightly larger tree against the next wall.

- Pitch 2, 5.9, A0, 16 m. Climb the thin crack in a right-facing corner with a small roof half-way up. The crack widens unexpectedly before the exit. A big cam (#5?) would be useful. Belay off solid trees on the next ledge.

- Pitch 3, 5.9 A0, 14 m. Walk 20 m left along the ledge, past one steep, straight crack to the next crack that has a distinct jog to the right in it. Climb the crack (awkwardly) and then flop onto the next ledge (even more awkwardly).

- Pitch 4, 5.9, A0, 43 m. Walk 20 m right along the ledge to a line of weakness that starts at a right-angling crack system with a stunted tree 1.7 m up and a much larger tree 10 m up. Start left of the stunted tree, step over it into a slabby right-facing groove, then pull over a small roof and step right next to some broken-looking blocks. Head up past a solid pine, step left and make hard moves up a vertical step. Above this step traverse right around a corner and climb a corner crack in the right-facing face to the top. Tree anchor. It is probably preferable to split this pitch in two to avoid rope drag.

*Descent:* Rappel the route. We did it in 4 rappels with 1 70 m rope, but a 60 m would suffice. It is also possible to walk off up and to climber's left and then down the left shoulder of the hill.



Photos of *Must Recreate*: Top - Pitches 1 and 2.  
Middle Laura Duncan leading at the top of Pitch 3.  
Bottom: Brent Elliott leading pitch 4.

## Cottage Cliff/Pond Cliff/Randy's Knob

This cliff is located 16 km down Highway 546 from its junction with Highway 639. Just before you reach the cliff there are two cottages on the north side of the road, followed by a small pond. The cliff is some 150 m away from the road on the north side. If you're driving from the south-west the cliff is about 2 km east of the midway bridge over the Little White River.

Two routes have been climbed here. On the lower left side of the cliff lies a big right-angling slab on top of an overhanging buttress. The routes are found there.

**Shawinigan Handshake, 5.10, 20 m** (Randy Kielbasiewicz, Wade Meade, September 2016).

A rightward slanting hand/fist crack line located on a steep right facing wall just left of the large overhanging buttress. Follow the crack to a rightward traverse. The route finishes at the 1st belay of *SAS*.

**Sneaking around Sussex, 5.8, 80 m, 4 pitches** (Randy Kielbasiewicz, Wade Meade, September 2016).

- Pitch 1, 5.7/5.8, 20? m. Start in the corner right of *Shawinigan Handshake*. Climb to a roof and pass it on the left. Belay at a tree.
- Pitch 2, 5.5, 20? m. Follow the low angle corner to its end. Loose and dirty. The grade will change significantly if it's wet due to the lichen.
- Pitch 3. Walk left and wander up through trees to the upper scree slope.
- Pitch 4, 5.8, 20? m. Climb the weakness through the clean upper wall on its right side. Poor gear and committing moves.

## Bridge Road Cliff

This is a lower-angled cliff of shattered rock that is not of interest to climbers. If you want to go take a



Randy Kielbasiewicz leading *Shawinigan Handshake*. The start of *Sneaking around Sussex* is visible to the right.

look at it anyway, park at the north side of the midway bridge over the Little White River, 17.7 km down Highway 546 from its junction with Highway 639, and hike 1.5 km down the logging road that starts here and heads northwest. The cliff will be visible about 150 m north of the logging road.

## **Endikai Lake**

Endikai Lake is a large lake on the West Little White River, a tributary of the Little White River with several cliffs on it. Two have been investigated. The cliffs can only be accessed by boat.

The lake is located 21.6 km down Highway 546 from its junction with Highway 639. Turn north onto the Endikai Lake Estates Rd, drive down it for 1 km, crossing a bridge and turning left to a boat launch.

### **Endikai Lake West Cliff**



This cliff is located about 2 km up the west shore of Endikai Lake. This is a big cliff, rising 160 meters from the shoreline (at 260 m) to the top (420 m) although half of this height is scrambling terrain. The rock is mostly easier angled and quite broken in places.

One 3 pitch route has been climbed here.

**Endikai Route, 5.5, 75 m, 3 pitches** (Danylo Darewych, Mike Grainger, August 16, 2013).\*

\* This description was written 9 years after the fact based on a rather vague recollection of the route. I do not vouch for its accuracy.

