Outcrops

An Eternally Incomplete Compendium of Ontario Shield Climbing Esoterica

Mississagi River Valley, Highway 129 and Havilah Rock Climbs, Algoma

By Danylo Darewych

"Other than Bon Echo, Rattlesnake Point and the Gatineau, 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

"Alive in the superunknown
First it steals your mind
And then it steals your soul"

Soundgarden, *Superunknown*, 1994

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: The left side of the cliff at Cumming's Lake catching some late afternoon sun, July 1, 2012.

Back Cover: Jesse Brown stemming at the top of the *Welcome to Canada* chimney, July 4, 2004. Photo taken from Jesse Brown's now defunct website bigwalling.com

Table of Contents

Introduction 2
A Word of Caution..... 3
Highway 129 Distances Chart..... 5
Intersection Rock/American Wall..... 6
Cumming's Lake - Rock Candy Mountain (General Description)..... 8
Location/ Approach Directions 9
Poison Ivy 11
Left Wall 13
Right Wall..... 21
Pullout Rock..... 23
Stoney Creek..... 24
Roadside #1 25
Kayak Cliff..... 28
Bench 30
Slab-Bottom Cliff..... 33
MBO 35
Bog Wall 38
Little Trout Creek 39
Peshu Lake Cliff 42
Roadside..... 45
Roadyard..... 47
Hinckler 50
Jack's Wall..... 51
Havilah Mountain 52
Geology..... 57

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

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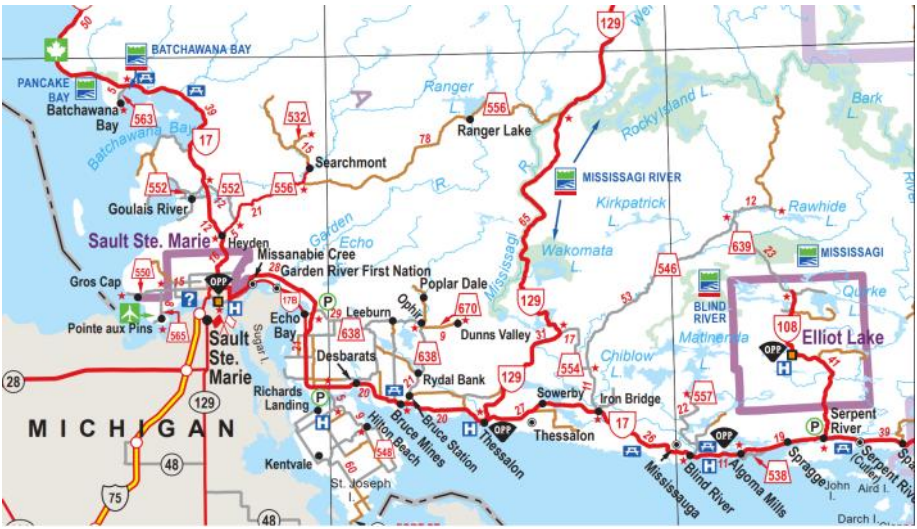
Introduction

This guidebook provides a description of rock climbing routes and rock climbing potential at the cliffs in the Mississagi River Valley, along Highway 129 and in Havilah in the Algoma region north of Lake Huron in Ontario. Highway 129 runs north from Thessalon on the shore of the North Channel of Lake Huron for 221 km to Chapleau. The highway is lined with spectacular cliffs on both sides of the road in the stretch from the 30 km mark to about 115 km. The section along the Mississagi River is especially picturesque.

There are many, many cliffs and many kilometres of cliff line along Highway 129. The cliffs come in all shapes and sizes. Many are broken, vegetated, short, mossy and of little interest to climbers. Some are tall, stunning, steep and spectacular. The odd stretch of overhanging rock is even clean. Some cliffs are literally roadside, most are a short 15 minute hike away, some are located on the other side of the Mississagi River and only accessible by boat.

A lifetime of rock climbing adventure awaits the intrepid explorer. Yours to discover.



Thessalon is located on the north shore of Lake Huron between Sault Ste. Marie and Sudbury. It is 92 km east of Sault Ste. Marie, 218 km west of Sudbury and 600 km from Toronto.

Climbing in the Wilderness - A Word of Caution

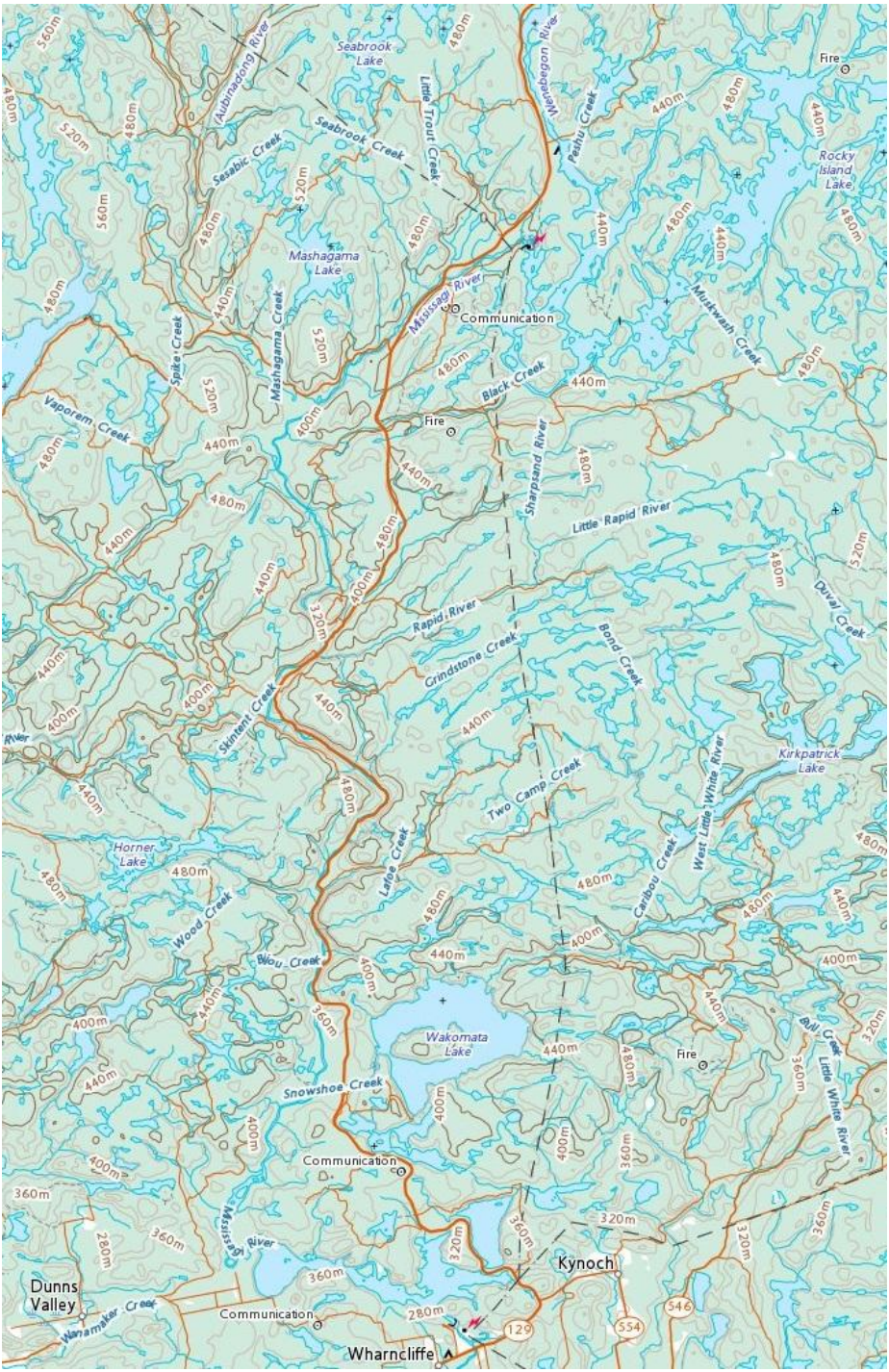
Climbing at the cliffs in Ontario's north is Ontario backcountry adventure climbing at its finest. It offers what few cliffs in Southern Ontario can - long, multi-pitch routes. The height gain and exposure are exhilarating, but can also be intimidating and disconcerting, if you're not used to them. A steady head and a cautious approach are required.

None of the routes described in this guidebook are well travelled. Some of the routes have now seen 2-3 ascents, but others have never been repeated. Do not assume that the routes are completely safe. An effort has been made to remove obvious, loose death blocks, but expect to find loose rock, dirty cracks and lichen. Test all holds, bang on flakes, pull down (not out) on blocks, and tread lightly when necessary. A hold that may have been solid one year, can come loose in the next. Bring your own scrub brushes and be prepared to use them (wire brushes are fine).

The protection is generally good or at least sufficient, but since the cracks are rarely completely clean, learn to place your cams as you would nuts—behind slight constrictions or rugosities; or else be prepared not to trust them and avoid falling. There are very few continuous or long cracks. Instead there are many shorter cracks of varying widths formed by the cleaving of various sized blocks. Cracks formed by large, heavy blocks on flat ledges with much surface friction are generally OK to place cams behind*; cracks formed by smaller blocks or flakes are suspect. Use your good judgement. Most routes demand a full range of cams - from the very small micro-sizes to #4 Camalots. Offset cams are useful to have. Even the long, mostly-bolted routes should not be treated as sport climbs at your local crag, but rather as adventure climbs. Climbing at the edge of your abilities and taking multiple whippers halfway up the cliffs, as if you were working a project, is not recommended.

Climb conservatively and within your limits. Be prepared to retreat — carry extra cordelette, slings, a knife and quicklinks or rap rings. Wear a helmet.

Having an accident on a long, multi-pitch route is not a pleasant experience. Even a minor injury, like a twisted ankle, can turn getting down and across the talus to the road into a time-consuming, complicated epic. It is highly unlikely that there will be any other climbers around that can help you. There are no emergency personnel trained in vertical rescue in the area, as far as I know. **It is from 35 km to 120 km to the nearest hospital in Thessalon.**


Seabrook Lake
Seabrook Creek
Sesabic Creek
Little Trout Creek
Wanebegon River
Peshu Creek
Fire
Rocky Island Lake
Mashagama Lake
Mashagama Creek
Spike Creek
Mississagi River
Communication
Muskwash Creek
Black Creek
Vaporem Creek
Sharpland River
Little Rapid River
Duval Creek
Rapid River
Grindstone Creek
Bond Creek
Skintent Creek
Kirkpatrick Lake
Two Camp Creek
West Little White River
Horner Lake
Large Creek
Caribou Creek
Wood Creek
Blow Creek
Wakomata Lake
Bull Creek
Little White River
Snowshoe Creek
Mississagi River
Kynoch
Dunns Valley
Wanamaker Creek
Wharncliffe
129
554
546

Highway 129 Distances

Location	Distance from Intersection of Highway 17 and 129 in Thessalon Heading North	Distance from Intersection of Highways 129 and 554 near Kynoch Heading North
Wharncliffe	26.5 km	
Intersection Rock	30.1 km	
Highway 129 and 554 Intersection	30.7 km	0.0 km
Tunnel Lake Trading Post	32.5 km	1.8 km
Dirt road to Cumming's Lake Trailhead	32.7 km	2.0 km
Tunnel Lake Narrows	34.5 km	3.8 km
Pullout Rock	54.3 km	23.6 km
Stoney Creek	58.2 km	27.5 km
Roadside Cliff 1	60.2 km	29.5 km
(Sand) Pit Pullout	61.8 km	31.1 km
Mississagi Riverside Campsites	61.9 km	31.2 km
Pig Pen Chute (Rapids)	63.2 km	32.5 km
Other Side (Kayak) Cliff	66.2 km	35.5 km
The Bench	71.8 km	41.1 km
Uphill Ice	72.8 km	42.1 km
Slab-Bottom Cliff	73.4 km	42.6 km
Roadside Cliff 2	74.1 km	43.4 km
Rapid River	78.9 km	48.2 km
Bigger Bridge over Mississagi River	79 km	48.3 km
Smaller Bridge over Sharpsand River (MBO)	81.2 km	50.5 km
Seymour Lake Rd	82 km	51.3 km
Gravel River	82.3 km	51.6 km
Sharpsand River #1	83.7 km	53 km
Bog Wall Clearcut (east of highway)	86.4 km	55.7 km
Bog Wall Creek Bridge (Sharpsand River #2)	87.2 km	56.5 km
Black Creek Outfitters	92.3 km	61.6 km
Aubrey Falls Trading Post and Resort	93.7 km	63 km
Highway 556 (Ranger Lake Road)	96.5 km	65.8 km
Road to Aubrey Falls Hydro Station	101.2 km	70.5 km
Bridge Over Mississagi	101.6 km	70.9 km
Dirt road to Little Trout Creek	102.3 km	72.2 km
Aubrey Falls Provincial Park Road	106 km	75.9 km
Peshu Lake Road	111 km	80.9 km
Roadside Cliff #3	121.1 km	90.4 km
Roadyard Cliff	121.6 km	90.9 km
Hinkler Road	124.5 km	93.8 km
Jack's Wall	134.7 km	104 km

Intersection Rock/American Wall

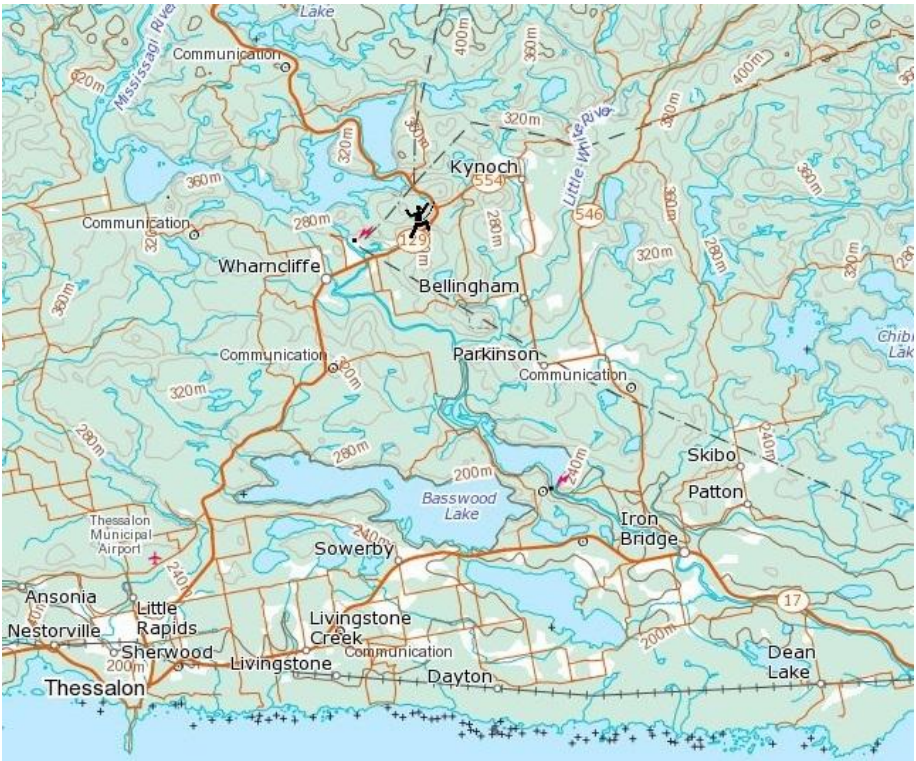
Intersection Rock/American Wall is a 35 m tall, 400 m long cliff* a mere 100 m from the road that is primarily of interest to ice climbers in winter. No rock climbs have been climbed here to my knowledge, although there is potential for steep rock climbs on the right side of the cliff. The routes would likely have to be bolted. However, the cliff appears to be on private property, so time and effort is probably best expended elsewhere.

