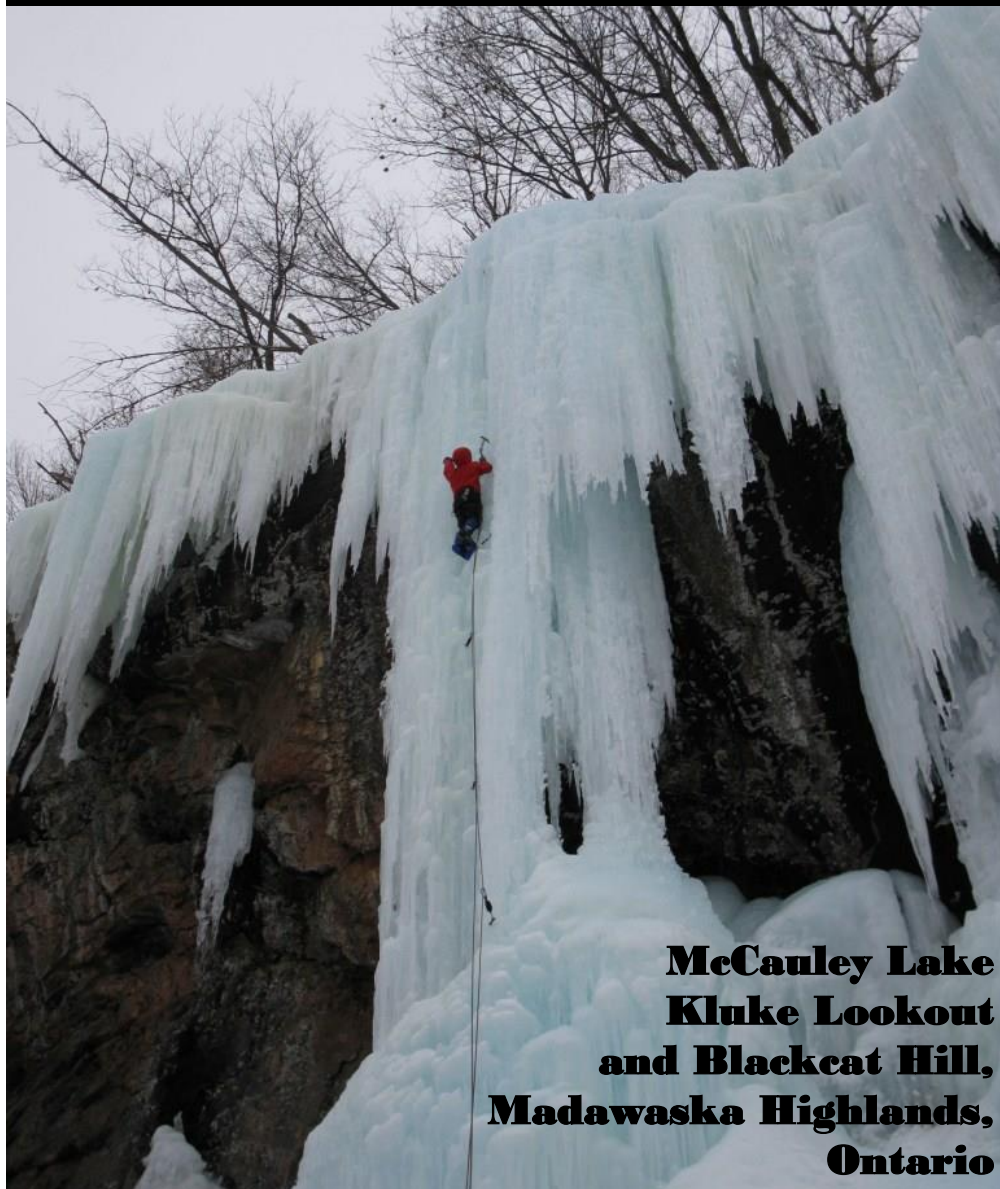


Madawaska Ice Climbs



**McCauley Lake
Kluke Lookout
and Blackcat Hill,
Madawaska Highlands,
Ontario**

**Danylo Darewych
Don Collier**



Front Cover: John Chan on the FA of *Blue Max*, March 6, 2009. Don Collier photo.

Inside Front: Pascal Simard on *TIOLI* at McCauley Lake. February 27, 2010. Photo by Nathan Kutcher (from kolos.ca)

Back Cover: John Chan on *Lepus* (left) & Danylo Darewych on *Quercus*, Kluge Lookout, March 15, 2009. Photo taken by Esther Collier from a hill on the other side of Bear Lake.

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Many thanks to the climbers who provided us with information and photos
(their names appear in the credits)

If you have any additions, corrections etc, please feel free to contact Danylo at
dedokvadratu@yahoo.ca

April, 2017
Mississauga, Ontario
Version 9

Introduction

This mini-guidebook describes three ice climbing crags near the town of Madawaska, Ontario. Madawaska is located some 300 km northeast of Toronto, near the south-east corner of Algonquin Park (a 3.5 hour drive). The crags described in this mini-guide are:

- 1) McCauley Lake, northwest of Madawaska
- 2) Kluke Lookout (Bear Mountain) and
- 3) Blackcat Hill, both of which are east of Madawaska

The ice climbs at these crags were climbed primarily between 2006-2010 (although McCauley Lake was first discovered in 1995). These new ice-climbing areas are testimony to the abundance of good ice still waiting to be discovered in Southern Ontario, if people are willing to get off the beaten track and go look for it. Happy hunting!



Directions to Madawaska from Bancroft:

From Bancroft head north on Highway 62 to Maynooth (23 km, 15 min). In Maynooth turn left (north) onto Highway 127. After 4.5 km turn right onto Madawaska Rd (which becomes Highway 523; don't turn on the Old Madawaska Rd). Go 34 km to Madawaska (about 30 minutes drive from Maynooth).

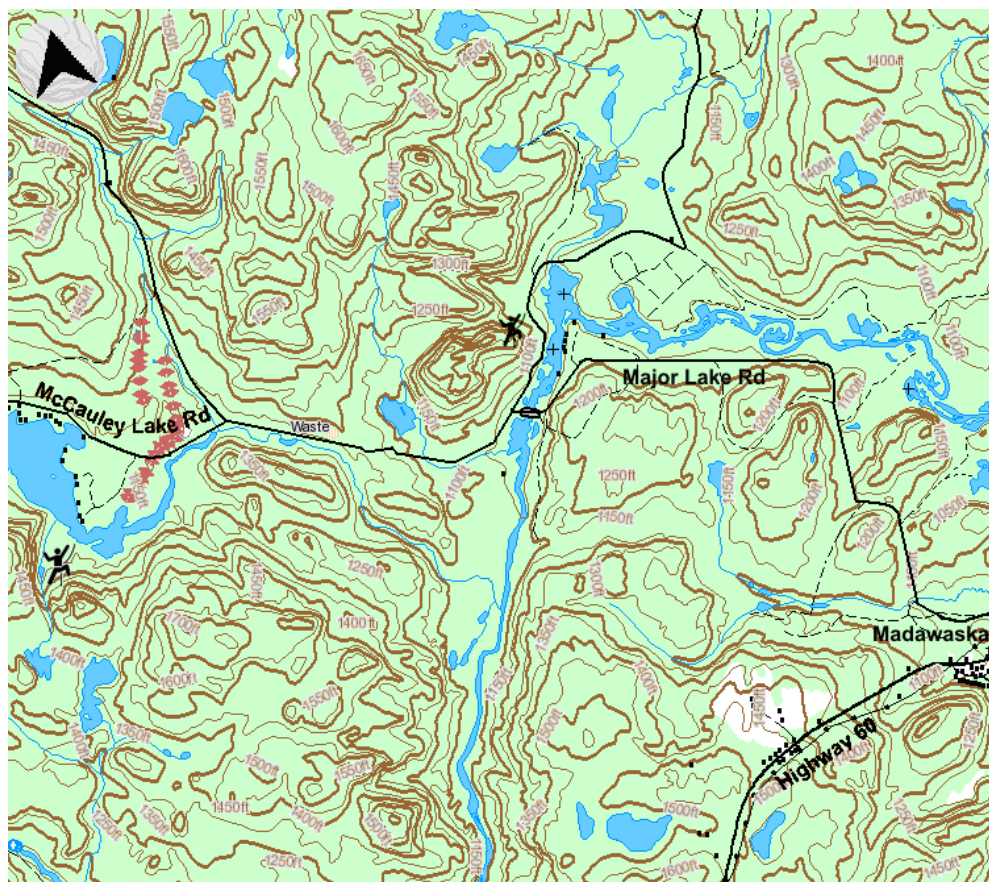
McCauley Lake

Text and photos by Don Collier (unless otherwise noted)

Introduction (by DD)

McCauley Lake is the jewel of the ice-climbing areas near the town of Madawaska. In fact, it deserves to be numbered among the best of all ice climbing areas in Southern Ontario in terms of number, variety, length and difficulty of climbs. *Blue Esther*, *The Wailing* and *Blue Max* would be a draw by themselves, but the fact that there are more than another twenty lines there make it well worth the long drive from Toronto (320km). The area was discovered in 1995 by Don Collier.