To reach the base of the route scramble up a little slab and then an unpleasant scree slope for 60 m until you reach a little stance below a short step of steeper rock above. There is a distinct yellow scar of cleaner rock 3/4quarters of the way up the face that you can use as a general orientation point to head for.



- Pitch 1, 5.5, 23 m?. Climb up the short vertical step above the stance and then head up and to the left over easier ground (gear belay).
- Pitch 2, 5.?, 22? m. Continue by traversing up and to the left and then head to a point roughly 10 m below the yellowish rock scar. Gear belay.
- Pitch 3, 5.5, 30 m. Traverse left to the next rib of slightly easier-angled rock left of the area of yellow, scarred rock (which looked a little more loose and steeper than what we would have liked) and then up a final more vertical rock step.

Descent: We traversed some distance rightward (climber's right) and scrambled down to a small clump of trees. We rappelled from these a full 60 m on two half-ropes. This brought us down to a point just slightly further right and almost at the same level as our original starting point.

### **Endikai Lake North Cliff - Black Knob**

This cliff is located on the far north end of Endikai Lake, a distance of 5.5 km from the boat launch. This a smaller cliff composed of black rock. It is steep and even overhanging on its left flank, but appears to have lots of positive holds and features. It would need to be bolted for climbing purposes, as there are not many cracks on this cliff.

## Other Cliffs in the Area

Here are some photos and very brief descriptions of other large cliffs in the Elliot Lake area. We have seen or visited these cliffs, but not climbed on them. As you can see the potential for further rock climbing development in Elliot Lake is huge.

### High Rocks

Located on the west end of Elliot Lake. The easiest way to get there would probably be a 3 km paddle across Elliot Lake. You can also get there by heading west for 7.5 km on Pipeline Rd (a wide logging road, but unsigned) north

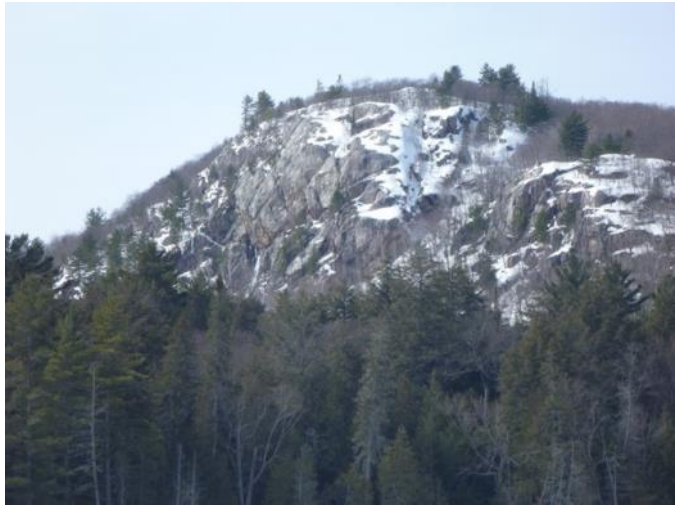
of town, then taking the rough road leading down to Elliot Lake Falls (you would need a truck; not driveable by car) and bushwacking around the bay to the cliff. There is also a longer trail that leads into the top of High Rocks, that apparently starts somewhere along Pipeline Rd, past a bridge. Looks like boat/water starts would be necessary.



### Old Baldy, Flack Lake

From Elliot Lake head north on Highway 108/639 for 27 km to the Flack Lake boat launch on your left (west), which is part of the Mississagi Provincial Park. You can see the cliff at the far west end of the lake from the boat launch. You would have to paddle some 6 km to the west end of the lake.

There is a trail to the top of the cliff there. The cliff and trail are not part of the park.



## Thunder Mountain, Rawhide Lake

Thunder Mountain is located on the south shore of Rawhide Lake, some 30 km north of Elliot Lake (46 km driving distance). The easiest way to get there is to head down the Boland River Rd. (see above) for 14/15 km. There is a trail on the north side of the road that leads 1.2 km uphill to the top of Thunder Mountain. The cliff faces north. You'd have to find a way down from the top to the base of the cliff on the other side. The cliff sits atop a giant talus slope. I'm not sure how tall the cliff is or how good the rock is for climbing. I've only been there in winter looking for ice and didn't bother going up the scree slope.