Location

This cliff is located near the intersection of Highways 129 and 554 north of the Iron Bridge/Thessalon area, midway between Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. You can get there in two ways:

1) From Iron Bridge: From Highway 17 (Trans-Canada) in Iron Bridge, head north along Highway 546 for 11 km. At this point Highway 546 veers right (north). Continue instead on Highway 554 for another 5.4 km as the highway heads west and north until it ends at the intersection with Highway 129. Turn left (south) along Highway 129 for 650-700 m. The cliff will be on the north side of the road.

2) From Thessalon: From the intersection of Highway 17 (Trans-Canada) and Highway 129 in Thessalon head north for 30 km along Highway 129. The cliff will be on the north side of the road, just before a bend and the intersection with Highway 554. Park at the side of the road.



* According to Robertson,J.A., and Card, K.D, *Geology and Scenery, North Shore of Lake Huron Region; Ontario Geological Survey, Geological Guide Book 4,* 1972, p. 186 the cliff is composed of "Gowganda Formation graded greywacke."

Above: The right side of *Intersection Rock/American Wall.* Below: Stefan Kloppenborg on his mixed route *I'm Afraid of Americans*, February 13, 2016.

I'm Afraid of Americans, M7, 20 m, 11 bolts (Stefan Kloppenborg, Feb. 13, 2016).

This mixed ice climb might be climbable as a mixed rock route, if you can find rock protection in the first 7 m. After that it is bolted to the top.

It is located towards the left end of the crag. Look for a big right-facing corner system with a smoother wall on the left and a crack running up the back of the corner.

Cumming's Lake Cliff — Rock Candy Mountain

The Cumming's Lake cliff is an impressive, 80 m high, diorite cliff on the shore of Cumming's Lake. The cliff appears to be called by the name Rock Candy Mountain, although this may also be the name of a height of land further inland.

This cliff has seen little development, in part because of its location far from major climbing centres, and in part because of the poison ivy (which grows abundantly nearly everywhere right at the base of the cliff).

Documented route development here was done by Jesse Brown (and friends) from Michigan in 2004, who put up at least two routes (*Welcome to Canada* and *Paul's Route*) and posted information on rockclimbing.com.* One route was also climbed by Dylan Cumming and Steve Foster from Sault Ste. Marie. However, climbing at Cumming's Lake appears to precede these developments, because we found an old ring piton near the belay bolts of pitch 1 of *Welcome to Canada.* This ring piton came out in Stefan Kloppenborg's hand when he clipped a screamer to it.

The quality of the routes that have been developed has been described by Jesse Brown as being "stellar, with a mix of crack and bolted face climbing (and great potential for far more lines)." Shaun Parent, a geologist and climber from Sault Ste. Marie/Batchawana Bay, however, warns that the cliff is dangerous, with much loose rock. You will, in fact, find both the stellar and the incredibly loose at Cumming's Lake.

The cliff is divided into two distinct halves, separated by a large talus slope. The left side is taller and cleaner; the right side is shorter and much more vegetated.

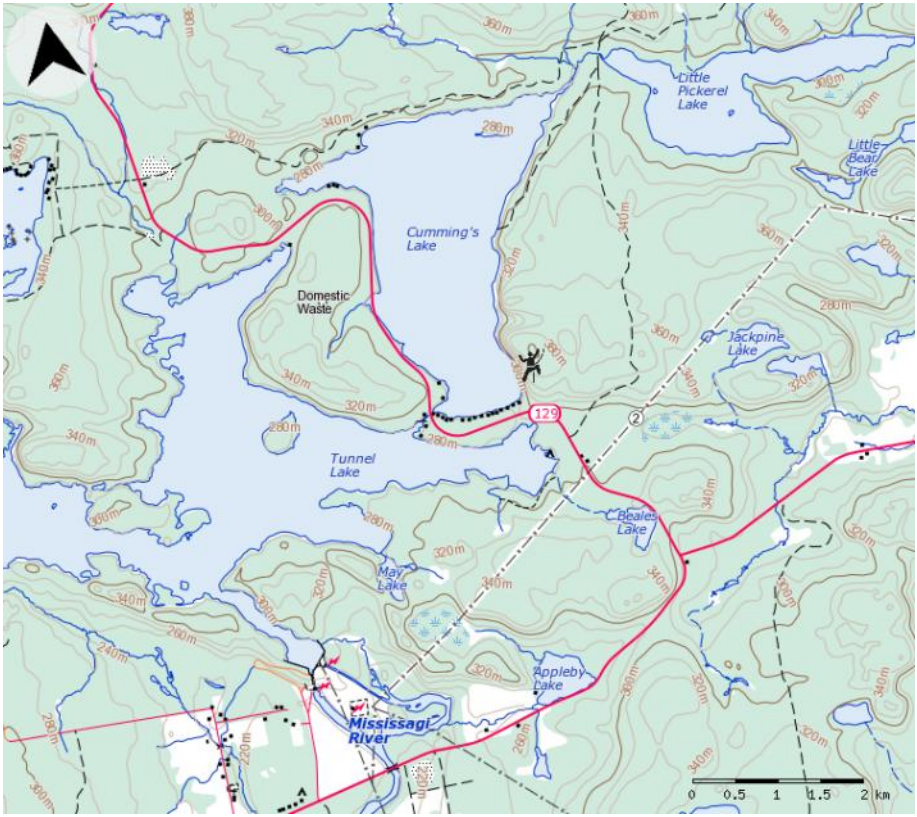
An old ring piton pulled from a crack a couple of feet climber's left of the first pitch belay bolts of *Welcome to Canada*.

* http://www.rockclimbing.com/routes/North_America/Canada/Ontario/North_Western_Ontario/Cummings_Lake/

Location

Cumming's Lake is located on Highway 129 in Algoma, 34 km north of Thessalon, Ontario.

From Thessalon simply head north on Highway 129. If you're coming from the east it is faster to head north from Iron Bridge on 546 and 554. At about 32.5 km north of Thessalon you will pass the Tunnel Lake Trading Post on the right, then the road will make a sharp bend (left) west along the south shore of Cumming's Lake (you won't be able to see the lake at this point because of the trees) and then 1 km further along another sharp turn right (north) along the west shore of Cumming's Lake. At this point, if you look right (east) across Cumming's Lake, you will be able to get a good view of the cliffs on the south-east shore of Cumming's Lake.



Approach directions

There are two overland approaches that can be used to get to the cliff – one along the lakeshore/talus and one along the clifftop trail (that can be reached from 2 different trailheads).

1) This is the recommended trail. About 100 m north of the Tunnel Lake Trading Post there is a dirt logging road/ATV track on the right which opens up to a large clearing (an old, filled-in gravel pit?) where you can park your car. From the big field walk 20-30 m further down the dirt logging road and look for a hiking path on your left. Signs mark the start of the trail.

The trail is broad and well-trodden. Follow the path as it heads uphill through a pleasant maple forest. You should cross a small creek (although this dries up in a dry summer) and then come to an intersection where another trail joins from the left. Head right and continue to the top of the cliff. The trail reaches the top of the highest point above the cliff in about 1200 metres This should take 15-20 minutes.

2) This is the alternate trailhead. From the parking area on the dirt road walk along Hwy 129 around the big left-hand bend for about 400 m to the first driveway on the right side of the road (labelled number 6452, David and Phyllis Cox on the mailbox). Walk down this driveway – partway down it you will come to a faint dirt path on your right that locals use to get to the top of the cliff (marked with a plastic pail on a tree). The trail heads gradually to the top of the cliff (about 1 km, 15 minute's walk).

From the top of the cliff you can descend down to the base of the cliff by walking down the huge talus gully/slope that separates the left and right cliff sections. This slope starts about 150 back from the open area at the top of the cliff. The gully is broad with some deadfall at the top and some unstable talus but no rappelling or downclimbing is needed. If you end up having to do any of these, you have started down in the wrong place.

3) Or from the driveway you can head up the trail for 30 m, then bushwack around the cottage for about 300 m to the edge of the talus/scree field at the base of the cliff, and follow it along to the cliff face. The talus field is quite extensive and tedious – travel is easier closer to the lake. I suspect you are crossing private property, if you use this approach. It is better to use the trails that go to the top. Hiking through the woods is more pleasant than trudging along the side of the road and teetering along the long talus/scree field along the base of the cliff.

Camping

Directly opposite the Rock Candy Mountain trailhead there is small one-car parking spot on the other side of the road. There is a narrow, grassy, clearing behind it, the overgrown remnants of narrow track. It is separated from the logging by a small row of trees and shrubs There is no water or outhouse here. You have to go to the Tunnel Lake Trading Post for those.

Otherwise, you can camp in the big clearing where you park your car or you can drive another kilometre down the logging road to another side logging road to the right. The road here is much rougher.

Poison Ivy

The cliff at Cumming's Lake is plagued by a veritable jungle of poison ivy which grows in big, leafy abundance all along the base of the cliff. If you want to climb at Cumming's Lake, come prepared to deal with it. The crux of your day may in fact be just getting to the base of the route.

Identification. First of all, learn to identify poison ivy. It is most easily recognised by its leaves. The leaves grow in groups of three from a long stem. Each group of three leaves grows on its own stem which in turn connects to a main vine. If there are more than 3 leaves on a stem - it isn't poison ivy. The leaves have a point at the end, tend to be smooth along the edges (at least that's the case at Cumming's Lake; they're known to be jagged in other areas) and often have a waxy, shiny top surface (but not always). Clusters of white berries are another indicator, but not all poison ivy plants have them. The poison ivy plants at Cumming's Lake vary in height, from low-lying ankle-biters to chest-high bushes.

Effects and causes. Contact with the poison ivy plant creates an incredibly itchy rash on the skin. The rash does not occur immediately. It usually takes 1-3 days for the rash to break out and at least a week for it to dissipate (if you're lucky). If you get a heavy dose, big blisters develop. The rash is caused by an oily resin called urushiol which is found in the leaves, stems and roots of poison ivy. Urushiol is potent - a nanogram of the stuff (1 billionth of a gram) is enough to cause a rash. Apparently, it is even found in the stems and leaves of a dead plant in the fall and winter (although I ignorantly yanked out a few dead-looking stems with my bare hands and never developed the rash on the palms of my hands). Moreover, urushiol is sticky, and can remain on clothes, shoes and tools for months. You can develop a rash by touching contaminated clothing and tools.

Avoidance and eradication. As you can tell, it is best to simply avoid poison ivy. Don't touch it. Unfortunately, it is not always possible to avoid it, especially if the base of the route you are trying to get to is covered in the stuff. Here are some suggestions - some tried and tested, some fanciful - for avoiding poison ivy or getting rid of it.

1) Go around it. Poison ivy does not like the shade. If there are tree or other bushy shrubs nearby, you might find a poison ivy free corridor around the stuff. Carry a stick to brush aside stray plants or crush them under rocks that you can then safely step on. Poison ivy tends to grow thickest at the sunny fringes of the green zone of plants at the base of the cliff, but sometimes it is intermingled throughout with raspberry and other bushes right to the base of the cliff and there is no getting around it.

2) Cut it back. Bring a pair of shears with you (the longer the handles the better) and cut a path through the poison ivy. Wear long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, and gloves. In fact, it is probably better to bring a complete change of clothes, because no matter how hard you try, you will end up brushing up against the poison ivy

plant somehow. Bag the clothes you wore while cutting the plants and wash them as soon as possible (or at least rinse them thoroughly in a stream or lake). We removed all the cut plants with a pair of sticks. Make sure you bring a large plastic sheet or garbage bag to flake the ropes out on, in case there are stray poison ivy leaves or uncut stems still lying around Go for a swim in the lake after your poison-ivy cutting session. This will remove any stray poison ivy oils from your skin. Cutting the poison ivy plant seems to be effective for most of the season. We cut a bunch of plants down at the start of July and the poison ivy hadn't regrown when we were back at the end of August.

3) Rappel in. If the route starts on a ledge or if the base is poison-ivy-free at the cliff face, and you know where the route tops out, then rapping in might be an option. Just remember to coil your rope and carry it down with you. If you just chuck it over the edge, the ends will invariably land in a bush of poison ivy.

4) Bring a goat. Apparently goats (and deer) like eating the stuff. In fact, animals aren't affected by poison ivy at all, just humans. Hire a goat from a local farmer, leave it tethered to the base of the cliff on a long chain for a couple of days and - voila! - no poison ivy.