Directions McCauley Lake Crag (Map 31 E/9 Opeongo Lake, Ref 255473) is located north of Bancroft and east of Whitney. From the junction of #60 and #523 in the small town of Madawaska, go north on Major Lake Road (aka Shall Lake Rd, because it leads to the Shall Lake put-in for Algonquin) for a little over 11 km and turn left onto McCauley Lake Rd (signed). Travel approximately 2km until the road goes by a small bay. Park here or, preferably, at a small parking area for ice fisherman a little further along on the left side of the road. Walk across the lake past the point and towards the cliff (Ref 252460). Travel is easy along beaver ponds.



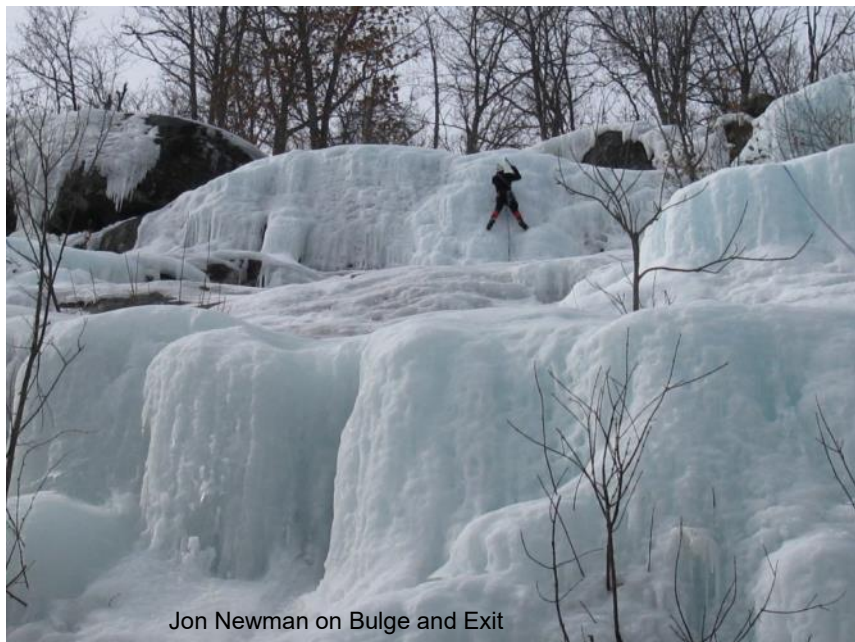


Overview

The area is sub-divided into four areas: the North CWM, the Main Area, Talus Cliff and the East Wall. Currently, circa 30 lines have been climbed, which represent all the obvious, and a few not so obvious, ice flows. The cliff faces east so it only gets morning sun. The big flows should last well into March.

(Special thanks to Esther Collier, Dave Britnell, Jon Newman, Alexandra Welsh, Michael Bryant, John Chan, Danylo Darewych and Lee Grimshaw for climbing here with me and making all the days memorable.)

The four areas will be described here from right (north) to left (south), in the order they would be encountered while walking in.



North CWM



North CWM

This is the first area one gets to. The thick blue lines are situated high in a bowl-shaped valley. Good routes, but a bit of a slog to get to in deep snow.

Mike-a-Don 40m, WI 3 (Michael Bryant and Don Collier). The obvious thick blue flow on the right-hand side of the CWM.

That's an Iron 40m, WI 3+ (Michael Bryant and Don Collier). The center blue flow. Named after a golfing video game I was playing with my son.

Bulge and Exit 55m, WI 2 (Jon Newman, Alexandra Welsh, John Chan and Don Collier). A very wide flow with various exits.



Quickly Out of Trouble in the middle of the photo. *Love in the Time of Cholera* (unformed) is the dagger on the right side of the photo. Feb. 14, 2010. Photo by Danylo Darewych.

Walking south of the CWM one comes to the first of several beaver ponds. The wall on the right contains four climbs, including *Quickly Out of Trouble* which serves as a landmark for the other three climbs.

Love in the Time of Cholera 15m, WI4- (Andriy Kolos and Justin Bryant, Feb. 16, 2013). This climbs goes up a thin pillar which forms occasionally to the right of *Quickly Out of Trouble*. Lower-off from anchors.

Quickly Out of Trouble 20m, WI 4 M6/7 (Pascal Simard and Isabelle Jette, Feb. 21, 2010). The first obvious ice sheet just above the beaver pond. Climb up initial rock and/or thin icicles (a pre-slung sling on the adjacent tree for first protection is recommended) to a sloping platform and better ice above.¹

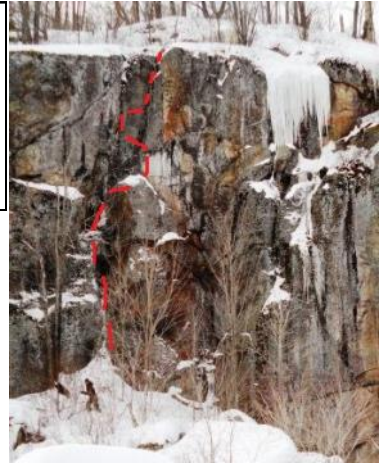
Staying Out of Trouble 20m, WI 3 (Danylo Darewych, Antonio Segura and Pietro Puzzuoli, Jan. 21, 2011). Arguably, a variation of *Quickly Out of Trouble* that climbs ice (not always present) to avoid the mixed section of the aforementioned climb.

Space Jam 20m, M7 (Andriy Kolos and Josh Smith, Feb. 10, 2013). A bolt-protected line up a distinct black-water streak to the left of *Quickly Out of Trouble*. Climb the streak on small seams and edges near the top to finish on a short smear of ice.

Overwhelmed (aka. *Scratch and Sniff*) 20m, M5+ (Pascal Simard, Andriy Kolos, Feb 26, 2012). About 50 m left of the previous route is an obvious broken area identified by a grey-rock concavity above a pedestal half-way up. Go up the left corner system to the top of the pedestal and continue to the top. Harder than it looks. No ice, just dry-tooling.¹



Left: Josh Smith on *Space Jam*, Feb. 10, 2013. Photo by Andriy Kolos. Right: *Overwhelmed*. From www.kolos.ca.



Gift Wall

Continuing south one goes by a high, dark wall with two thin lines. The first ascensionists referred to this area as the Gift Wall because they were surprised that the two obvious ice lines had not yet been climbed. Timing is everything to get the right ice thickness here.

Gift by Omission 50m, WI 3, M4 X (Fernando Jesus Nuflo and Joe Palma, Feb. 21, 2010). Climb the thin ice streak. Usually very thin and very run-out.

Lightweight ID 25m WI 3+ M4 (Pascal Simard, Feb. 21, 2010). The left climb on the Gift Wall about 100 m south of the previous route. The ice ends in an alcove. Rock gear may be very useful at the start. A mixed corner on the left can be climbed if the final ice bulge is rotten. A lower-off anchor is found in the alcove.

Lightweight ID (left) and *Gift by Omission* (right). Photo by Fernando Nuflo, Feb. 2010.



¹ Description based on description in "Ice Conditions, 2011-12" on www.kolos.ca



Valentine Slabs Area

Just south of *Lightweight ID* is a high, wide broken open area. Here, one sees the wonderful ice of the Main Area with the striking *Blue Esther* and *The Wailing* being the obvious lines. Between *Blue Esther* and *Lightweight ID* is a large area made up of slabs, trees and cliffs: this is the Valentine Slabs Area. The following three routes are found in this area and are characterized by their deep blue color. The length of each route will vary considerably with the amount of snow cover. While they are of lesser quality than most of the routes at McCauley Lake, the first ascensionists had a lot of fun climbing them. They were all climbed on Valentine's Day 2010.

Hillbilly Hare 45m, WI 3 (Dave Britnell, David Wardlaw, Jon Newman and Don Collier). Located high up on the far right side is a line of thin blue ice. Easy climbing, but in a very aesthetic location. Named for a Bugs Bunny character.

Freeze! Say Z! 30m, WI 2 (Jon Newman, Don Collier, Dave Britnell and David Wardlaw). This climb is located far to the left of the previous route and is characterized by two blue bulges of ice. There is a large coniferous tree at the top. The name of the climb is the favourite expression of a delightful autistic child that Don Collier works with.

Wardlaw's Water Wall 20m, WI 2 (David Wardlaw, Jon Newman, Dave Britnell and Don Collier). This climb is the short blue ice bulge, around a buttress and left from the previous route. So named because D. Wardlaw did not want his name associated with such a trivial piece of ice. It didn't work!