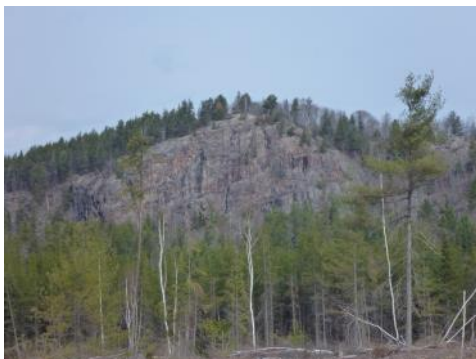
Thunder Mountain is a culturally significant site to local First Nations communities. They visit it alone or in groups for spiritual purposes.



## Camp 8 Road Knobs

From Elliot Lake drive north along Highways 108/639 to the end of Highway 639. Turn right onto Highway 546 and continue north, then west along it for 4 km. At this point there will be a small bridge over Camp 8 Creek. Cross the bridge and turn left (north) onto a side logging road. Continue along this road for 1 km through a recent logging cut. To the north across the logging cut you will see several knobs with cliffs and slabs.

If you continue along Highway 639 past Camp 8 Creek for 800-900 m you will see yet another knob/cliff to the north of the road through the trees. Park at the side of the road and bushwack for 400 m to the cliff. It can likely also be approached from the north from the side logging road mentioned in the previous paragraph. The cliff is quite steep with some interesting features. The rock looks sound. Routes would definitely need bolts.



## Geology\*

As a climber, I've become used to referring to all cliffs beyond the limestone of the Niagara Escarpment as being granite. In fact, this guidebook was originally subtitled "An Eternally Incomplete Compendium of Ontario Granite Esoterica." I had always assumed that the Canadian Shield, the ancient bedrock of central and northern Ontario (and of much of Canada), was entirely made up of granite. It turns out that both my assumption and the subtitle were incorrect. They are especially untrue of the cliffs described in this guidebook on Elliot Lake. The cliffs aren't granite.

The geology of the Elliot Lake region is, in fact, much more complex and more interesting.

Geologists divide the Canadian Shield in Ontario into 3 areas or provinces: the Superior Province, the Southern Province and the Grenville Province.

The Superior Province is the oldest and largest part (70%) of the Canadian Shield. It was formed between 4.5 billion and 2.49 billion years ago. It stretches north and west of Sudbury. It is composed primarily of intrusive igneous rocks and is indeed predominantly granite. The second oldest is the Southern Province which was formed between 2.49 billion and 570 million years ago. It stretches in a narrow band from Sault St. Marie along the north shore of Lake Huron, past Sudbury and then north to Kirkland Lake, but is also found in two spots north of Lake Superior. It is composed primarily of sedimentary rocks, but also partially of volcanic rocks. The youngest part of the Canadian Shield is the Grenville Province. It was formed 1 billion to 570 million years ago. It stretches from south of Sudbury through Algonquin Park and to the St. Lawrence River (in Eastern Ontario). It is composed of metamorphic rock in its northern part; and of sedimentary and volcanic rocks which have been metamorphosed in its southern part.<sup>1</sup>

The town of Elliot Lake is located on the boundary between the older (Archean era) rock of the Superior Province and the younger (Proterozoic era) rock of the Southern Province. Since the cliffs in this guidebook are composed of rock of the Southern Province, some further information about the Southern Province is in order.

The Southern Province was formed initially from the sediments eroding off the rock of the Superior Province. The rocks formed from these sediments are mostly conglomerate, sandstone, siltstone, mudstone and greywacke. Later, 1.9 billion years ago, a collision of tectonic-plates created the Penokean Mountains along the southern edge of the Southern Province, north of today's Lake Huron. The ridges



Map by Dr. K. Tait, ROM, from [http://www.davidkjoyceminerals.com/pagefiles/articles\\_cobaltgowganda.asp](http://www.davidkjoyceminerals.com/pagefiles/articles_cobaltgowganda.asp)

<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Northern Development and Mines Ontario. **ROCK ONtario**. Ontario Ministry of Northern Development and Mines, ROCK ON Series 1, 1994, p. 27-28.