5) Get industrial (Dylan's Proposal). Put on a Tyvek suit, gloves, mask, and goggles, haul in a weed wacker and destroy all the poison ivy bushes. Unfortunately, this will not completely eradicate the poison ivy, since it does not destroy the root system of the plant, but it should at least slow it down for a couple of years.

6) Napalm it (Randy's Solution). Get some industrial-strength herbicide (preferably from the US) and spray the poison ivy. This would be the most effective method as it not only kills the stems and leaves, but also the roots. It may be necessary to repeat the process in the following year as some plants manage to grow back. Unfortunately, you would need copious amounts of herbicide to deal with all the poison ivy at Cumming's Lake.

Caution. Do not burn poison ivy! Burning may release the poison into the air in the form of tiny droplets which then may be inhaled into the lungs and cause a severe reaction.

Whatever method you chose, be prepared to lose. Poison ivy is toxic, noxious, pernicious and evil. Sometimes you just can't win with it. Make sure you bring Calamine lotion with you.

Treatment. The poison ivy rash is caused by an oil. Wash, scrub, wash, scrub and scrub again to remove the oil from your skin. Otherwise - Calamine lotion.

Birds of Prey

The cliff at Cumming's Lake is periodically inhabited by some sort of species of winged raptor. I'm no expert, so they can be anything from ospreys to hawks to peregrine falcons. On one Victoria Day (late May) visit to Cumming's Lake, their screeching was quite vociferous and constant, even though we were nowhere near the big nest which appeared to be atop the *Welcome to Canada* pinnacle. On other visits we haven't seen them at all. If they are around, it's probably best to stay away from their nesting site, should it be in the vicinity of a climb. Firstly, it wouldn't be environmentally friendly to disturb them. Secondly, you wouldn't want to be dive-bombed mid-route by an angry, shrieking bundle of sharp talons and hooked beak.

Routes

The cliff is divided into two distinct halves – a shorter right side and a taller left side. A large, sloping ramp of talus separates the two halves. Almost all the known route development has been done on the taller left side.

Routes are described from left to right (north to south).

Left Side Wall

The Left Side Wall: A) *Paul's Route*, B) *Welcome to Canada,* C) *Hard Man Direct*, D) *Candyman Direct, E) Cat God,* F) *Dog's Breakfast (?)*, G) *Stefan's Route* and H) *Memories of Jenga*. Jan. 3, 2016.

The prominent left wall of the cliff rises 85 m above the talus field at its base. Most development has occurred here. Many of the route descriptions are taken from descriptions written on rockclimbing.com by Jesse Brown.

Paul's Route, 5.9, 80 m, 3 pitches, mixed*
(FA Jesse Brown, Paul, June 20, 2004; bolted and cleaned on rappel)*

CLASSIC line, worth three stars for sure (even without the cheesecake topout)! Awesome line! Amazing exposure and views!

Start ~75 yards to the left of *Welcome to Canada*. Beware the poison ivy at the base.

If you're rappelling in from the top, you can find the top of the route by heading along the clifftop trail until you reach the second clifftop bench (in memory of Paul McNabb - 1939-2015) and then angling downhill to the right through one line of trees..

• Pitch 1, 5.8+/5.9, 50 ft/15 m. Climb up an initially slightly overhanging face,

* Descriptions by Jesse Brown from http://www.rockclimbing.com/routes/North_America/Canada/Ontario/North_Western_Ontario/Cummings_Lake/ with additional info by me..

then continue up an easier-angled rib of rock to the anchors (6 bolts).

• Pitch 2, 5.8, 25 m. Follow the bolt line up a short corner crack, clip the high bolt on the face above and traverse lower to the right into a dihedral. Follow the right facing seam/finger crack in in the back of the dihedral (solid pro) to the bolted belay station (4 bolts, plus small cams up to 0.75 Camalot).

• Pitch 3, 5.9, 75 ft. Continue up, following the bolt line in the dihedral (plenty of bolts). Top out to a bolted belay and a wonderful little meadow. P1 and P3 are fully bolted. P2 requires a set of small Aliens and Camalots up to 0.75. Walk off or rappel using two ropes (the rappel is about 56 m). *JB*

Additional Note: I avoided the harder opening moves of pitch 1 by starting in the corner 2 m to the right (gear required at the start until you can reach over and clip the bolts). I also found small cams useful in between the bolts on the 3rd pitch. *DD*

The line of *Paul's Route*. The wide chimney at the right edge of the photo is *Welcome to Canada*.

A view up *Paul's Route* during development, showing the fixed line used when bolting/cleaning the route. The route generally follows the rope. June 20, 2004. From rockclimbing.com.
The start of the route is now much more vegetated. Some of the bolts are obscured by small cedar trees.

Jesse Brown shimmying up the chimney on *Welcome to Canada*. "BIG and continuous, but much easier than it looks at first sight (but aren't all chimneys that way?)." July 4, 2004. From rockclimbing.com

Welcome to Canada, 5.9 (FA Jesse Brown, Paul, May 15, 2004; bolted on lead during the FA, after extensive cleaning on rappel; Pitch 3 FA Dustin Hooey, Mike Park, April, 2021).*

This route climbs an imposing chimney between a skyscraper sized detached tower and the main wall (the chimney is on the left side of the detached tower) and then continues to the top of the cliff. *JB*

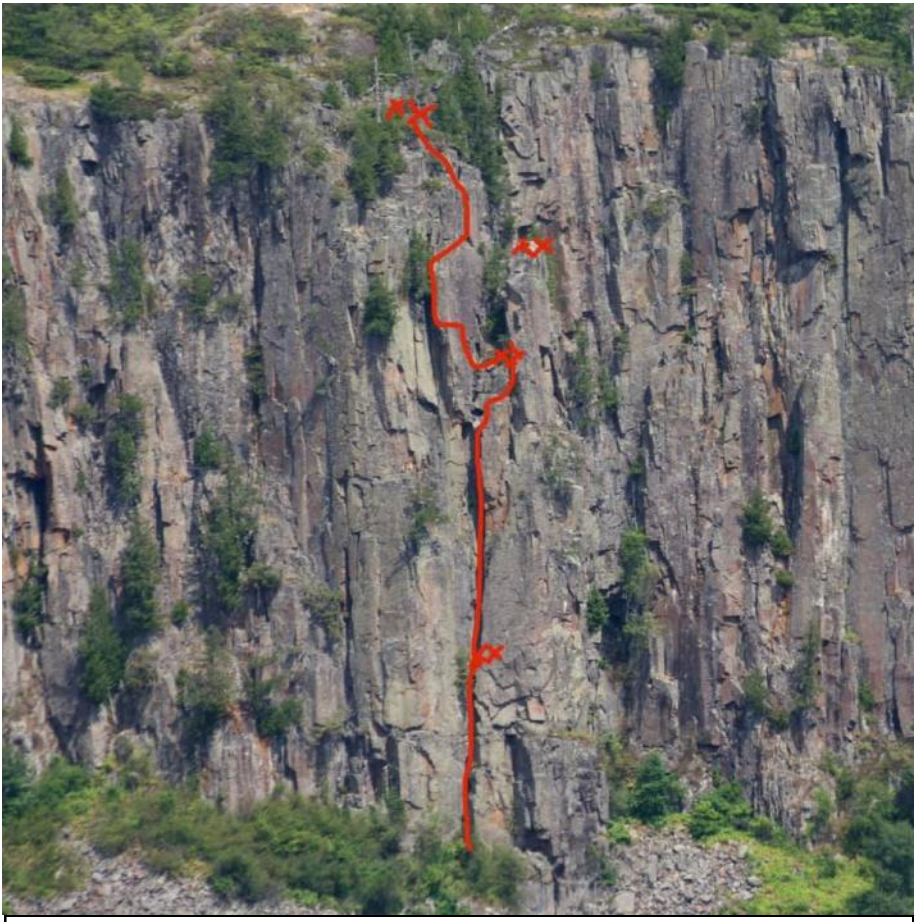
If approaching from the top, follow the trail to the memorial bench and make your way carefully down the steppy slope and bushes towards the rather prominent standing dead pine near the edge. Here you'll find the rap anchors. Rappel bearing a little climber's right over some juniper bushes down to the next anchor on the front side of the pinnacle. From here it's two raps to the ground with a single 60 m, or a single double rope rap on the outside of the spire. *DH*

Expect a lot of raspberry and other prickly bushes at the base and on the bottom half of pitch 1, as well as poison ivy at the base.

• Pitch 1, 5.4? 60 ft: Shimmy up some easy 5th class (2 bolts) to the belay/rap station on top of a huge chockstone in the chimney. *JB*

• Pitch 2, 5.7+/5.8, 90 ft: Proceed directly up the chimney, past the chockstone to a bolted anchor with chains (6 bolts). Or you can continue another 20 ft to the top of the pinnacle on trad gear (small nuts and cams). There is another 2 bolt anchor on the top of the pinnacle.

* Descriptions by Jesse Brown from http://www.rockclimbing.com/routes/North_America/Canada/Ontario/North_Western_Ontario/Cummings_Lake/ with additional info from Dustin Hooey.



The line of *Welcome to Canada*, as drawn by Dustin Hooey.

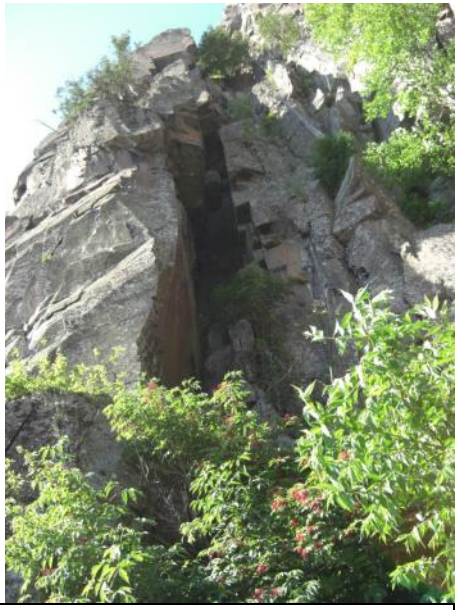
• Pitch 3, 5.9, 29 m (6 bolts). From the last belay anchor, move left up the face to the outside corner. A few harder (5.9?) moves will get you up the corner and back on the face. Follow the bolted line right again and up to the top. Over some juniper bushes near a standing dead pine you'll find the rap anchors. *DH*

• *Pitch 1 Variation, 5.5*: A (slightly) less vegetated and shorter alternative start to *Welcome to Canada.* Start on the right side of the detached tower. Head up to a ledge in a corner and traverse left 5 m to the pitch 1 belay station of *Welcome to Canada* on top of the detached block.

Hard Man Direct, 5.9, 80 m, 3 pitches, trad*

This route was named *Hard Man Direct* by Jesse Brown on rockclimbing.com. It may be the line of *Dog's Breakfast* that was first climbed by Dylan Cumming and Steve Foster or *Dog's Breakfast* may be located further right. Dylan and Steve only gave me a very vague description of the route, so I don't really know where it is. The description below is based on Jesse Brown's description of *Hard Man Direct* on rockclimbing.com.

* Descriptions by Jesse Brown from http://www.rockclimbing.com/routes/North_America/Canada/Ontario/North_Western_Ontario/Cummings_Lake/



Left: Mike Park on the traverse of pitch 3 of *Welcome to Canada,* April, 2021. Photo by Dustin Hooey. Right: Alternate right-side start to *Welcome to Canada.*
Below: The first pitch of *Hard Man Direct.* Photo by Jesse Brown.

Start at the base of the first major pillar to the right of *Welcome to Canada.*

• Pitch 1, 5.7, 75 ft.: Follow the face/thin crack on the right side of the pillar (nuts/cams) to a bolted belay/rap station (with chains).

• Pitch 2, 5.9, 90-100 ft: Following the dihedral formed by the pillar and the main wall, climb the face to a perfect right facing finger/hand/fist crack to the top of the pillar and a bolted belay/rap station. (nuts, small cams to #4 Camalot or equivalent)

• Pitch 3, 5.9, 100 ft: Heading right out over the void, climb the face to a bomb-bay chimney to a roof. Pull the roof to a semi-hanging bolted belay (no chains), or walk back 20ft to some trees. (4 bolts, thin wires to #4 Camalot). *JB*

About 100 m to the left (north) of the bottom of the descent gully there is a deep gash in the cliff (which also might be *Dog's Breakfast).* The clean buttress to the left of the deep gash in the cliff has been dubbed the Candy Cane by

The right end of the Left Side Cliff, July 1, 2012. *Welcome to Canada* is left of the big pillar in the middle of the photo, *Hard Man Direct* climbs the smaller pillar above the stand of trees, and the Candy Cane buttress lies to the left of the dark gash on the right side of the photo.

Dave Smart. Two routes climb the face of the Candy Cane.

These routes can also be accessed from the top by walking along the clifftop trail past the first bench in memory of Jane Mundy (which is above the tight-side cliff) and then further past the top of the talus slope/descent gully that splits the cliff system to an open area at the top of the cliff.

Candyman Direct, **5.11a, 80 m, 4 pitches, bolted.**
(FA: David Smart, Danylo Darewych, July 3, 2023**)

Two fun crack pitches followed by two fun sport pitches. Start below the thin crack on the left side of the wall at the base of the Candy Cane.

• Pitch 1, 5.9, 18 m. Climb the face and thin crack to the ledge below the corner.

• Pitch 2, 5.11a, 22m. Up the strenuous corner short corner, the clean crack, then the less stable, but easier crack above and on up to the belay ledge on the left.

• Pitch 3, 5.7, 22 m. Easier climbing up the bolt protected face to a ledge below the final wall.

• Pitch 4, 5.9, 18 m. Step left two metres and climb the bolt protected line of weakness to the top.

* I didn't climb the route cleanly. I pulled on draws, stepped on bolts and in the end avoided the crux at the start of the 2nd pitch by stepping to the right. We did find two old pins and tat at the belay ledge at the top of the first pitch. One of the pins had fallen out, the other is still there. *DD*

Catastrophic Implosion, 5.10b, 17 m, bolted.
(FA: David Smart, August, 2023)

This is a variation finish to *Candyman Direct.* Climb directly up the wall above the belay for the last pitch of Candyman Direct, then right-ish to the top.