Main Area: North

Blue Esther 50m, WI 3 (Michael Bryant and Don Collier). The wide, obvious blue flow on the right-hand side of the cliff. Many different lines can be climbed here. Highly recommended. One can walk off climbers right and go past *Three Stooges* and *Yellow Fever* (see below). Named for my wife who was with me the first time into McCauley in 1995.

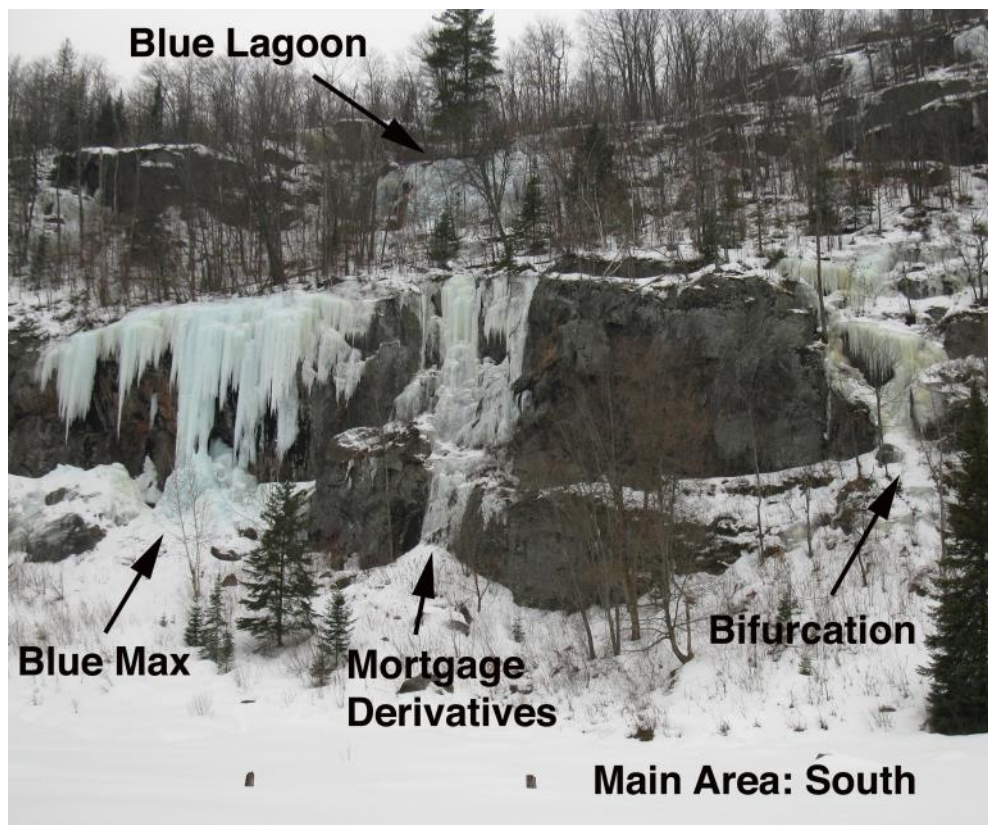
Grey Alan 60m, WI 3 (John Chan, Don Collier, Danylo Darewych and Dave Britnell). Climb the first half of *Blue Esther* and then traverse left about 20m to another ice flow which leads to the top. Recommended. Named after my son.

Three Stooges 20m, WI 2+ (John Chan, Don Collier, Jon Newman and Alexandra Welsh). Three blue flows located high and to the right of *Blue Esther*. A bit vegetated. Do them on the walk-off from *Blue Esther* if you must.

Yellow Fever 15m, WI 3 (Jon Newman, Don Collier and Alexandra Welsh). Located on the right-hand retaining wall of *Blue Esther*. A narrow yellow flow. Short but fun. Again, best done if you are walking off from *Blue Esther*.

The Wailing 40m, WI 4 (Jon Newman, Don Collier and Dave Britnell). The stunning three-tiered climb to the left of *Blue Esther*. Highly recommended. Named for the sound I was making topping off this climb!





Main Area: South

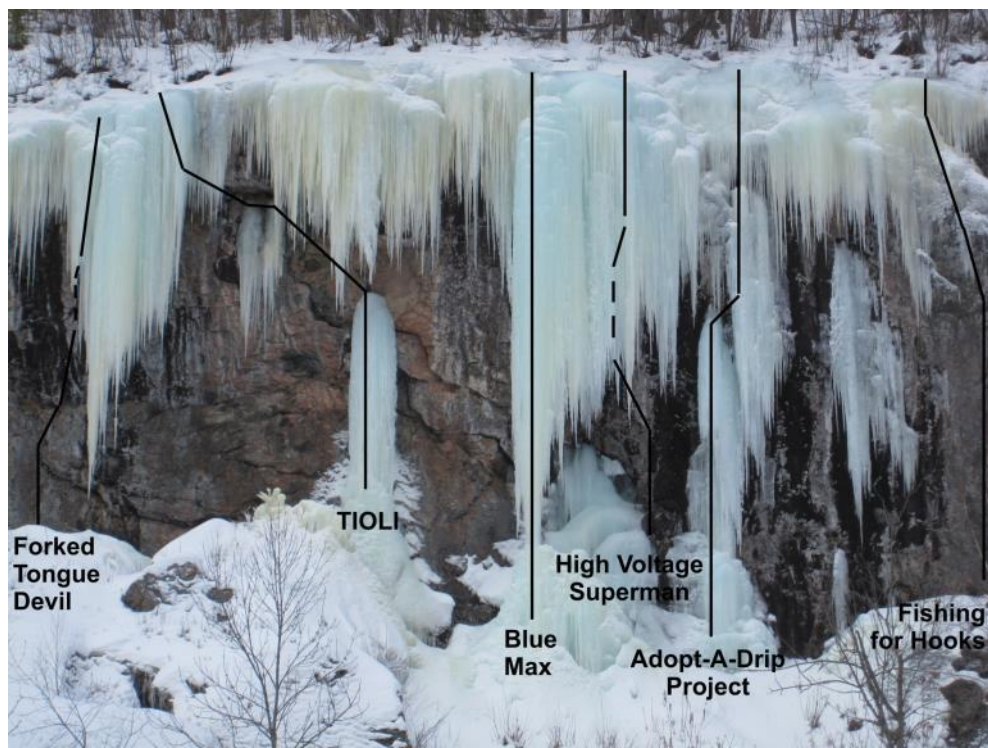
Bifurcation 25m, WI 3 (Left: Jon Newman and Lee Grimshaw, Right: Don Collier and Michael Bryant). This is the first climb on the right side of the lower tier to the left of *The Wailing*. Two choices: go left up the ramp and the tree and then to the top OR go right and up the bulge to the top.

Mortgage Derivatives 33m, WI 4 (John Chan and Don Collier). This climb is located in a vague scoop to the left of *Bifurcation*. Straight up. Recommended.

A Dick and Six Tits in Search of the V-Tree 25m, WI 4 (Joe Palma, Imola Kerekes, Elaine Taylor and Astrid Palantzas). This climb ascends the initial slabs of *Mortgage Derivatives*, but then breaks right for an entertaining exit.

Left of *Mortgage Derivatives* is the overhanging wall containing stunning ice daggers and pillars. This is the site of *Blue Max* and several mixed lines (see following page for descriptions).

Blue Lagoon 20m, WI 2+ (Lee Grimshaw and Jon Newman). A wide sheet of blue ice located in the woods above *Blue Max*.



Blue Max Wall

This overhanging wall of beautiful blue ice daggers and stunning pillars is home to McCauley Lake's hardest routes. The ice on this wall does not form the same way every year.

Fishing for Hooks 15m, M6+ (Nathan Kutcher and Joe Palma, March 13, 2011). This route climbs a weakness on hard-to-read rock at the far right end of the wall to a fun transition onto a smear of ice near the top. The easiest way up isn't particularly straightforward and requires hands-on-rock moves as well as drytooling.²

Adopt-A-Drip-Project 25m, WI 5 (Andriy Kolos and Pascal Simard, Feb. 20, 2010). Climb the discontinuous and overlapping ice lines to the right of *Blue Max*. A rest in the ice chimney provides welcome relief. Exceptional climbing!³

High Voltage Superman 20m, M6 (Andriy Kolos, Nathan Kutcher and Doug Smith, March 13, 2011). This mixed route climbs the wall between and behind *Blue Max* and *Adop-A-Drip*. After a hard move near the start, more moderate climbing leads up to stemming between the rock and ice. After clipping the last bolt, climb out from under an ice roof between the two big icicles and onto the steep ice above.^{2,3}

Blue Max 30m, WI 4+/5 (John Chan and Don Collier, March 6, 2009). Climb the wall's only continuous vertical pillar straight up. An instant classic.