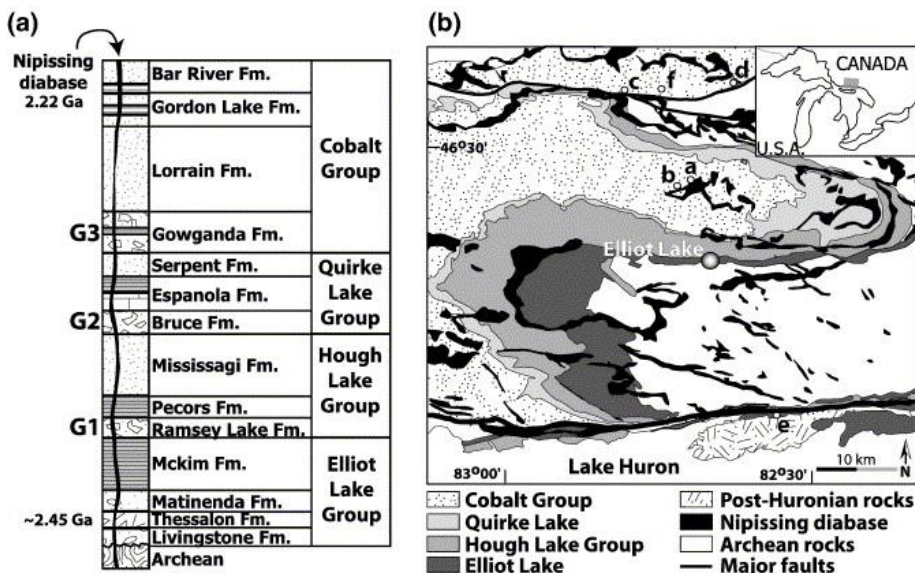


Diagram (a) shows the stratigraphy (layers) of rock in the Huronian Supergroup of the Southern Province of the Canadian Shield. The oldest rocks, Archean, are at the bottom; the youngest at the top. Ga stands for Giga Annum - 1 billion years ago.

north of Manitoulin Island and the white quartzite La Cloche Mountains (of Killarney Provincial Park) are remnants of these mountains. During this tectonic collision, some of the rocks of the Southern Province underwent low-grade metamorphism (ex. sandstone becoming quartzite). About 1.1 billion years ago North America started to split apart (it didn't, in the end), forming the Midcontinental Rift. This deep valley of this rift was filled with lava (which formed igneous rocks) and sediments. Also, magma from below cut through the previously formed sedimentary layers, creating intrusions of igneous rock (the sills and dikes of the Nipissing Diabase). As a result, the Southern Province has quite a complex mix of various types of rock.

The Southern Province is divided into three areas or Supergroups. The rock around Elliot Lake and along the north shore of Lake Huron belongs to the Huronian Supergroup. The Huronian Supergroup is in turn divided into 4 Groups, which are subdivided even further into Formations. The diagram above shows the various layers/categories of the Huronian Supergroup.

All the rocks of the Huronian Supergroup are low grade metamorphic sedimentary rocks or igneous rocks.<sup>2</sup>

The bulk of the Huronian Supergroup consists of mostly metamorphosed sandstones and mudstones. Since there are no index fossils, the sedimentary rocks cannot be dated using fossils. However, the base contains volcanics that have been dated at about 2.480 billion years ago (Gya). The top of the Huronian and cross cutting all of the units within are the Nipissing sills which date to 2.2185 Gya. The age at which the Huronian sediments were deposited is between 2.480 Gya and 2.219 Gya.

<sup>2</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Huronian\\_Supergroup](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Huronian_Supergroup)

## Rock Composition of the Stone Ridge/Nordic Cliff

The rock of the Stone Ridge/Nordic Cliff belongs to the Matinenda Formation of the Elliot Lake Group of the Huronian Supergroup. The Matinenda Formation “consists of greenish arkose (feldspar rich sandstone) with or without quartz pebble conglomerate beds, followed by conglomerate with quartz and greenstone pebbles in a greywacke matrix, and grey sandstone and argillaceous sandstone.”<sup>3</sup> It is in the conglomerate of the Matinenda Formation that uranium was found which led to establishment of many uranium mines in the Elliot Lake Region (now closed). There was, in fact, a mine right next to the Stone Ridge cliff – the Nordic Mine.