Unknown, 5.9, mixed.

Another exit option from the last belay on *Candyman Direct*. Described by Jesse Brown as: "A classic third pitch without pitches 1 or 2. Fun route - too bad there isn't a bottom to it! " Now you can reach this pitch by climbing the bottom pitches of *Candyman Direct.*

Climb the clean thin crack on the left to the top with a mix of bolts, in situ pitons and gear. Small cams (Aliens), nuts, medium cams. *DS and JB*

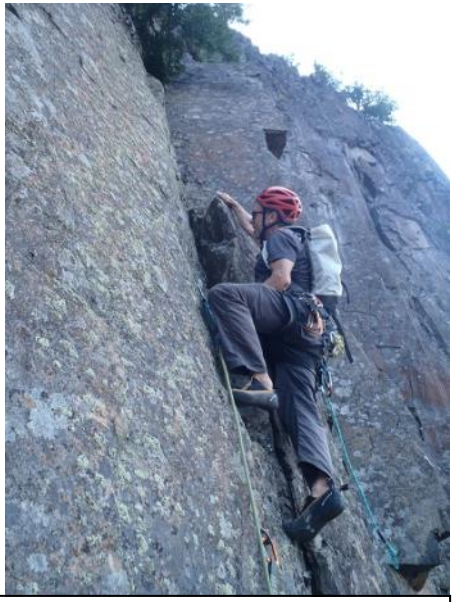
This route can also be found from the top of the cliff by heading 100 ft to the right of *Hard Man Direct* to an exposed, vegetation free ledge (small wash) overlooking the cliff face. Look right, can't miss the shiny SS hardware. *JB*

Cat God, 5.11b, 80 metres, 4 pitches, bolted.
FA: David Smart, Danylo Darewych, Mike Grainger, August 21, 2023; First Free Ascent - David Smart, August 26, 2023.

This route is on the right side of the Candy Cane face. Start below an overhang. Looking up you will see two cat's ear's features on the final headwall. Hard climbing with a very exposed last pitch.

• Pitch 1, 5.10a, 18 m. Climb up to the overhang, then left over it and up to the seam to the ledge.

• Pitch 2, 5.8, 20 m. Climb a left-facing flake, then stay right on the prow, avoiding a large tree. Belay on a good ledge.



Left: Mike Grainger leading the first pitch of *Cat God.* Right: Dave Smart starting off on the second pitch of *Cat God.*

• Pitch 3, 5.11b, 20 m. Straight up the wall via 5 metres of thin, technical moves, then some easier rock to belay on top of a small pillar.

• Pitch 4, 5.11a, 22 m. Hard moves off the belay lead to a groove that takes you to the roof. Holds on the right help you gain the thrilling position atop a small ledge. Climb the wall, left-ish to the top. Tree and bolt belay. *DS*

Stefan's Route, 5.8, 12 m (FA Stefan Kloppenborg, Christian Theoret, Anna Grant and Danylo Darewych, Aug. 31, 2014).

This is the middle crack, just left of *Memories of Jenga.* Climb the first pitch of *Memories of Jenga* to the ledge. From the ledge continue up the middle crack to a cedar tree above (webbing with maillon).

Stefan's Route is an incomplete project - it's just the bottom of a potentially longer route. On the FA Stefan continued up through the tree and around the corner to the left only to be stymied by scary, loose blocks. Stefan originally planned to return and climb the crack cleanly and to trundle "2 tonnes" of loose rock from the upper pitch, but that never happened. Have a go, if you wish.

Stefan on his route. Part of the 2nd pitch of *Memories of Jenga* is visible in the corner to the right.

Memories of Jenga, 5.7, 65 m (FA Mike Grainger, Danylo Darewych, Chelsea Mccune, July 12, 2014).

This route is located at the right end buttress of the left cliff, just past the corner where the cliff face turns away from the lake towards the big talus cone. There are 3 cracks visible above – a wider off-width on the left, a narrower crack in the middle, and a crack in a corner system on the right. *Memories of Jenga* climbs the corner crack on the right. Don't let the name deter you – the climbing is good and we cleaned off most of the loose blocks.

• Pitch 1, 5.7, 13 m. Climb a short crack at the left end of the buttress up to a wide ledge and traverse 4 m right along the ledge to a belay at a big birch tree. You could walk up to this tree directly from the right avoiding the first pitch, were it not for the sea of poison ivy to the right.

• Pitch 2, 5.7, 15 m. Climb up the corner crack system above, detouring once to the right down low to avoid a small tree/no holds section. Belay at a cedar growing straight out of the cliff.

• Pitch 3, 5.6, 15 m. Climb the double crack above to a belay on a ledge covered in juniper bushes (gear and bush belay).

• Pitch 4, 5.3, 20 m. Walk over the junipers to the left side of the ledge and scramble up easier angled terrain to the top. Belay off a block (inscribed Dianne and Henry, 1977).

Descent: Walk along the clifftop trail to the right and descend down the big talus cone. *DD*

Left: Lines of *Stefan's Route* (on left) and *Memories of Jenga* (on right). Right: Stefan Klop-penborg on the first pitch of *Memories of Jenga* with Christian Theoret belaying.

Right Side Wall

The right side is the shorter of the two sides (but it still appears to be close to 60 m high). I have no knowledge of any rock-climbing routes on the main wall of the right side cliff, however there is one short route located on small pinnacle outlier of the right side cliff.

Rock Crawlers, 5.6, 10 m
(FA Stefan Kloppenborg, Chelsea Mccune, July 12, 2014).

At the far left end of the right wall and half-way up the large talus slope there is a small pinnacle with a metal pole on top. Climb the crack system in the corner in the middle of the pinnacle. Squeeze through the notch at the top and belay from above. Large gear useful. To descend, scramble down the back side. Skier's right is a little easier. Try to avoid the poison ivy. *SK*

Above: The mini-pinnacle half-way up the big talus slope. The route *Rock Crawlers* heads up the crack visible on the front face. Photo by Stefan Kloppenborg, July 12, 2014. Below: A partial view of the Right Side Cliff, July 1, 2012.

Pullout Rock

Pullout Rock is a smaller cliff situated close to the road. No rock routes have been attempted or climbed at this cliff. We didn't see any obvious, easy-to-climb trad lines when we first investigated the cliff. Perhaps it might yield some decent sport routes. There is a peculiar vertical intrusion/runnel of what looked like congealed sand running up one section of the cliff.

Location

Drive 54.3 km north from Thessalon along Highway 129. There will be a wide pullout/snowplow turnaround on the right (east) side of t he highway. Park here. The cliff is located about 150 m east of the highway. It is clearly visible from the highway.

Stoney Creek Cliff

Stoney Creek cliff in winter: *Hungry Man* is the big flow on the far right. *Ozzy's Chute/Classy Gully* is in the middle (I think) and a snow gully lies on the far left. March 16, 2011.

The cliff at Stoney Creek is clearly visible as you drive along Highway 129. The cliff is an ice climbing venue in the winter. Most of the cliff seems to broken and vegetated for good rock climbing routes, but there might be some decent rock climbing opportunity on the steep lower cliff band of the ice climb *Hungry Man.*

Directions/ Location

Drive 58.2 km north on Highway 129 from Highway17 at Thessalon. Just before the Stoney Creek area Highway 129 will make a sharp turn to the right, then to the left and then immediately pass over Stoney Creek at 58.2 km. (where it feeds into the Mississagi River). There is a sign for Stoney Creek. Park at the end of the guardrail on the right side of the road. The cliff will be visible above the highway as you make the turns.

Approach

Hike north/uphill along the road for 50 m, then head east and uphill through the forest for some 450 m, staying on the high ground above the Stoney Creek drainage. When you hit the cliff line, head for its upper right end where the ice climb *Hungry Man* sits atop a talus slope. I suspect the talus slope and base of the cliff will have quite a lot of poison ivy in the summer.

Roadside Cliff #1

This cliff is the first cliff along the Mississagi River that comes right down to Highway 129. The cliff is 29.5 km north of the intersection of Highway 129 and 554 near Kynoch (or 60.2 km north of the intersection of Highway 17 and 129 in Thessalon). The cliff is marked with the numbers 129 – 13 at the base near the highway. The Mississage River runs right on the other side of the road at the point where the cliff comes down to the highway.

Sketching for Seniors, 5.8, 3 pitches (FA Mike Grainger, Danylo Darewych, July 3, 2019).

The route is located in the middle of the left section of the cliff. Look for a prominent left-angling ramp/crack system midway up the cliff, right of two tall pines trees. N46° 37.726' W83° 25.692'

To get to the base of the route bushwack in from the left along the base of the cliff, stepping up onto a series of treed ledges (the last one is a steep 2 m step that requires taking your pack off and passing it up) until you're about 15 m past the second big pine tree at the base of low-angled, left-trending gully. Or you can make a beeline straight for the base of the route from the road (the bushwacking isn't bad).

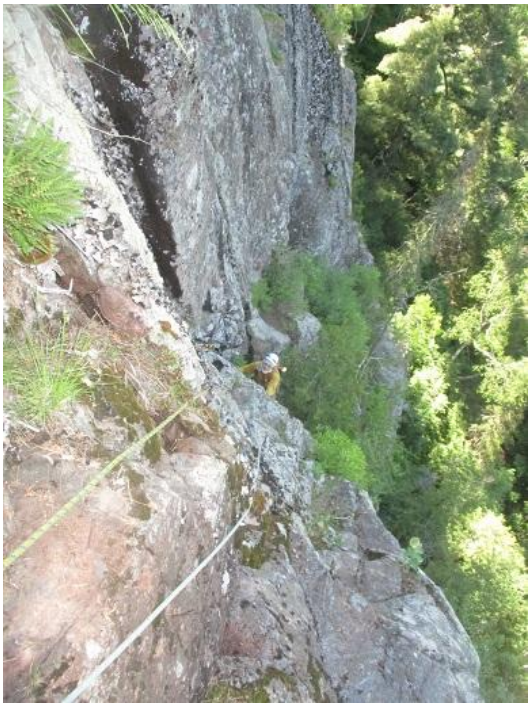
• Pitch 1, 5.7R, 23 m. Head up an easy groove, going 4-5 m past a cedar tree on the left, then traverse left around a corner, past another tree and up to the left (poor, flared-out #4 cam placement), then back right to a crack that takes good gear. Top

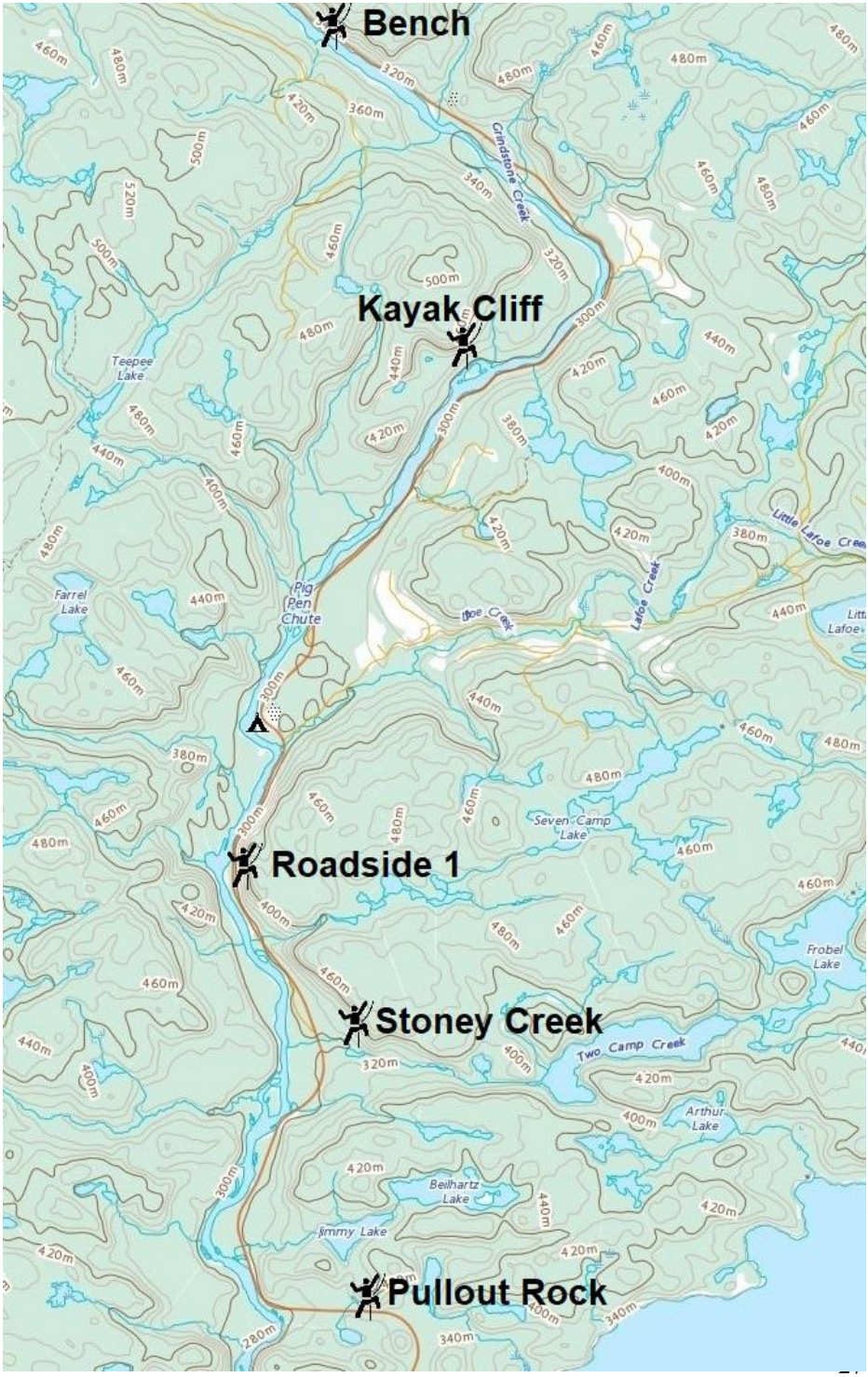
out onto a ledge either straight up or on the left, then traverse right to a solid tree to belay.