The Independence of Oft-Linked Items (TIOLI) 25m, M6+ (Pascal Simard and Andriy Kolos, Feb. 27, 2010). “Climb the pillar to the left of *Blue Max* and traverse left to finish above the blob of ice. Two pins protect the traverse and a bolt protects the overlap.” Bring a rack of cams from tiny ones to #3 Camalot, saving a 0.75 for the horizontal slot above the overlap.³

Forked Tongue Devil 20m, M7+ (Nathan Kutcher and Pascal Simard, Feb. 28, 2010). McCauley Lake’s most difficult route. “It climbs a slightly loose open book up to the steep, improbable looking head-wall. Clip the first bolt and work your way up on small/technical but good well-spaced holds. Stem onto the first dagger, climb it, then swing out around the second dagger/curtain and up to the top. Gear: 4 bolts, a screw or two and a big sling or cordelette for the anchor. There is a belay bolt and small stance up and left of the start that the belayer should use to keep clear of falling ice.”³



Above: Andriy Kolos on *High Voltage Superman*. March 13, 2011.

Below: The right side of the Blue Max Wall in 2010-2011, showing the lines of *High Voltage Superman* on left and *Fishing for Hooks* on the right. Photos from www.kolos.ca



³ Info from <http://www.kolos.ca/andriy/ontario%20ice/2009-2010%20Ice%20Conditions%20in%20SO.pdf> 13



Above: Andriy Kolos (left) & Pascal Simard (right) picking their way across *The Independence of Off-Linked Items*. Feb. 27, 2010. Photos from Imola Kerekes and Fernando Nuflo.
Below: *Forked Tongue Devil* (left) and Imola Kerekes getting pumped on *Adopt-A-Drip-Project*. Feb 27, 2010 (right). Photos by Nathan Kucher and Fernando Nuflo.



Talus (South) Cliff

To the left (south) of the Main Area is a long cliff characterized by a maze of large-sized talus at its base. Lots of potential for extreme mixed routes on this cliff.



A view of part of the McCauley Lake ice climbs looking south from the last beaver pond. The Blue Max Wall is on the right, the Talus (South) Cliff is in the middle (with *The Blob* marked with a red arrow), and *Manon* et al. are just visible at the far end of the Talus Cliff. Photo by Nathan Kutcher.

Little Beastie 15m, WI 3 (Danylo Darewych and Dave Britnell, Feb. 14, 2009). Located on the south wall of the gully that separates the Talus Cliff from the Main Area.

The Blob 15m, WI3/4 (Nathan Kutcher). This is the thick flow located low on the broken wall about 100m left (south) of *Little Beastie*. It ends at a big ledge. There are rings to rap from.

Lust in the Time of Syphilis 20m, WI4 (Andriy Kolos and Justin Bryant, Feb. 16, 2013). This climb is on the fat pillar that forms above and to the right of *The Blob*. Climb *The Blob* and traverse right and downwards to access a ledge at the base of the pillar. The second is protected best by tensioning off *The Blob's* anchors. Climb the pillar to its end where thin ice and generous hooks await around the corner (a gold Camelot protects the upper part). A beautiful, full-value tour of McCauley.



Left: *Little Beastie*. Photo by Dave Britnell.

Right: *Lust in the Time of Syphilis*. Photo by Andriy Kolos, from www.kolos.ca.

The next four routes are located at the far south end of the Talus Cliff. Easily visible from the beaver ponds.

Manon 18m, WI 4 (John Chan, Don Collier and Jon Newman). The obvious pillar at the far south end of the cliff.

Jon Johnson 20m, WI 3 (Jon Newman and Don Collier). Named for the two “Johns” that worked the route. A large dagger of ice struck John Chan on the thigh during the first attempt ending his day. Jon Newman took over and completed the route. Climb the technical ice on the left side of the small bowl that lies about 10m right of *Manon*.

Alpine Shugh 25m, WI 2 (Jon Newman, Alexandra Welsh, Don Collier and John Chan). The easy flow in the bowl just right of *Jon Johnson*.

Mr. Hide 20m, M5+ (Pascal Simard, Andriy Kolos and Tiago Varella Cid, Feb 27, 2011). This climb is located just to the right of *Alpine Shugh*. From a sloping ledge climb a left-leaning ice ramp. Work your way up to a dark triangular roof with great hooks, edges, handjams and excellent pro. A short strenuous headwall leads to lower-off anchors.



Spot the climber. Pascal Simard, dressed in black, on the rock exit to *Mr. Hide*, February 27, 2011. Photo by Taras Toporowych.

Talus (South) Cliff

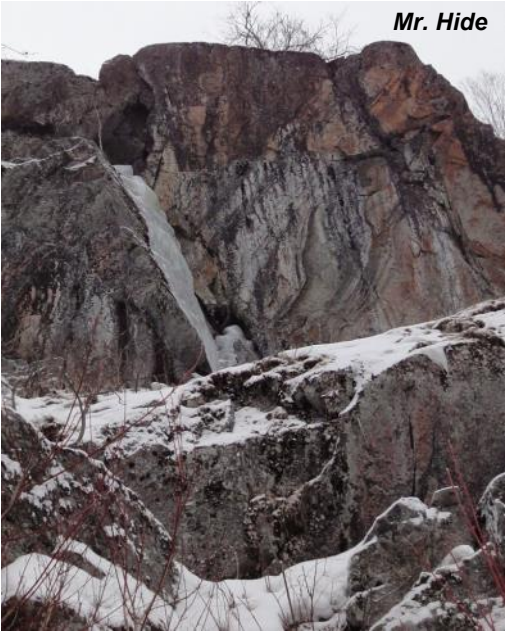
Manon **Jon Johnson** **Alpine Shugh**



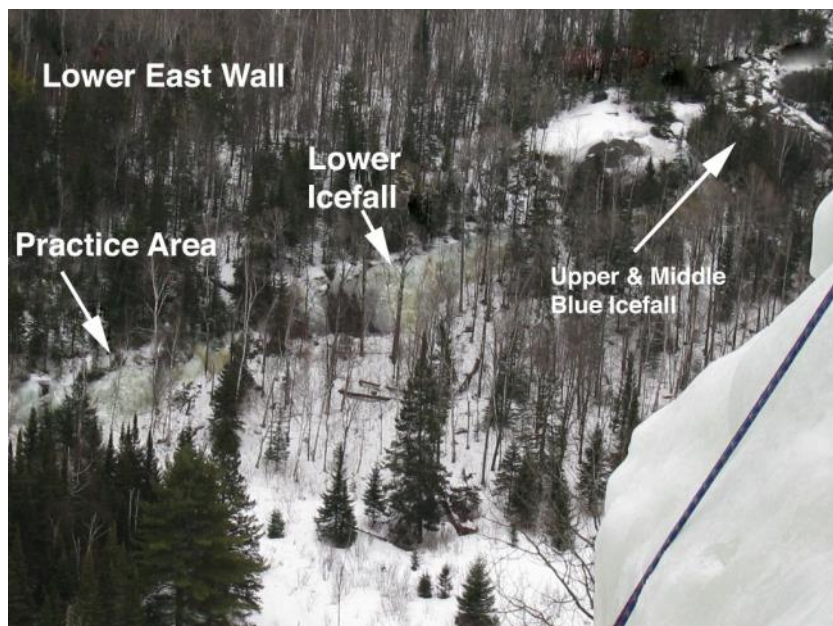
John Chan on Manon



Jon Newman on Jon Jonson



Mr. Hide



East Wall

The next three routes are located across the valley (east) from the Talus Cliff. A retaining wall borders the creek that feeds the beaver ponds and wide ice forms in places over this wall.

Upper Blue Icefall 15m, WI 2 + (Jon Newman and Don Collier). At the far right (south) end of the wall.

Middle Blue Icefall 18m, WI 2-3+ (Jon Newman and Don Collier). A very wide ice flow of varying degrees of difficulty. Recommended if one is nearby.

Lower Icefall and Practice Area 10m, WI 2 (Jon Newman and Alexandra Welsh). Visible behind the southern most beaver pond. More yellow than blue.

Other Climbs in the Area

Around the 8 km mark the Major Lake Rd crosses the Madawaska River. Just after the bridge a road turns right. Turn onto this road and in less than 1 km there is an ice line high on top of the hill. My wife and I climbed these two routes which are named after the horrendous bushwhack it took to get to the climbs. Map 31 E/9, Ref. 308473.

Evil Jr. 15m, WI 2+ (Don and Esther Collier). Past the tree and up to the top.

Evil 15m, 3+ (Don and Esther Collier). The wide sheet of ice to the right of Evil Jr. Steep.

The hill over which *Evil* et al. flows shows promising relief on the topo map (31 E/9). However, a circumnavigation of the hill by Esther Collier found only small broken cliffs and short ice flows. Definitely not worth the slog!