The cliff itself appears to be either sandstone or quartzite. Quartzite is sandstone that has undergone metamorphosis as a result of heating and pressure, in this case likely caused by the tectonic collision that created the Penokean Mountains. Pure quartzite is white (as for ex. In Killarney), but at Stone Ridge the rock has a lovely tan/yellowish tinge, indicating the presence of other minerals. “Quartzite is very resistant to chemical weathering and often forms ridges and resistant hilltops. The nearly pure silica content of the rock provides little for soil, therefore, the quartzite ridges are often bare or covered only with a very thin layer of soil and (if any) little vegetation.”<sup>4</sup> This is definitely the case at Stone Ridge - the cliff edge is bare rock and the soil cover is then further away from the cliff edge.

Apparently, a near vertical diabase dike cuts through the quartzite of the cliff.

## Rock Composition of the Horne Lake Cliff

The Horne Lake Cliff is “an escarpment in which the Mississagi Formation (light grey, thick bedded) is seen to rest on the Pecors Formation (dark grey, thin bedded).”<sup>5</sup> The Mississagi and Pecors are both formations of the Hough Lake Group of the Huronian Supergroup. The Pecors Formation consists of interbedded siltstone, sandstone, and argillite (a sedimentary rock, formed from consolidated clay, that does not split easily); and the Mississagi Formation of sandstone.

## Rock Composition of Rooster Rock, Quirke Lake

Rooster Rock is of the Gowganda Formation.<sup>6</sup> The Gowganda Formation is part of the Cobalt Group of the Huronian Supergroup. The Gowganda Formation is a heterogeneous assemblage of conglomerate, greywacke (a variety of sandstone with fragments of rock and rock minerals resulting from rapid erosion and deposition), quartzite and argillite.<sup>7</sup>

So, as you can see, none of the cliffs described in this guidebook are actually granite.

## Little White River Cliffs Composition

**Trapper’s Cliff, Revelation Crag-** Polymictic matrix supported conglomerate with feldspathic sandstone, arkose, conglomeratic sandstone, mudstone, greywacke, and clast supported conglomerate interbeds of the Lower Gowganda Formation.

**Endikai Cliff** - Mafic intrusive rocks of the Nipissing Diabase: metadiabase, meta-

<sup>4</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quartzite>

<sup>5</sup> Robertson, p. 159

<sup>6</sup> Robertson, p. 168

<sup>7</sup> Robertson, p. 29

gabbro, amphibolite, quartz metagabbro.and granophyre.

**Black Knob** - Granitic intrusive rock: Grey biotite trondhjemite and pink hornblende granodiorite, quartz monzonite with intrusions of Nipissing Diabase - metadiabase, metagabbro, amphibolite, quartz metagabbro.and granophyre.

**Endikai Riverside** - Granitic intrusive rock: pink hornblende granodiorite, quartz monzonite with intrusions of Nipissing Diabase (metadiabase, metagabbro, amphibolite, quartz metagabbro.and granophyre) and amphibolite.

**Bridge Road Cliff** - Green cherty siltstone of the Gordon Lake Formation of the Cobalt Group of the Huronian Supergroup.

**Stargazer Cliff** - Same as Endikai Riverside.

**Randy's Knob/Cottage Cliff** - Feldspathic sandstone of the Mississagi Formation of the Hough Lake Group of the Huronian Supergroup.



Looking down from the belay stance on *Seagull Alley*. Photo from [lureofthenorth.com](http://lureofthenorth.com)







**Why are  
all these  
people  
smiling?**

Above: Shaun Parent, Mike Grainger, Randy Kielbasiewicz, and Melissa Armstrong at Stone Ridge/Nordic, Aug. 17, 2013.

Right: Kielyn and Dave Marro-ne at the top of the first pitch of *Critical Mass*, Rooster Rock, Sept. 26, 2013.

Below: John Cotgrave, Max Pinion, Scott Ross at Stone Ridge/Nordic, September 21, 2013.



**Because  
they're  
climbing in  
Elliot Lake -  
beautiful rock,  
beautiful  
views!**