• Pitch 2, 5.5, 16 m. Head up the left-angling ramp/crack system to a belay on a ledge below a steep, vertical crack with a very small stunted tree stub. No need for big cams; protection can be found using smaller gear outside the big crack system.

• Pitch 3, 5.9, 30 m. Climb up the steep, vertical crack (tread carefully - there's a very loose-looking block in it that you end up pulling and stepping on). The protection is poor in the flared crack below the stubby tree, but there's a surprisingly good cam placement in the mossy crack above). Continue on easier-angled rock, then steep turf to the top (the rock rib on the left is very sound, but unfortunately completely lacking in protection opportunities).

It's a clean 60 m rappel to the ground over excellent-looking rock from a big tree on climber's left.




Bench
Kayak Cliff
Roadside 1
Stoney Creek
Pullout Rock
Grindstone Creek
Teepee Lake
Farrel Lake
Pig Pen Chute
Lafoe Creek
Little Lafoe Creek
Seven Camp Lake
Frobel Lake
Two Camp Creek
Arthur Lake
Beilhartz Lake
Jimmy Lake

Kayak Cliff

Looking southwest across the Mississagi River on the Kayak Cliff from Highway 129

The Kayak Cliff is located on other (west) side of Mississagi River. Several prominent grooves/ramps/cracks are visible from across the river. I think the crag is about 50-60 m tall and 300 m long. One route has been attempted here. You will need a canoe, kayak or raft to cross the river.

Location:

The Kayak Cliff is located along Highway 129, 35.8 km north of the Highway 129 and 554 intersection; (or some 4.7 km north of a former sand pit), on the other side of Mississagi River.

Paddle across the river to a pebbly beach at the outflow of a small, muddy stream (not navigable). Do not a make a direct, line-of-sight approach to the cliff from the shoreline – there is a high, intermediary ridge in the way. Instead bear left along the shoreline of the muddy creek for some 100 m and cross the ridge at its lowest end where it drops down to the creek. There is a small narrow dry valley/ streambed on the other side. Follow this uphill/upstream for some 300-400 m and then head left uphill. There is a 10-15 m high, long, slabby ridgeline of rock running beneath the main cliff. It is easiest to cross this at its lower-angled left end. You have to cross a final 50 m wide swath of trees before hitting the talus slope beneath the main cliff. Look for the main, central section of the cliff. There is a prominent wide, black groove/chimney feature in the center of this face.

Curses! Foiled! 5.7, **32 m to high point** (Danylo Darewych, Mike Grainger, Friday August 28, 2015). Unsuccessfully attempted.

Located to the right of the prominent black groove/chimney. Go to the highest point of the talus slope, then walk 9 m up a vegetated gulley above that (watch out for some poison ivy). There will be a solid slab on your left. There is a small stance at the top of the vegetated groove.

• Pitch 1, 5.6, 20 m. Start up a slim rib of rock between two cracks, then climb the right crack (8 m) to a ledge. There is a steep vegetated crack on the left, but climb an easier rib/crack on the right to another ledge (gear belay).

• Pitch 2, 5.7/5.8 (5.7 if you're 6 ft tall; harder if you're shorter), 13 m. Head up the right-facing corner/crack above (stemming out to a crack further right when needed lower down; I also placed one piece in the right crack). Lots of full length stemming and high reaches. Gear belay on the ledge above on the left (there are two trees on the right, but they are not solid).

• Pitch 3, 5.?, 15 m. We tried heading up the continuation of the corner, but were stymied by suspect, loose-looking black rock. We ran out of time before we could attempt another crack line 4 m to the left.

Descent/rappel: We downclimbed (placing gear) 7 m from the left end of the ledge down to another ledge with a birch tree and then made a 25 m rappel to the ground.

Mike Grainger kindly pointing out the line of *Curses! Foiled!*

The Bench

The Bench is a surprisingly tall cliff system in the Mississauga River Valley, just 150 m from Highway 129, but almost entirely hidden from view from the road. It is about 100 m high and about 200 m long. Two routes have been climbed here, but there is scope for many more, mostly bolted, lines. The views along the Mississagi River from the top are beautiful

Directions/Approach

Drive north from the intersection of Highways 129 and 554 for about 41.1 km. There are no particularly significant landmarks to indicate where to stop, other than a slight widening of the west bank of the Mississagi River. There is a steep, forested slope on the east side of the road. The slope is topped by a ridgetop cliff line that runs fairly continuously parallel to the river for 3-4 km along this stretch of highway. Most of this ridgeline is fairly broken and vegetated with some more interesting sections of cliff interspersed among the choss. The Bench is the most interesting outcrop along this cliff line.

Park at a slight pullout the west (river) side of the road south of the cliff. Hike up the treed slope east of the road. There is a Red Bull can stuck on the stub of a branch of a big pine tree to indicate where we hiked up in winter. Bear slightly left as you head up the slope. You will get to a flat bench running parallel to the road from which rises the cliff of the same name. It is about 150 m distance and 60 m of elevation gain to the base of the cliff.

General Description

A view of the upper section of the right Bench.

The cliff is divided into two distinct, offset sections, split by a steep, treed gully. The right section of the cliff rises directly from the forested bench and consists of much more solid looking and steeper rock. There is a big ledge system about 20 m up that runs across this right-side face. The face is vertical for about 45-50 m above this ledge, before easing off for the last 30 m into a system of ledges and small cliffs.

The left section of the cliff is set further back and higher up the slope above a talus field. The front of the left-side face is easier angled and more broken and vegetated. However, there is also a steep, overhanging left-facing corner on the left side of this section of cliff.

Routes

River Song, 5.10+, 25 m, trad
(FA Mark Hurst, Mike Grainger, Danylo Darewych, August 28, 2024)*

Located towards the left end of the right-side face. Look for a nook/crack system with several cedar trees higher up. Climb the off-width corner to a small ledge (cedars), step right and climb up the steep crack system behind two cedars. Try not to use the mostly dead cedar for support at the crux. Tree belay on the big ledge.
MH, DD

Above: The start of *River Song*.

Walking the Ostrich, **5.8, 58 m, 3 pitches, trad**
(1st pitch: Mark Hurst, Danylo Darewych, April 8, 2023; 2-3pitches: Mark Hurst, Danylo Darewych, Mike Grainger, August 28, 2024)

Located in the middle-right of the right-side face. Look for an overhanging section of cliff with a leftward leading crack in it. Left of this overhang lies a ramp.

* All of us hung on this route. I pulled and stepped on the mostly dead cedar to get past the crux. *DD*

• Pitch 1: 5.5, 20 m. Start on the face to the left of the ramp on a crack with a flake in it, then continue past a birch along the low-angled upper part of the ramp. Cams, nuts and trees for pro. Tree belay on a large ledge that cuts across the lower part of the face here.

• Pitch 2: 5.8, 18 m. Walk right on a (higher) ledge for 10 m. Thrutch your way up two short, awkward, left-facing corners to a pine tree ledge. Tree belay.

• Pitch 3: 5.6-5.7, 20 m. Head right up a needle-covered slab in a gully (trees for pro on the right), then step back left and climb up a crack system, pulling over a bulge at the top. Exit right around some trees. Tree belay.

Descent: Walk leftwards for 10 m to a big pine tree and rappel down the route using trees (there is a sling with a maillon on the top tree).

Above: Mark Hurst leading the first pitch of *Walking the Ostrich.*
Below: The left Bench.

Slab-Bottom Cliff

The Slab-Bottom Cliff is another cliff located along the ridgeline east of Highway 129. It is about 50 m tall and 100 m wide. No routes have been climbed here yet. New routes would likely have to be sport routes. Some of the rock looks suspect. The cliff also needs a more creative name.

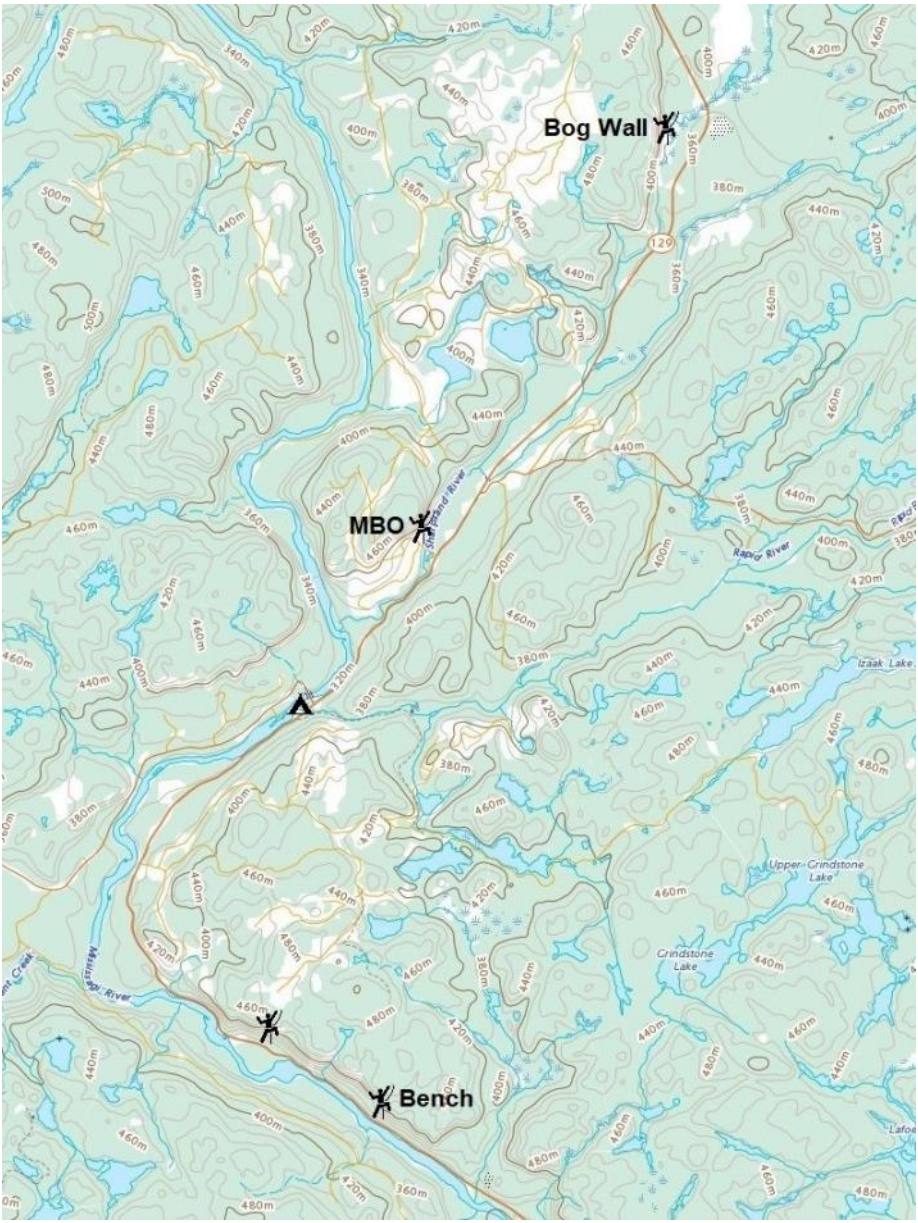
Location

The cliff is located on Highway 129 42.6 km north of the intersection of highways 129 and 554. At this point the river heads away from the highway for a short distance and passes through a couple of curves. The top of the cliff will be visible through the trees to the east of the highway, although it is even easier to spot when heading south. Park on the shoulder away from the curve.

Head directly east through the trees. You will drop down a hill, cross some wet terrain at the bottom, then head back uphill to a talus slope below the cliff. The cliff is about 150 m from the highway.

General Description

The tallest face of the cliff lies in the middle of the cliff line. It start with a slabby 15 m apron, then gets vertical. To the right of the main face the cliff line is split by a deep cleft, on the other side of which lies a smaller face. The cliff also continues left of the main face. The talus slope lies higher up here and consequently the cliff is shorter.


Bog Wall
MBO
Bench
Raptor River
Izaak Lake
Upper Grindstone Lake
Grindstone Lake
129

MBO

Dave Broadhead, Randy Kielbasiewicz and Jon Gullett standing at the side of Highway 129 and gazing wistfully at the remnants of the ice at MBO, March 15, 2015.

The MBO is a large cliff system with many different faces, pinnacles and sections, located on the west side of the Gravel/Sharpsand River,* a tributary of the Mississagi River. All told the cliff system is about 850 m long (not all of it suitable for climbing) and about 85 m at its tallest point. Only one rock route has been climbed here, although there is potential for many more.

The cliff is a favourite winter ice climbing haunt of Marvin Egner (Cupcake), Laurie Snedeker (Cougar) and friends from Michigan who often camp here at the far side of the bridge. They named the cliff MBO — Mark's Big One.

Directions

The MBO is located some 81.3 km north of Thessalon along Highway 129 (or 50.6 km north of the intersection of Highways 129 and 554). Look first for the larger bridge across the Mississagi River at 79 km north of Thessalon (or 48.3 km north of the intersection of Highways 129 and 554). Two kilometres past the bigger bridge you will come to a smaller snowmobile/ATV bridge across the Gravel/Sharpsand River*. You can drive across this bridge in the summer and park in the clearing on the other side. This is also a good camping spot.

A shorter logging road branches off to the left here and ends in the forest about 1 km away. The main logging road heads straight ahead and slightly uphill, turns left (south-east) and roughly parallels the left side (wing) of the cliff system before looping around its south-east end and heading north into the green vastness of the Algoma forest.

* The river is named the Gravel River on the southernmost sign at the side of Highway 129. It's called the Sharpsand River on topographic maps and on signs further north.