Kluka Lookout (Bear Mountain)

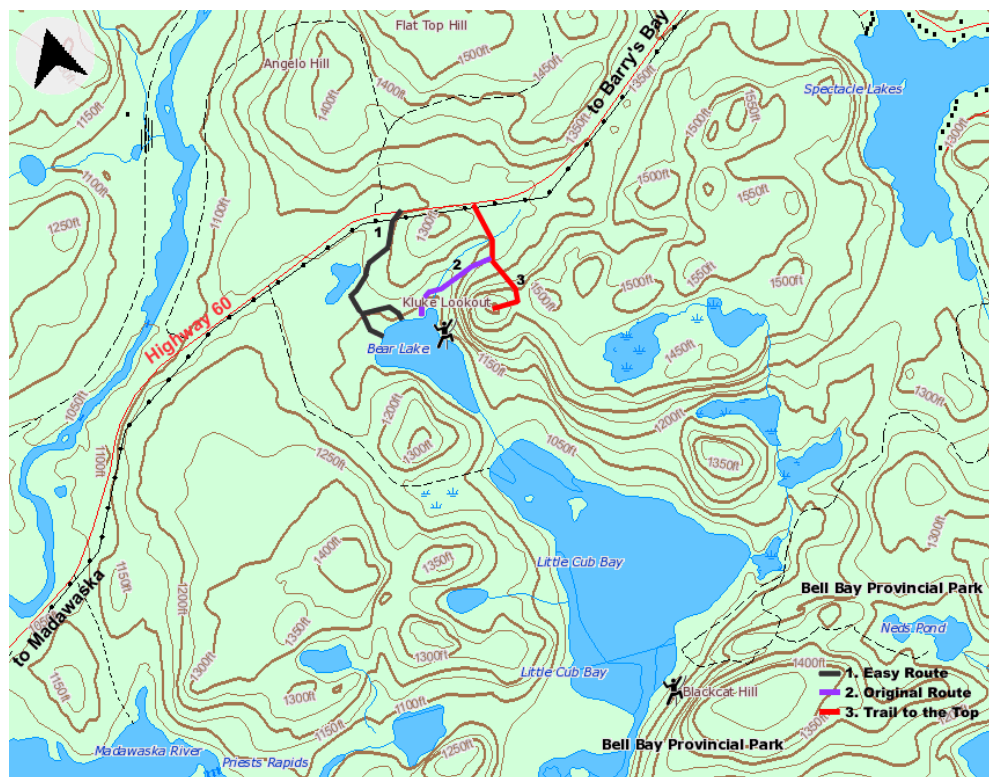
by Danylo Darewych

Kluka Lookout is a big, tall cliff (c.100 m high) with 5-6 decent ice routes (unfortunately none at the tallest point of the cliff). It's a long drive from Toronto (330 km) and 30 minute approach from the road. It's called Kluka Lookout on the topographic maps, but named Bear Mountain on the sign at the start of the trail.

Directions to Kluka Lookout from Madawaska

There are several different ways of getting into Kluka Lookout (and Blackcat Hill further south). To start, head east from Madawaska on Highway 60, over the Madawaska River bridge, past the lumber yard, and over the Opeongo River bridge. Then choose one of the following approaches:

Approach 1— The Easy Route (recommended): At approximately 8 km east of Madawaska (or 19.8 km from the Beer Store in Barry's Bay), look for a sign with the number 23573 (it looks like the address number signs that mark driveways). It will be just at the end of a guardrail on your right at a point where the hydro wires come back close to the road. Park just past the end of the guardrail (GPS co-ordinates: N45 31.601 W77 54.001). A well used snowmobile/ATV trail heads south into the forest here. Follow this trail into the north end of Bear Lake. At one point the trail splits. Both branches of the path lead to Bear Lake: the right branch heads straight to Bear Lake, the left branch leads to a nice campsite on the lake. This is the most direct route into Bear Lake (1 km, 20min).



Approach 2— The Original Route (not recommended): At approximately 8.5 km east of Madawaska (or 19.3 km west of the Beer Store in Barry's Bay) there is a small swampy area on the left side of the road and the road makes a slight uphill turn to the left. Before this uphill curve to the left, look for a snowmobile path/hiking trail heading right (south) into the woods. The trail entrance is marked by a sign with the number 23471 and also with pairs of orange disks nailed to trees on either side of the entrance. (There is also a pair of orange disks nailed to the third utility pole back from the curve, next to the trail entrance). Park on the shoulder (GPS co-ordinates: N45 31.557 W77 53.655).

Hike down the trail (snowshoes are a must). There is a sign near the entrance stating the distance to Bear Mountain (0.7 km). The trail will head downhill and cross a creek, then start to head slowly back uphill. Just before the trail starts to head more steeply uphill (to the top of Bear Mountain where the Kluge lookout tower used to stand), look for red flagging tape and/or a faded old yellow blaze (on a birch tree) on the right side of the trail (GPS co-ordinates: N45 31.343 W77 53.640). The flagging tape is not always there and the yellow blazes are now next to impossible to spot. If you can find them, follow the flagging tape and/or yellow blazes (they run almost together), contouring around the slope for 75-100m, then heading downhill past a hunting platform up in a tree (N45 31.367 W77 53.768), then more sharply downhill, back across the creek, then finally up a slight slope on the north end of Bear Lake. From here you have a good view of the northern end of the cliff (including the climb *Ursus*) and the central part of the cliff. Head down onto the lake (from where you can see the rest of the cliff and the remaining ice climbs at the south end). The distance is about 1.2 km. Map #31 F/12 Reference 737448

If snow conditions are good, then the approach takes about 30 minutes. If the snow conditions are bad and you're breaking trail through deep snow (as is often the case), then the approach is a heinous postholing hell that can take a good hour or more.

Approach 3 — The Over-the-Top Route: If the lake ice is suspect, you can reach the climbs by heading over the top of Kluge Lookout/Bear Mountain. Simply follow the trail to the top of Kluge Lookout/Bear Mountain (when the trail branches, turn right) and then head down the southern slopes of the Mountain towards the lake. The travel is quite easy through a pleasant oak grove at the top and only gets bushwacky towards the bottom.

If you have the opportunity, head to the top of Kluge Lookout/Bear Mountain. The views from the top are quite nice. Look south to the big flow on Blackcat Hill and start salivating.



Kluge Lookout (Bear Mountain), March 27, 2005. Photo by Danylo Darewych.

General Layout of the Kluke Lookout Cliff

The cliff at Kluke Lookout forms a big arc. The far left (east) end of the cliff faces north. It is located a fair ways up a treed slope. The rock here is steep, compact slab and the ice tends to be very thin. Heading right (west) from the far east end, the cliff gets taller and more broken, and then curves past a steep prow to the south. The cliff here faces west and gets a lot of sun. The greatest concentration of ice climbs is located on the far south end. The ice here tends to be much fatter, but bakes out earlier because of the exposure to the sun.

East End - North Face

The East End - North Face can be reached by slogging up from Bear Lake along the cliff line, or perhaps more easily by rappelling in from the top, if you know where the ice routes are located (they're hard to find from the top, because the cliff drops away). Expect the ice here to be thin and unprotectable.

City Wrangler, M? to WI3, 20 m (Peter Hoang and Andriy Kolos, March 18, 2017).

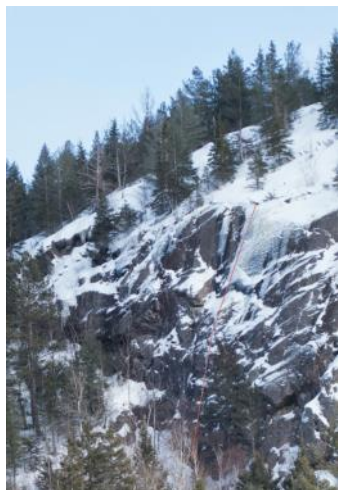
Just uphill and to the left of *Chiraq/Six* lies a pedestal below a roof. Mantle upwards, extend into the crack in the roof, keeping your core tight so you don't fall backwards onto your belayer. Plug in as much gear as you want. Reach way up, following a seam on the left to a huge pod and a key flake. Stab the ice and scamper to the top. A great equalizer route: harder if you're short in some sections. Harder if you're tall in some sections. *AK*

Chiraq, M5+, WI5, 43 m (Sam Eastman-Zaleski, Matthew Zaleski, February 16, 2014).

Start on tricky intermittent verglas smears (bottom 10 feet), climb overhanging cracks, then up a thin 85° ice sheet (too thin for screws). There are two fixed pins and a fixed nut lower down, then four bolts. Small wires and a few cams are needed.