General Cliff Layout and Description

The left wing of the cliff, roughly above the logging road, is shorter, more broken and more vegetated. There is some good-looking rock towrds the far left end, but getting to it is a hassle, because from the road you have to drop down into a gully that is chock full of deadfall and vegetation. The main section of the cliff starts about 100 m right of the left-hand turn in the logging road. The first feature is a dome of slabby rock. One part of it is scrubbed clean by the iceflow of Redemption in winter (and water run-off in the spring and fall). Further right (north-east) there is a steep gully, followed by more faces, ridges, corners, slabs and terraces that I haven't mapped out/explored well enough to describe accurately in words. The cliff eventually comes close to the Sharpsand River. There is a good, tall, clean face here, overhanging on its right side. Further to the right there is more broken, treed terrain before the cliff ends at its far northern side at a large, tall talus slope with cliffs on either side (if I recall correctly).

According to the GeologyOntario Spatial Search online map the rock in the area of the MBO belongs to the "gneissic tonalite suite," and more specifically the rock is tonalite to granodiorite-foliated to gneissic-with minor supracrustal inclusions. It is part of the Superior Province of the Canadian Shield.

Lorna Doone, 5.7 A1, 60 m, 4 pitches
(First and second pitch anchors installed by Marvin Egner. FA 1st pitch – Marvin Egner, Laurie Snedeker, October 2015; Rest of route – Danylo Darewych, Joah Faria, May 2-3, 2026)

This route is located at the left end of the main section of the MBO (just left of where the ice climb Redemption is found in winter). From the bridge walk straight ahead and slightly uphill for about 150 m to a point just before the road turns sharply left. Look for a cleared, but unmarked, trail through the roadside trees on the right. Head uphill to the right, roughly parallel to the cliff line for about 75 m. Look for a toe/slab of rock coming down to the forest with a few ledges on it. Walk up to the lower ledge (there is a fixed line to help you), then clamber up 5 m to the higher ledge where there is a two-bolt anchor station with chains. There is at least one low fifth-class (5.01-5.1) move here that might be difficult with a full pack, so probably best to gear up on the

Looking up at the first 2 pitches of *Lorna Doone.* The route starts on a ledge (hidden by foreground foliage on the right in the photo) and then heads up left of the vague left-facing corner. The route ends at the big pine visible at the top of the cliff.

lower ledge.

• Pitch 1 – 5.5, 15 m. From the chain anchor step left into a more vegetated notch/low-angled gully/ line of weakness and work your way up it past a piton halfway up, then move back rightwards (avoiding some loose blocks) to a two-bolt anchor on a ledge.

• Pitch 2 – 5.5, 15 m From the anchors step left and up onto a small ledge, traverse back right above and past the anchors, then up onto a vegetated slab and walk up to a two-bolt anchor (with rappel rings/chains/quicklink) at the base of a small v-shaped notch.

• Pitch 3 – 5.7 A1, 15 m. From the anchors, step left 2 m and climb up a crack over a small overhang (we aided through this section) and continue along easier-angled rock to a two-bolt anchor on a ledge.

Marvin Egner (in red) belaying from the bottom chain anchor as Joah leads the first pitch of *Lorna Doone.*

• Pitch 4 – 5.3, 15 m. From the anchors, step down and traverse right 5-6 m across a gully along a mossy ledge, then climb up 5-6 m up a slight buttress and over/through a juniper bush to a very large pine tree with cordelette (and quicklinks).

Descent: You can rappel from the pine tree straight down for 50-55 m with two half-ropes. Or make two single- rope rappels: the first from the pine tree to the anchor at the top of pitch two and the second from there back down to the starting ledge (maybe all the way to the ground).

Joah and I climbed this route in less than ideal conditions in early spring after a heavy snow year and much rain, so there was lots of water and wetness that forced us up a rather wandery and less esthetic line. In fact, we climbed the first two pitches in our boots. Marvin Egner climbed the first pitch with us, then descended back to the ground. In dry conditions a more interesting line on more solid rock would be possible, especially on the slab to our right on the second pitch, the v-shaped runnel above the second pitch belay and on the final gully. It should also be noted that there are two bolts on the slab to the right of the second pitch (installed by Marvin Egner) where he intended the route to go, but that whole slab was wet with water and impossible to climb on the day we were there. Reason to return.

Bog Wall

The central face of the Bog Wall in winter. March 9, 2019.

The Bog Wall is a tall cliff situated above the west bank of the meandering Sharpsand River, some 400 m from Highway 129. It is an ice climbing destination in winter, but several of the faces have good rock climbing potential.

Location

The Bog Wall is located on Highway 129, 10 km south of the intersection of Highway 129 and Highway 556; or 7.7 km north of the bigger logging bridge over the Mississagi River (not to be confused with the smaller bridge over the Gravel/ Sharpsand River another 2.3 km further on); or 56 km north of the intersection of Highway 129 and 554; or 87 km north of Thessalon.

Getting to the Bog Wall is likely more difficult in summer than it is in winter. In summer you have to cross the Sharpsand River. There are 3 options:

A) Wading across the river. The channel of the river is narrow - only several meters across. I've no idea how deep it is. A small inflatable raft for gear might be a good idea.

B) Crossing a beaver dam. Park at a pullout near a logging cut south of the cliff on the east side of the highway, walk through some forest on the west side of the highway, and then cross the river/swamp/beaver pond on a beaver dam below the very far southern end of the cliff line. I've crossed it in winter. Hopefully, it's solid in summer as well. The total distance of this approach from the road to the central face of the cliff is about 400 m.

C) Hiking in from the north. Park north of the causeway where the highway crosses the Sharpsand River (there is a good, clear view of the cliff here) and walk along the north/west shore of a creek along a swamp to the cliff. It's farther - about 750 m - from the north end to the central face of the cliff, but closer (400 m?) to the cliff faces at the north end.

Little Trout Creek

The Little Trout Creek is an interesting cliff with a short approach and mostly solid rock. The clean part of the cliff face is about 100 m long and 40-50 m tall. The left side has very steep, clean, solid rock, although most of the features face the wrong way. There is a slightly easier-angled break in the middle of the cliff with cracks/ lines of weakness on either side of it. The right side is also very steep with overhangs. One route has been top-roped at the cliff. There is some potential for hard sport climbing routes at this cliff.

Directions

Drive north along Highway 129 from the intersection of Highways 129 and 556 (Ranger Lake Road). After 4 km you will pass the road to the Aubrey Falls Generating Station on the right, then a bridge over the Mississagi River. Drive past the first logging road on the left (200 m north of the bridge) and turn left onto the second logging road (700 m north of the bridge). A 100 m down this logging road there will be a fork in the road. You can park here.

Head down the left fork. After another 100 m there will be another, short side

logging track heading to the right. It ends just above the creek at a small clearing that would make a nice camping spot. You can get to the cliff from this side logging track, when Little Trout Creek is running low. It is the shortest and fastest approach. Cross the creek and walk leftward 50 m through a stand of trees to a talus slope, then skirt the talus slope on its left uphill to the cliff. This will bring you below the break in the middle of the face. Otherwise, continue left along the larger logging road (snowmobile trail in winter) for another 100 m until you cross the creek on a bridge and then head back right through the trees to the cliff.

You can reach the top of the cliff by following a rough, partially flagged trail up the treed slopes to the right of the cliff to the top of the crag. It's a surprisingly long way up from the creek.

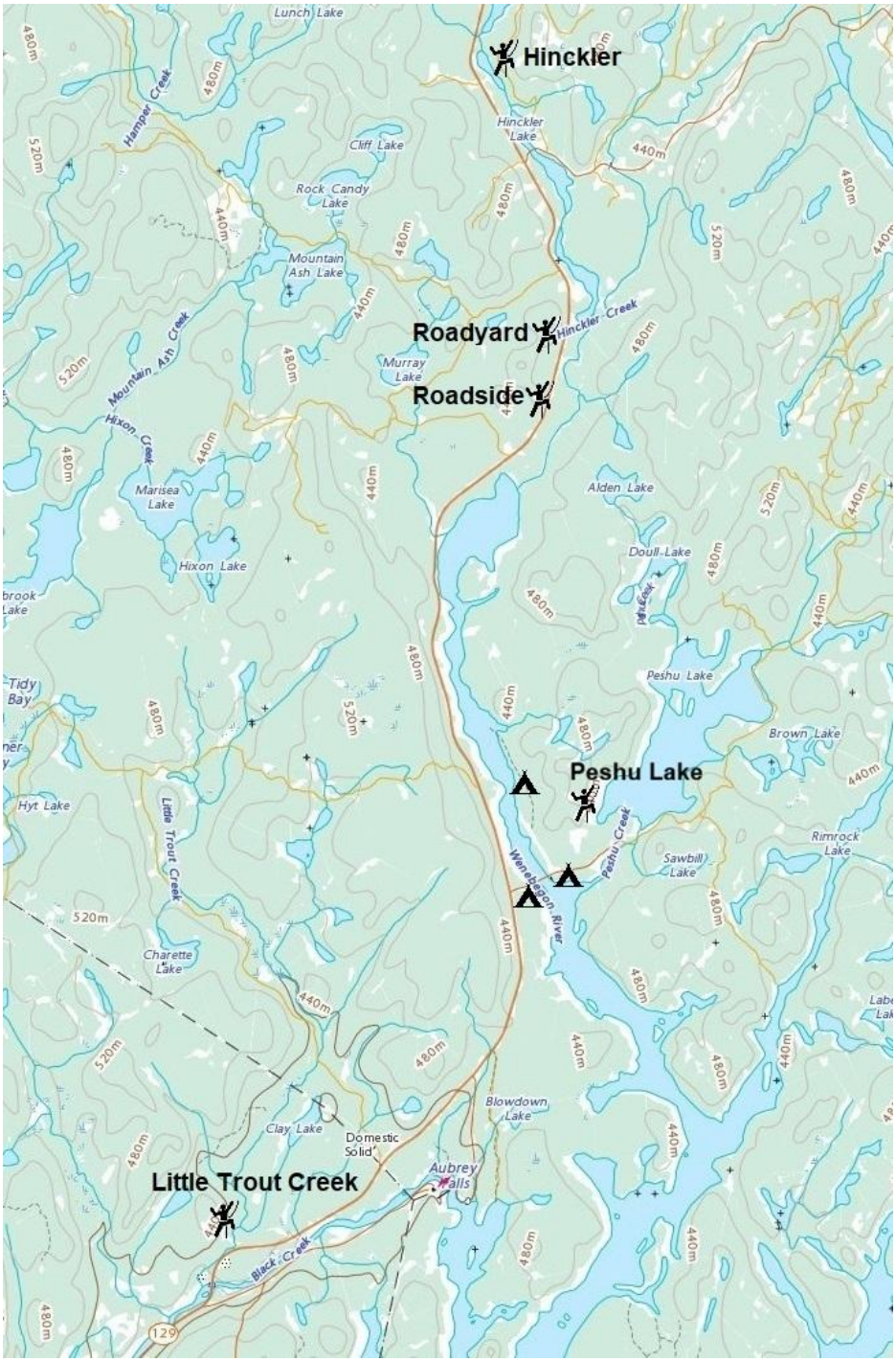
You can access the base of the steep, left-side face by heading left from the main face for 25 m and up a narrow, vegetated ramp to the big treed ledge below the face.

Left Side Crack, 5.9, 50 m
(Top roped by Mike Grainger and Danylo Darewych, September 6, 2024)

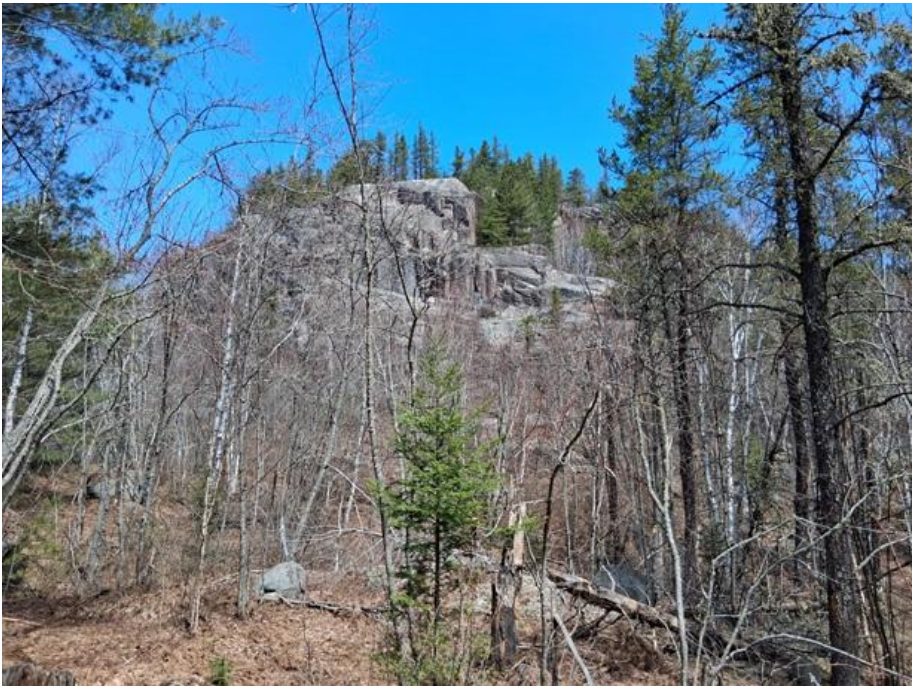
This route climbs the right-facing set of corners on the left side of the break/dike in the middle of the cliff. A lot of the rock is either black, blocky siltstone or Nipissing Diabase (not sure which) that has a tendency to break unexpectedly (even though we trundled all the loose rock we could find), so test your holds.

Climb the initial corner, which is slightly overhung half-way up, to a stance on a sloping ledge. Climb another, shorter, slightly overhung corner above, work your way up and left to a third corner and climb it to the top. Tree belay.

We considered bolting this route, since it has very good, continuous climbing. but decided against it for the moment, since it would be a lone bolted route at an isolated crag. We plan to return to look at other lines and if we discover other climbable lines, then we will reconsider bolting the route.


Hinckler
Roadyard
Roadside
Peshu Lake
Little Trout Creek
Lunch Lake
Hamper Creek
Hinckler Lake
Cliff Lake
Rock Candy Lake
Mountain Ash Lake
Mountain Ash Creek
Hinckler Creek
Murray Lake
Hixon Creek
Marisea Lake
Hixon Lake
Alden Lake
Doull Lake
Peshu Lake
Brown Lake
Hyt Lake
Little Trout Creek
Weneheson River
Peshu Creek
Sawbill Lake
Rimrock Lake
Charette Lake
Blowdown Lake
Clay Lake
Domestic Solid
Aubrey Falls
Black Creek
Tidy Bay
480m
520m
440m
129

Peshu Lake Cliff



The Peshu Lake Cliff is a multi-tiered dome of lovely, solid pink granite partially hidden in the woods off the south-west corner of Peshu Lake. There is about 250 m of climbable cliff line there and the cliff is about 45-50 m tall at its highest point. Only one route has been top-roped here. The walls are slabby in some places, very steep in others with not a lot of features. The climbing would mostly be rather difficult.

According to the GeologyOntario Spatial Search online map the rock is "massive to foliated granodiorite to granite" of the Superior Province of the Canadian Shield.

Directions

Drive 111 km north on Highway 129 from the intersection of Highways 129 and Highway 17 in Thessalon (or 80.9 km from the intersection of Highway 129 and Highway 554). Turn right onto the Peshu Lake Road (a dirt road), drive straight ahead 500 m across the bridge over Aubrey Lake, then after another 300 m pass a long straight turn-off to the left down a former airstrip, continue on another 400 m down an increasingly pot-holed road and turn left (north) down a narrow lane through the forest for 275 m to a former quarry. Park here.

A flagged, cleared path starts on the right side, just before the quarry entrance. The path skirts the quarry on its right (east) side to the north end of the quarry and

then continues across a rocky slab where the path is marked with cairns. The path skirts two rocky knolls on the right, descends into a slight depression, then up onto another rock slab, drops down through the forest into a slightly larger depression and up onto a final moss-covered clearing (from where you can see the cliff), after which it turns right and ends near the start of the cliff base. The path is about 750 m long (10 minutes). You have to bushwhack the final 150 m to whatever part of the cliff you're aiming for, The west face of the cliff is found at these coordinates: Lat: 46.963° N Lon: 83.167° W (Lat: 46° 57' 46.222" N Lon: 83° 9' 59.212" W).

Alternatively, you could drive a total of 2.5 km to the south end of Peshu Lake and bushwhack in or canoe in from the east.

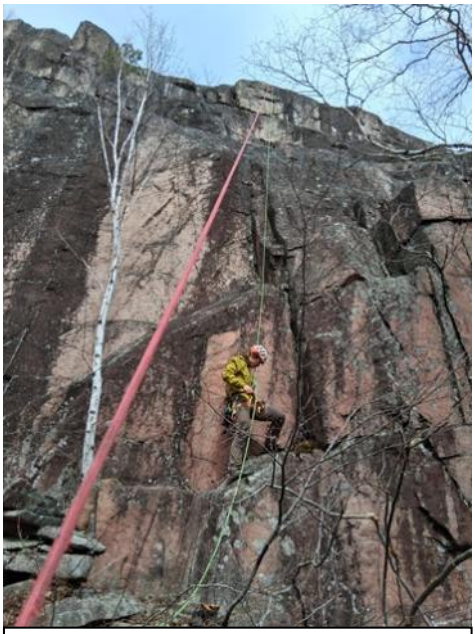
General Cliff Layout and Description

The cliff lies in a big, over-180 degree arc at the south-west corner of Peshu Lake. The side facing the lake (the south-east face) is very jumbled and broken with a large talus base – it is not conducive to climbing. The southern side holds some interesting steep faces and gullies rising above a terrace. The west face is the tallest - it rises in a sweep of clean, slabby granite above the forest floor. At its northern end the cliff line breaks up into a series of steep faces above terraces.

You can reach the top of the cliff either by hiking up a treed, vegetated ramp system that starts at the southern end and heads up to the left or by hiking around the slabs at the north end of the cliff system.

Top Rope Tough Guys, 5.7-5.8, 45 m (Top roped by Joah Faria, Danylo Darewych, May 3, 2026)

This route is located in the middle of the west face. Look for a short, vertical face of big blocks on the right and a slight ramp feature on the left. Start right of the small ramp feature. Make some strenuous moves to start and then continue up the slabs above, trying to follow a line of least resistance. Lots of balancy slab climbing. Tree anchors on trees that are set well back from the cliff edge. Walk off to descend. The route would require quite a few bolts in order to be safely leadable.



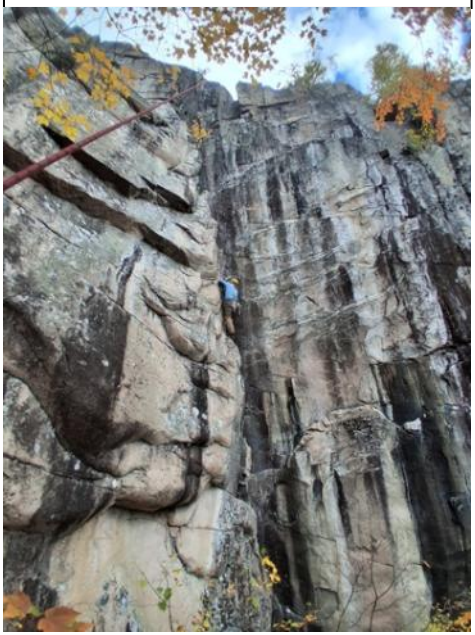
Above: Joah Faria at the start of *Top Rope Tough Guys*. Below: Mike Grainger on the *Overhanging Corner Crack*.

Overhanging Corner Crack Project, 5.9+, 27 m, trad *Please Don't Climb* (Mike Grainger and I aided our way up the crack in Sept. 2026, then trundled and bolted it on Oct. 2, 2026, but got rained off it afterwards. We plan to come back and give it another shot..)

This route is located at the south end of the cliff. From the end of the trail at the forest floor, bushwhack right around a low cliff band, then head up a treed slope and diagonal to the right across two small talus fields to gently overhanging black and white streaked wall with 3-4 striking (but discontinuous) cracks. The route is found in the left corner of this wall.

Climb up the continuously strenuous corner for 17 m to ledge, then up a short vertical face and finish on a left-leading ramp. Rappel rings.

Gear: Nuts and cams to #4 (doubles from 0.5 to 2). There are 4 bolts on the route where there are no decent placements.



Roadside Cliff

Part of the Roadside Cliff as viewed in winter, February 2019.

The Roadside Cliff is located about 1 km m south of the Roadyard Cliff (see instructions on next page), on the west side of Highway 129, just 25 m from the road.

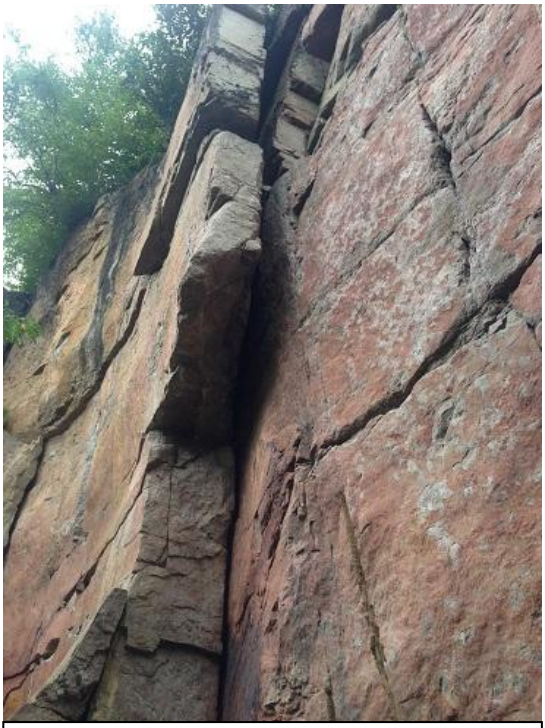
Another Roadside Distraction, 5.hard, 24 m.
(Danylo Darewych, Mike Grainger, Aug. 27, 2018).

The climb is located on a wall of yellowish-red granite in the middle of the cliff. There is a wide overhanging, right-facing, off-width crack system in the middle of the wall. *Another Roadside Distraction* is located 5 m to the left at another right-facing crack.

Layback, stem, jam up the initial 7 m high crack/corner and exit very awkwardly onto a ledge (belly-flop/grovel; I

had to pull on a small offset cam placed into a half-crack to exit). Climb another 7 m high right-facing corner-crack above. Belay from tree. Walk up 5 m from the belay and squirm up a narrow squeeze chimney behind a huge flake for 7 m to the top.

Multiple #4 Camalots (and 1 #5) recommended for lower cracks. The upper squeeze chimney is unprotectable.



The line of *The Girls on the Transport Flaps*.

The Girls On The Transport Flaps, 5.10, 21 m
(Dave Brown, Noelle Phillips, May 31, 2019)

This is the wide overhanging, right-facing, off-width crack system in the middle of the wall. Climb the short, tight-hands dihedral and the steep offwdith above. Above the bulge, follow a squeeze chimney that protects with hand-sized gear. From the ledge above, take the second pitch of *Another Roadside Distraction* to the top or rappel from a tree. Gear from #2 to #5. *DB*

Roadyard Cliff

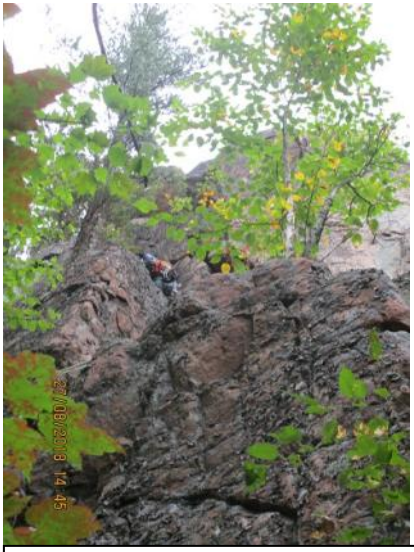
The Roadyard is quite an extensive cliff with many different faces of many different shapes and sizes. The far northern end is broken, jumbled and shorter with a forested base. South of the northern end the cliff becomes more open with a talus base and much taller. There are a couple of nice buttresses in this section. Further south the base becomes forested again and the cliff face becomes shorter, but also very steep with clean, smooth rock. Finally, at the far southern end the cliff becomes more broken again and rounds off uphill into the forest. The cliff is about 500 m long and up to 50 m tall.

Directions

The Roadyard Cliff is found on the west side of Highway 129, 91 km north of the intersection of Highway 129 and 554 (or about 25 km north of the intersection of Highway 129 and the Ranger Lake Road), about 200 m south of a highway maintenance yard on the east side of the highway. The northern end is closest to the road, about 100 m away. The middle section is about 150 m from the road and the southern end is about 250 m from the road. Where you park will depend what section of the cliff you are trying to reach.

Snot Worth It, 5.6/5.7, 18 m
(Mike Grainger, Danylo Darewych, Aug. 27, 2018)

This climb is located at the very far southern end of the cliff. Start just around the corner from the left end buttress of the cliff (up high on a grassy platform). Climb up easy edges/ledges to a harder wide crack (#5 and #6 cam preferred), exit it to the right and continue easily to the top. Hard to judge the grade as it was led



Left: Mike Grainger on *Snot Worth It*. Right: Pink buttress from the approach.

when the rock/lichen were as slippery as snot, because of a misting rainfall. It was the only thing we could climb in those wet conditions.

The next three routes are located at an appealing pink buttress in the middle right section of the cliff. The following descriptions were provided by Dave Brown.

Park opposite a pond on the east side of the highway, 400 m south of the road-yard. At this point there is a yellow survey sign on the east side of the highway, and a culvert passes beneath it.* Bushwhack west for a couple of minutes and you will see a scree slope with a large pink buttress at its top left. Go up the scree until you are even with the point of the buttress, then traverse leftward (south) through a few bushes to the buttress. To reach the first route, step left around the point of the buttress and onto a ledge. For the others, go rightward up a steep, loose ramp at the base of the cliff.

White Lightning, 5.9 21 m
(Dave Brown, Noelle Phillips, May 30, 2019)

Pull a low roof with a fist-crack in it and continue up the zig-zagging crack above, which varies in width from about 4 to 10 inches. At the top, move right to the top of *Thirteen Days to You*, check the condition of the tree, and rappel that route. Gear from 2 to 10 inches. *DB*

Thirteen Days to You, 5.8, 21 m
(Dave Brown, Noelle Phillips, May 30, 2019)

Start in a short, chossy chimney. Pull a small roof and follow the off-width above into a squeeze chimney. Blue TCUs are helpful in the squeeze chimney. There is a tree at the top to rappel from. It's thick, but it isn't the healthiest. Check

Left: *White Lightning*. Right: *Thirteen Days to You*. Photos by Dave Brown.

* The pond, sign and culvert don't appear to be in quite the same spot. *DD*

its condition before rappelling. Gear from TCUs to #6. *DB*

Feather, Fur, and Fin, 5.9, 42 m
(Noelle Phillips, Dave Brown, May 30, 2019)

Start in a short chimney, pull a small roof, and follow a 4-5 inch crack to a large ledge. Move left and follow another 4-5 inch crack to the top. Descend by walking down to climber's right, or rappel from a tree with double ropes. Gear from TCUs to #5. *DB*

Thunder in the Mountain, 5.10, 42 m
(Dave Brown, Noelle Phillips, May 30, 2019)

This is the gem of the cliff. Climb the rightmost crack, which goes from .75 to 5 inches through a bulge. From the ledge above the bulge, continue up a lower-angled 4-5 inch crack. Descend by walking to climber's right, or rappel from a tree with double ropes. Gear from .75 to #5. *DB*

Above: *Thunder in the Mountains*. Photo by Dave Brown. Below: *Hose Me Down Corner.*

The next line is located at the northern end of the cliff about 300 m south of the roadyard. Look for small rock outcrops through the trees on the west side of the road, south of the yellow right-turn highway sign. Park here and head right into the forest.