The Six, WI?, X, 25 m (Andriy Kolos and Peter Hoang, March 18, 2017)

Start same as *Chiraq* (clipping the first fixed pro), but follow the rarely forming pure ice line all the way to the top. A serpentine-like narrow flow of thin, unprotectable ice leads to a wide slab at the top. *AK*



Left: *Chiraq*.
February 16,
2014. Photo by
Sam Eastman-
Zaleski. Right:
The base of *Chi-
raq/The Six*,
March 18, 2017).



Ursus (Bear), WI3, 23 m
(Danylo Darewych, Don Collier,
March 10, 2008).

Located in the middle of the north face of the cliff. It's easiest to approach from the lake, although it's a fair ways up the slope (or you can contour/bushwack in from the original approach trail if you know the location).

Route Description: 10 m of easy angled approach ice, followed by 15 m of steeper ice. Good, solid belay tree at the top. There are more ice bulges above, but they're not really worth it.

Aspect: Faces north-west.

Consistency: Excellent. Comes in well every year. Nice fat flow. Stays in to the end of March (at least).

Name explanation: I was going to call the climb Bear, since it's on Bear Lake and Bear Mountain, but because there already is one well known Bear Lake in Ontario, I decided to use the Latin name, *Ursus*, instead.

To the right of *Ursus* (20-30 m) there is a vague, easier-angled gully with an ice step at the bottom and one at the top which can be used to access the top of *Ursus* to set up a top rope. The ice-steps can both be by-passed.

The Pig Latin, WI2 5.3, 30m (Dave Britnell, Chris Talbot, Don Collier, Feb 13, 2010)

Start at the base of the vague gully and climb the first ice step/bulges. After the ice bulges venture right up a snow/ice slope through a narrow groove until you get to a rock step. Sling the stump at the base of the rock and climb the rock stemming the two grooves (about 5.3). Climb past a tree with some good hooking and climb up the snow ramp and belay at trees.

FYS, M?, WI3?, 70? m (Mike Reaume, Ty Wagmar, February 27, 2016).

Located towards the right side of the north face, just where the face starts to curve. From the lake head up a vague depression to the right of a talus slope towards the low point of the base of the cliff. Follow the base of the cliff uphill to the left until you see some thin ice spilling down over rocky steps/slabs.



Ursus. March 10, 2008. Photo by Don Collier.



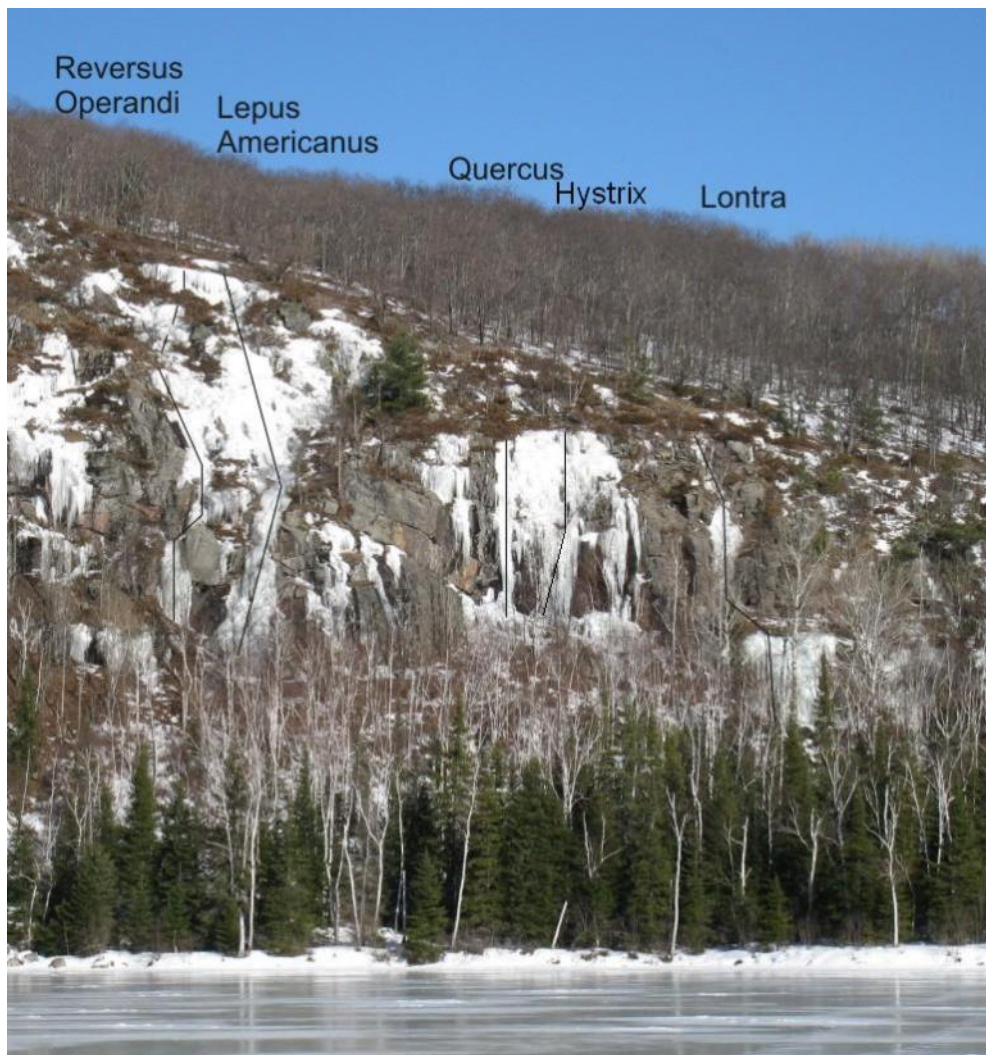
FYS. February 27, 2016. Photo by Ty Wagmar.

Climb a thin, brittle curtain to leave the initial slab and get into the actual route. Follow the ice up and right to a big tree (belay). Traverse left, then back right up an ice-up ramp, then head up on fatter, easier-angled ice up to the top.

Consistency: There is ice in the upper section of this route every year, but it doesn't always touch down.

Name explanation: After climbing the initial, brittle ice curtain, I carelessly and thoughtlessly booted it off leaving Ty to battle up it with no usable ice. I looked back at him and said, "Nothing like fucking your second, eh"? So FYS stands for Fuck Your Second. *MR*

West Face - South End



South end routes of Kluke Lookout. March 15, 2009. Photo by Don Collier.

The next 5 routes are located at the right (south) end of the cliff. Approach from the lake up the slope to the base of the routes. These climbs face west and get a lot of sun. It can be positively balmy at the base of these routes on a sunny day. As a result these routes are probably in good shape only to the end of February – after that they start getting quite baked.

Reversus Operandi, WI 2+, about 30 m (of ice) (Dave Britnell, Danylo Darewych, February 15, 2009)

Location: Leftmost route on the right (south) end of the cliff.

Route description: In a fat year this route is just the left side of the wide flow that is *Lepus*. In a thin year, or later in the season, it's a separate line (as in the cliff photo on

page 20). Start 5m left and about 8m upslope from the start of *Lepus*, at the ice ramp to the left of a big block. Head rightwards up the ramp, then romp upwards, staying on the left side of the flow until the ice peters out in juniper bushes, and finally head for the nearest tree. Or head right to the top section of *Lepus*. Rap down *Lepus*.

Consistency: Very good.

Name explanation: Named by Dave “Goo” Britnell, who does things in his own unique style.

Lepus Americanus (Snowshoe Hare), WI2+, 65 m (John Chan, Don Collier, Feb. 15, 2009)

Location: On the left side of the right (south) end of the cliff.

Route description: Start at a big fat bulge to the right of a big block. Hop happily up fat bulges and easy angled ice for a full rope length. Set up a screw belay at a low-angle ice bulge or, if the second can simul-climb a short distance, there is a suitable tree to belay from. Rap from a tree to climber’s right of the top section (two ropes required) or walk off to climber’s far right (where the cliff peters out).

Consistency: Very good. Seems to come in every year. Single, huge, wide sheet earlier in the season (February), two separate distinct lines later in the season (March) when the left side (*Reversus Operandi*) separates. Can have a fair bit of snow cover. It’s in to about mid-March.

Name explanation by John Chan: “Fits the character of the climb well, as the snowshoe hare’s camouflage changes with the seasons like the climb (chilly and icy at the bottom, but springlike and bare at the top).”



Left: Dave Britnell doing it his way on the FA of *Reversus Operandi*. February 15, 2009. Photo by Danylo Darewych. Right: Start of *Lepus Americanus*. March 15, 2009. Photo by Dave Britnell.



Left: Danylo Darewych on the first ascent of *Quercus*. February 15, 2009. Photo by David Britnell. Right: Pietro Puozuoli at the top of the steep section of *Hystrix*. January 13, 2011. Photo by Antonio Segura.

Quercus (Oak), WI4, 23 m (Danylo Darewych, Dave Britnell, John Chan, Don Collier, February 15, 2009)

Location: Middle ice on the right (south) end of the cliff. Approach from the lake up the slope to the base of the route.

Route description: Climb the pillar in a bit of a corner straight up for 8-10 m (quite pumpy; there are two not-completely-restful ledges for one foot on the right side), then continue up easier bulges for 10-15 m, and head for nearest tree.

Consistency: Doesn't come in solidly every year. It's probably only good to the end of February, as the sun really clobbers this climb.

Name explanation: It's a stout route. The belay tree at its end is an oak (at least, I think it's an oak; otherwise, this will be the second biggest misnomer in Ontario after *One Pine* at Bon Echo).

Hystrix (Porcupine), WI3+, 20 m (Danylo Darewych, Pietro Puozuoli, Antonio Segura, January 13, 2011).

Location: Just to the right (5 m) of *Quercus*.

Route description: Head up an initial 4-5 m vertical section (thin, bubbly) up and around thin pillar (awkward) onto big ledge/cave. Step delicately out right onto another vertical section (4-5 m), then pick a line up easier-angled bulges (10 m) before juniper-jumping for another 7-10 m to a belay tree. The big ledge/cave gets covered completely by thin icicles later in the season of a good year.

Consistency: Inconsistent

Name explanation: I almost blew off the initial section when a foot popped off a bub-

ble as I was reaching for a screw. As a result I was a lot nervous on lead (close to hysterics ☺) while making the step out right from the ledge (I felt like curling up into a ball; even Elvis made an appearance), so I used a full quiver of quills for some extra courage (4 screws in 5 feet - I have no shame; well, there were quite a few air pockets - that's my story and I'm sticking to it).

Lontra (Otter), WI 2, 30 m? (Danylo Darewych, Catherine Ranger, March 9, 2008)

Location: Rightmost ice at the right end of the cliff. Approach from the lake up the slope to the base of the route.

Route description: Start at a big, fat, wide, blue 4-5 m ice bulge, onto a snowy ledge, past a tree into a left-facing corner with another section of more vertical ice (7-10 m), then head uphill up the low angled slope, connecting blobs of ice, weaving around blocks, wallowing in snow to the nearest tree (another 20 m?).

Consistency: Comes in every year. The amount of ice depends on the snow cover. I'm not completely sure how much actual ice there is on this route, because when we did it there was a tonne of snow. Despite this, I thoroughly enjoyed the route – the sunshine, the elevation gain, the views from the top. Others might not be so appreciative.

Name explanation: Looking down the snowy gullies from the top, I thought to myself “Wouldn't it be nice and quick to slide down like an otter?” Then I looked at all the sharp, pointy implements attached to me, thought better of it, and walked off to the left.

Bear Lake

On a short cliff band on the west side of Bear lake (across the lake from the main cliff of Kluge Lookout) there is one more short climb:

Stray Cat, WI3(+), 7 m (Justin Bryant, Doug Smith, Dave Broadhead, February 18, 2012).

Climb the obvious column with one semi decent rest halfway up. Really short, but kind of steep for a 3. (A tip of the hat to all the "cat" climbs at Blackcat Hill). *DB*



Danylo whooping it up on the first bulge of *Lontra*. March 9, 2008. Photo by Catherine Ranger.

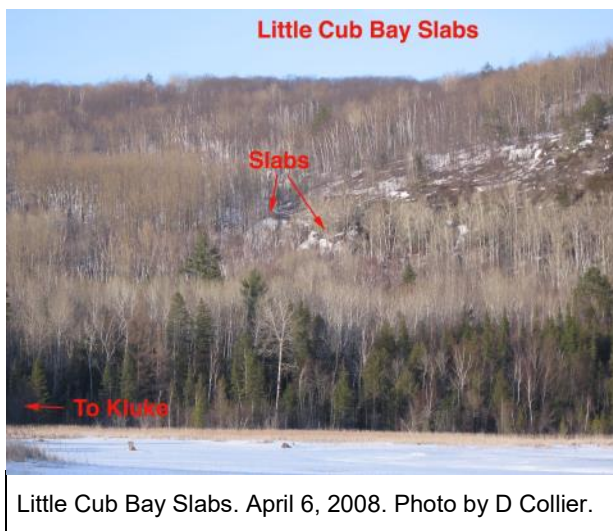


Justin Bryant on *Stray Cat*, Feb. 18, 2012. Photo by David Broadhead.

Little Cub Bay Slabs,

WI2 15-20 m (Don Collier,
April 9, 2007)

If you do take the over-the-top-of-Kluke route to get to Blackcat Hill you will pass by some easy-angled ice-covered slabs at the north-east corner of Little Cub Bay (Map 31 F/12, Ref 741444). These were climbed by Don Collier “in a new route haze” on the way to Blackcat and in his words are: “Probably covered with snow most of the year and not worth the effort unless you happen to go right by them.”



Little Cub Bay Slabs. April 6, 2008. Photo by D Collier.

Blackcat Hill

by Danylo Darewych

Blackcat Hill is a distant, remote crag that has a number of long and interesting routes, some of which last well into April. It is one of the few crags in Southern Ontario that faces north. It gets practically no sun in the winter months, and then only some in the late afternoon in March/April. As a result it can be painfully frigid at the base of the crag, even in March. It is a long drive from Toronto and a slog to get to.

Geology: The rock is “part of a large intrusive mass known as the Algonquin Batholith¹ (Lumbers, 1980). This same body underlies most of the eastern side of Algonquin Provincial Park. These are Mesoproterozoic intrusive rocks some 1450 to 1420 million years old. Work by Eastern (1992) and others of the Ontario Geological Survey indicates this area to be part of a structural area termed the Opeongo Domain of the Algonquin Terrain. Quaternary deposits are confirmed to the east end of Bell Bay.”²

Flora: The area is home to some species of plants that are normally found much further north. “Significant plants with arctic affinities ... are Encrusted Saxifrage, Three-toothed Cinquefoil, Fragrant Cliff Fern and a grass Narrow False Oats (*Trisetum spicatum*). These plants are provincially common and secure but at their southern extreme located in a unique isolated habitat.”³

Directions:

Blackcat Hill is located east of the town of Madawska on the south shore of Little Cub Bay of Bark Lake in the Madawaska Highlands (see map in Kluke Lookout description). Map 21 F/5, reference 743420. Three approaches can be used to reach Blackcat Hill.

¹ A batholith (from Greek bathos, depth + lithos, rock) is a large emplacement of igneous intrusive (also called plutonic) rock that forms from cooled magma deep in the Earth's crust. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Batholith>

² http://nhic.mnr.gov.on.ca/areas/areas_report.cfm?areaid=3017

³ <http://madawaskavalley.on.ca/municipal/documents/Initial%20Environmental%20Impact%20Study%20-%20Bark%20Lake.pdf>



Overview photo of Blackcat Hill. April 6, 2008.

1) *By going past the Kluge Lookout (Bear Mountain) cliff.* Follow the directions given for Kluge Lookout. Then continue past the Kluge Lookout cliff to the south end of Bear Lake (watch for thin ice at the beaver dam), follow a creek southwards for 300m (a bit bushwacky, but not bad) to the north end of Little Cub Bay of Bark Lake. Cross the bay to its south end. Blackcat Hill and the wide fat flow of Fat Cat will be easily visible from the middle of the bay - head straight for them (you may have to detour slightly around the outflow creek from Little Cub Bay to Bark Lake). The distance is some 3.7 km. Time will vary from 1.5 hours in good snow conditions to well over 2 hours when the snow is deep and non-supportive (the last 250 m from the shoreline of Little Cub Bay to the base of the cliff being especially unpleasant).

2) *By going over Kluge Lookout (Bear Mountain).* If you are approaching in very late season and the ice on the lakes is suspect, you can get to Blackcat Hill by taking the trail from Highway 60 (same start as above) to near the top of Kluge Lookout (Bear Mountain), then bushwacking down its southern slopes (not bad) to the north-east corner of Blackcat Hill, passing by the Little Cub Bay slabs (quite bushwacky), then skirting the eastern shore (mucky and reedy at first) and southern shore (sandy, gravelly) of Little Cub Bay, and hopping one creek to get to Blackcat Hill. 2 hours+. Only for the truly committed (or those who should be).

3) *By walking along an old logging road/trail* that drops into the northwest corner of Little Cub Bay. To find the start of this trail, drive east from the town of Madawaska on Highway 60 for 7.5 km, looking for a slight opening (not flagged) in the woods on the south side of the highway. A semi-useful landmark is a sign for Barkwick camp (facing east and tottering over) some 70m further along on the north side of the highway. Follow the road/trail (snowshoes a must). It will make two left-hand turns (in small clearings) and contour gradually and steadily downwards around a hill. When you can see a lake through the trees on your left, leave the trail and head down to the lake (100m) – this is Little Cub Bay. The rest of the approach is as described in option 1. The distance is close to 4 km.

Fat Cat, WI3, 45 m (FA Danylo Darewych, Zbyszek Kielb, Omri Menashe, March 11, 2006).

The obvious fat, blue flow in the middle of the crag. It's 10-15 metres wide. The route starts with an initial 8 m vertical step to a big wide, sloping ice ledge, followed by another 30+ metres of fat ice to the top. Good stances for placing screws. The ice lasts well into April.

Alley Cat, WI3+ or WI 4-, 22 m (FA Danylo Darewych, Don Collier, David Britnell, April 9, 2007).

Located in the corner/open book 10 m right of *Fat Cat*. Scramble up, over easy-angled snow and/or ice for 10m, past a large cedar to a big ledge/platform – this is where the route starts.

The route forms every year, but can vary greatly in nature – from a wide, fat sheet that fills the whole corner, to a thin column in the back of the corner, or a thick fat pillar. Expect some tricky, balancy moves from right to left at the crux.



John Chan on the steeper left side of *Fat Cat*.
March 22, 2009. Photo by Don Collier.



Two different views of *Alleycat*:
left photo – March 11, 2006 (fat), right – April 9, 2007 on FA (thin). Photos by Zbyszek Kielb, Don Collier.





Left: *Thundercat*, March 22, 2009. Right: Danylo Darewych starting off on *Tomcat*. April 6, 2008. Photos by Don Collier.

The next two routes, *Jungle Cat* and *Thundercat*, are located side by side in a small alcove some 25 m left of *Fat Cat*. *Jungle Cat* is on the right, *Thundercat* is on the left. Only about 5 metres separate these two routes, yet, surprisingly, they form as completely independent lines. These two routes don't form every year. The ice can be thin and nastily brittle.

Jungle Cat, WI3 M3, 25 m (FA John Chan, Don Collier, March 22, 2009)

The right side route in the alcove. A thin route. Weave among trees to a narrow column of hard-to-protect vertical ice some two and half body lengths high (rock gear, perhaps BD stoppers #4-6 and CCH blue Alien, would give some protection options on the rock corner). A few foot placements on rock may be necessary. Follow more easily angled ice to the top. Rap the route (guaranteed rope mess).

Thundercat, WI4, 25 m (FA Dave Broadhead, Danylo Darewych, March 22, 2009)

The left side route in the alcove. Follow a thin smear of easy angled ice for 5-8m to a very thin vertical column. Find a stance on the right on a bit of a ledge, delicately climb the thin column (6 m), step around tree (either right or left), then squeeze left past a big block, and up a final bulge to the top. Thin ice, awkward, balancy moves, and poor protection at the crux make this climb more difficult than the amount of vertical would suggest. Rap the route.

Tomcat, WI4-, 35-40 m (FA, Danylo Darewych, Don Collier, Jon Gullett, April 6, 2008). GPS co-ordinates: N45 29.830 W77 53.191

This route isn't really visible from the lake, because it is hidden by trees. To get to it, head for the thin ice line visible at the left end of the cliff (this is *Pussycat*). As you get to the base of *Pussycat*, *Tomcat* becomes visible just to the left of *Pussycat*.

Tomcat starts up some easier-angled (WI3) thin ice among trees for about 25 metres, but finishes with a really nice 10-12 m just off-vertical (85 degree) corner. The ice can be a dripping, unprotectable, chandelieri mess on the top section, but the position makes up for it.

Pussycat, WI 3+, 35-40 m (FA, Danylo Darewych, Jon Gullett, Don Collier, April 6, 2008).

Another worthwhile and interesting route. *Pussycat* is visible from the lake as a narrow route on the left end of the cliff.

Pussycat starts 5 metres to the right of *Tomcat*. The route does not seem to touch down all the way to the base of the cliff, so start by climbing the first 10-15 metres of *Tomcat* (which starts just to the left), traverse right through some trees, and continue up *Pussycat*. The next 10-15 metres are fairly easy angled, but then the route kicks back for the final 10-12 metres to almost vertical (although not quite as steep as *Tomcat*). The ice is only about 2 body widths wide, but quite thick at this point, so the protection is actually worth something. The route ends under a small overhang covered with a thin layer of completely unbonded ice. Prepare to make a sketchy traverse left over loose rocks, using an only-slightly alive, stunted cedar as a handhold and then exit through some annoying cedar shrubbery (I hauled on it shamelessly). Or make a v-thread in the thick ice under the overhang.

This route would be harder (WI4), if the ice touched down all the way to the bottom, because the ice would spill over a small roof 5 metres from the ground, and probably be very thin.



Above: Looking up at the top part of *Tomcat*.

Below: Danylo on *Pussycat*, after traversing in from *Tomcat*. April 6, 2008.

Photos by Don Collier.



Lodging

Here are some suggestions for lodging in the area. We've only stayed at the Maynooth Hostel/Arlington Hotel and the Mad Musher. Some friends have stayed at the Riverland Lodge. I have no first hand knowledge of the others.

1) South Algonquin Backpackers Hostel/Arlington Hotel, Maynooth

(613) 338-2080; 1-800-595-8064 <http://thearlington.ca>

Corner of Hwys 62 & 127 in downtown Maynooth (that's an oxymoron). New owners. \$25 per person per night for a dorm room; \$35 for single occupancy private room; \$58 for double occupancy private room (taxes included). The cheapest place to stay in the general area. The place has a lot of "character" and it's usually empty. There is a pub on the ground floor, with live music on some weekends (which can be quite noisy, if you're on the floor just above the pub).

2) Riverland Lodge, Madawaska

(613) 637-5338 www.riverlandlodge.com

On Hwy 60 just east of the intersection with Hwy 523 before the Madawaska R Bridge. There are four rooms from \$60 for two people to \$150 for 6. Breakfast is included. Diners are available at an extra cost. They have an accommodation special for snowmobilers and ATVers— \$60 + 13% HST per person per day for dinner, breakfast, accommodation.

3) All Star Resort, 1 Major Lake Rd., Madawaska.

(613) 637-5592; 1-800-565-0364 www.allstarresort.com

7 cottages — the cheapest being \$153 plus 13% HST per night for 4 people.

Also one motel style room for \$95 plus 13% HST for two people.

There is even a lodge for 10 people at \$450 + HST per night (but 2 night minimum stay)

Pre-booked continental breakfast package available for a small additional charge

4) Spectacle Lake Lodge

613-756-2324 ; 1-800-567-4044 www.spectaclelakelodge.com

11 km east of Madawaska, 17 km west of Barry's Bay off Highway 60.

A variety of different cottages from \$240 to \$300 per night for 4 people (but you have to stay 2 nights minimum). Lodge rooms are from \$120-\$180 for 2 people.

There is a winter special, which includes dinner and breakfast, for \$120 plus 13% HST per person (not sure if that applies to ice climbers though).

5) Mad Musher Hostel, Highway 60, Whitney

613-637-2820; 1-866-551-5534 www.madmusher.com

4 private rooms available with shared bathrooms; kitchen facilities; common room with satellite TV. Prices for 2 people vary between \$55 - \$68; 3 people - \$80; 4 people - \$95 plus 13% HST. There is a restaurant on the premises.

There are other motels in Whitney (not sure what's open in winter), Bancroft and Barry's Bay.

Food

There is nothing open in Maynooth or Madawaska at the time of day when climbers are looking either for breakfast or dinner. Options in the general area include:

1) Porterville Diner on Highway 127 in Lake St. Peter, which is open 7:00 - 8:30 on weekends. (613) 338-3043

2) Honey Doo's Café on Highway 127 in Lake St. Peter, which is open 6:00 - 7:00 (closed Tuesday). (613) 338-3194

3) Spectacle Lake Lodge (a couple of kilometres past the Kluge Lookout access trail; see previous page), 8:00 - 7:00 (9:00-7:00 on Sundays).

4) Mad Musher in Whitney (see previous page), 11:30-9:00 (8:00 on Sundays).

Otherwise, the closest restaurants and fast food joints are in Barry's Bay and Bancroft.

If you're staying in the Maynooth hostel or at the Mad Musher hostel, the easiest solution is to bring your own food and cook in the hostel kitchen. There are two grocery stores in Bancroft and two in Barry's Bay. Madawaska only has one poorly stocked corner stores. I'm not sure what's in Whitney.

Forgot your snowshoes? The Spectacle Lake Lodge has 8 pairs of snowshoes for rent in various sizes. Snowshoe rentals are \$15 for a half-day (4 hours) or \$25 per day.

Come for the climbing, but enjoy the views. Below: Andriy Kolos at McCauley Lake, February, 2011. Facing page top: John Chan at McCauley Lake, Feb. 14, 2009. Facing page bottom: Danylo Darewych hiking out from Blackcat Hill across Little Cub Bay towards Kluge Lookout, March 16, 2013. Photo by Rob Borotkanics.