Hose Me Down Corner, 5.8, 15 m
(Mike Grainger, Danylo Darewych, July 4, 2019).

The cliff at the north end is a broken jumble of small faces and huge boulders. The climb is located on the first tall-ish vertical rock outcrop about 150 m from the road. Look for a right-facing corner/crack system.

Climb the initial 10 m corner (coming at it from the left) to a ledge on the left, then finish up a shorter 5 m corner to the top. Gear to #4 Camalot.

Hinckler Cliff

By Dave Brown

The Hinckler Cliff is just visible from 129, maybe 2 km north of Hinckler Road, on the other side of a small body of water. We accessed it from Hinckler Road, but you could likely get to it straight in from 129 about as easily. There are really two distinct crags here, separated by a bit of a canyon. The westernmost crag is the one you come to first, and we climbed an obvious offwidth on its north face. To get to the handcrack, cross the canyon, and head up the slope on the other (eastern) side of the canyon. The handcrack is on that crag's north face as well. *DB*

Purgatory Cove. Photo by Dave Brown.

Purgatory Cove, 5.10-, 15 m, trad.
(Dave Brown, Noelle Phillips, 9 July, 2019)

This route is often wet, but it offers some very nice climbing if you catch it dry. Start with fists, pull over a low roof as the crack widens, and continue up the offwidth above. We rappelled from a tree, but you could likely easily walk off to the east.

Gear: #4 - #6 cams. *DB*

Sunset Sea, 5.7, 12 m, trad.
(Noelle Phillips, Dave Brown, 31 May, 2019)

Climb the obvious, attractive, handcrack. Descend by walking a very short distance to the east.

Gear: The route will take a #5 down low, but primarily requires hand-sized pieces. *DB*

Jack's Wall

Shaun Parent's Westie in front of Jack's Wall. Photo by Shaun Parent.

Jack's wall is a slabby wall between 20-30 m tall and about100 m long. All routes are bolted. It is located right on Highway 129, 104 km north of the intersection of Highway 129 and Highway 554 or 38.5 km north of the Intersection of Highway 129 and Highway 556 (Ranger Lake Road). It is on the east side of the highway, just before a downhill drop in the road and a sweeping curve to the right. The cliff is clearly visible from the road. The wall was developed by Shaun Parent.

Routes are listed from left to right.
Jack and Ashley
Jack and Jamie
Jack and Max
Jack and Ben
Jack and Shaun
Jack and Jane
Jack's a Hardcore
Jack's No Sissy

Jack is 5 years old this this August.

Havilah Mountain

Havilah is an impressive cliff that rises spectacularly above the farm fields and marshy wetlands around the meandering Thessalon River. The main cliff is some 900 m long and 80-90 m tall at its highest point. The rock quality appears to vary greatly from quite friable and shattered in the northern end to quite solid at the southern end. The cliff itself is split by several prominent vegetated gullies. Another (unexplored) secondary cliff system is shorter in height and length, but still appears to be about 300 m long. The cliff is also the site of the former Ophir gold mine that operated between 1892 and 1921. Access issues make climbing at this cliff somewhat difficult. One route has been climbed here.

Directions

From Bruce Mines take Highway 638 north for 21.4 km to Ophir. Where Highway 638 makes a sharp turn to the left (west) go straight onto Poplar Dale Rd. Continue north on Poplar Dale Rd for two kilometres and turn right onto Murray Rd. Head east on Murray Rd for 350 m – you will see a big cliff to the north across

some farm fields.

Access Issues

The cliff itself is on Crown Land, but you have to cross private property to get to the cliff if you're approaching from the south. The first property, 80 Murray Rd, has a lovely stone house with fields around it and a garden in front. It belongs to Brian Hepburn (705) 736-1228. We've been asking his permission to cross his property to get to the cliff.

The next property to the east (up the hill) used to belong to some fellow from Wisconsin. There used to be no house on this property, just a long (gated) approach driveway that leads to Havilah Lake and an old concrete foundation on a hill overlooking the lake. It has now been purchased by some folks from Sault Sainte Marie who have widened the road/driveway. It is signed Private Property – No trespassing. This used to be the easiest way to get to the top of the cliff, but is probably best avoided now.

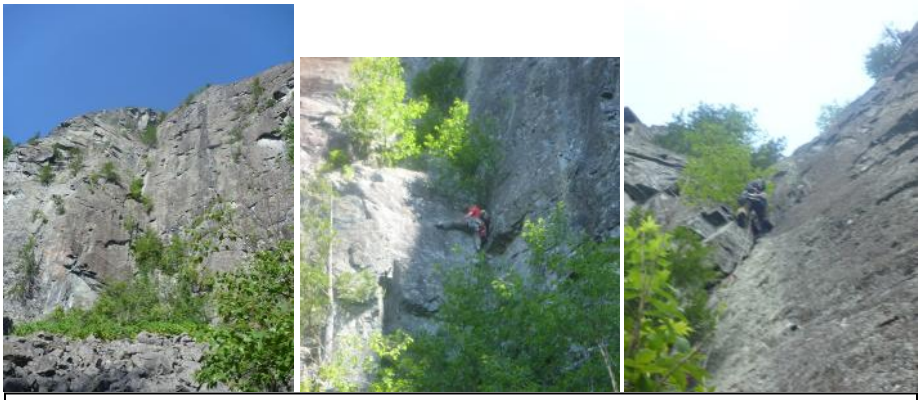
Approach

Approach directions to bottom of cliff across Hepburn's property. Head across farm field to corner of field/tree line approximately directly east of the farmhouse. An old tractor trail (now hunt path) through the forest starts here. In 2020 we followed it without any problem, but now sections of it are quite overgrown. In 2023 and 2024 we ended up following a hunt trail past a hunt stand through some fairly open forest until we hit a boggy/wet section where we veered right some 25-35 m and popped out onto a clear section of trail heading left. This should be fairly easy to follow – we cleared out/cut back the more overgrown sections and flagged tricky bits. The trail eventually reaches the (dry) streambed of a creek that drops down from Havilah Lake. This stream gurgles pleasantly in its upper sections, but the water disappears underground the further it gets downstream. We cleared a really rough trail along the near side of the streambed until we reached the foot of the hillside and here crossed the creek and then hugged a small, short cliffline and finally a short stretch of forest (20 m) to reach the talus below the main cliff face. The talus is really big and blocky at first, but gets better. There is a line of cairns

across the initial section of talus, primarily of use on the way back out to find the return trail.

Approach directions to the top of the cliff across the neighbouring property. Continue east along Murray Rd, for 1.2 km past the gated driveway to a gravel/sand pit. Park here and backtrack to the gated driveway. Walk uphill along this long driveway/access road for 500 m. It'll wind its way south of Havilah Lake until it ends on a small hilltop at a concrete foundation (apparently an old burned out house used to stand here). From here you have to bushwack along a vague ridgeline for 200-250 m (feels farther) paralleling the shoreline of the lake below until you hit the steep notch where the creek flows out of Havilah Lake. Turn left downhill to by -pass the notch and cross the creek. Head back uphill on the other side through mostly open forest and over slabby slopes to the vague top of Havilah Mountain (another 250-300 m), then drop steeply down towards the cliff face. The first time we hiked into the clifftop we contoured left along the cliff top after crossing the creek and heading slightly uphill, but that eventually proved to be fairly difficult going with lots of deadfall, rock outcrops, gullies to cross. Once we knew where we were going it was easier to head for the top and drop down to the cliff (still lots of nasty deadfall in places).

Alternate approaches (not across private property. If you want to avoid private property, you'd have to walk into the cliff directly from the west from Poplar Dale Rd, but that would be a nightmare of oxbow bends of the Thessalon River and swampland (I've only done this approach in winter on snowshoes). Better to come in along the hydro line north of the cliff to the north end of the cliff, but you'd still have to find a way across the Thessalon River and some swamp. Plus, it's farther to the good rock from the north end.



Left: The line of *The Stonemason.* Middle: Danylo Darewych leading up the first pitch. Right: Mike Grainger leading the crux bulge of the second pitch..

The Stonemason, 5.10+R, 77 m, 3 pitches, trad
(FA Mike Grainger, Danylo Darewych September 2024)

This route heads up a prominent corner/crack/open book system that runs the up the right side of the Havilah cliff (N46° 28.876' W83° 42.529'). I think it's about 150 m north across the talus field. You'll have to cut through poison ivy to get to the base of the route. You can identify the bottom of the route by a big, dead, fallen over cedar and a small rock pedestal at the base of the corner.

• Pitch 1, 5.7, 25 m. Clamber 2 m up to the top of the pedestal. From it head up to the left on edges (almost no pro) for 4-5 m, then through a small swath of cedar trees to the base of a corner on the right. Climb up the corner to a two-bolt belay at a ledge (rap rings).

• Pitch 2, 5.10+, 25 m. Continue climbing up the corner, stem and layback through a strenuous, steep section, squeeze past a tree at its top, finish on an awkward wider crack. Tree belay (slings with maillon).

• Pitch 3, 5.9 R, 27 m. Continue up the corner system. The climbing is fairly straightforward at first – you head past a large cedar up to small, twin cedars. Here the climbing becomes continuously tricky and heady. You have to pull and step on the twin cedars to get by them – they bend disconcertingly and there's no decent pro near them and the rock is slightly suspect. Continue up until you're below an overhang with old gnarly cedars. Thrash your way up to the right through the cedars and up a final short corner to a two bolt anchor (with rap rings) at the right end of a large, vegetated ledge. From here you could scramble to the top of the cliff, if you were so inclined. There's another 15-20 m of slab climbing above, but it would have to be bolted to be climbable.

Descent: If you have two 60 m ropes, you can rappel from the pitch 3 anchors down to the pitch one anchors and from here on one rope to the ground. If you have only one 60 m rope, you'll have to make three rappels.

The wall to the right of *The Stonemason* is composed of good, solid rock and would be a good candidate for a bolted sport line.

Left: Th main wall of Havilah Mountain. *The Stonemason* lies in the middle of the photo.

A couple of photos of some of the other faces of Havilah Mountain.

*The description of the rock composition of the various cliffs in the area of the Mississagi River Valley is based on written sources. I'm no geologist, so I cannot actually identify the rock based on personal observation. Hopefully, at some point I hope I will be able to get rock samples identified by a proper geologist.

Geology*

Map by Dr. K. Tait, ROM, from http://www.davidkjoyceminerals.com/pagefiles/articles_cobaltgowganda.asp

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. Only some of the cliffs are granite.

The geology of the Mississagi River Valley region is, in fact, 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.[1]

The Mississagi River Valley region 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 part of 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

[1] Ministry of Northern Development and Mines Ontario. **ROCK ONtario**. Ontario Ministry of Northern Development and Mines, ROCK ON Series 1, 1994, p. 27-28.

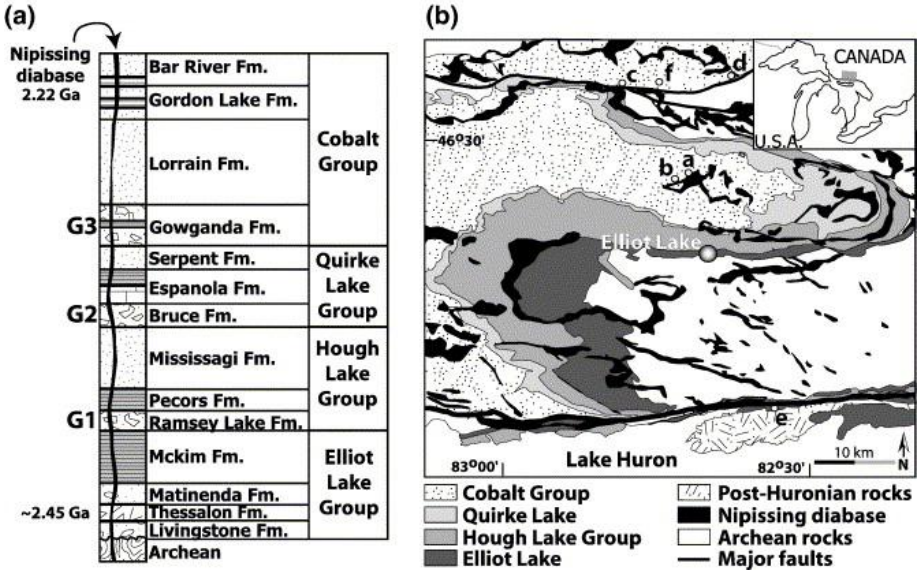


Diagram (a) shows the stratigraphy (layers) of rock in the Huronian Supergroup of the Southern Province of the Canadian Shield. The oldest rocks, Archean, are at the bottom; the youngest at the top. Ga stands for Giga Annum - 1 billion years ago.

southern edge of the Southern Province, north of today's Lake Huron. The ridges 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 metamorphosis (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 sediments were deposited between 2.45 Ga and 2.219 Ga (Ga stands for Giga annum - 1 billion years ago).[2] 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.

The rock of the Huronian Supegroup consists mostly of conglomerate, mudstone, siltstone or limestone, and sandstone (layered one on top of another).[2] In some places, these rocks have been lightly metamorphosized.[3]

[2] Bennett, Gerald. **The Huronian Supergroup between Sault St. Marie and Elliot Lake**—Field Trip Guidebook, Volume 52, Part 4. Institute on Lake Superior Geology, Sault Ste Marie, 2006.

[3] Long, D.G.F. 2009. The Huronian Supergroup; in **A Field Guide to the Geology of Sudbury**, Ontario; Ontario Geological Survey, Open File Report 6243, p.14--30.

Rock Composition of Intersection Rock

According to the GeologyOntario Spatial Search website map Intersection Rock lies in a band of "conglomerate, sandstone, siltstone, argillite" belonging to the Gowganda Formation of the Cobalt Group of the Huronian Supergroup. Argilite is a fine-grained sedimentary rock composed predominantly of indurated (friable) clay particles. It is sometimes called mudstone. Most of the rock at Intersection Rock seems to be siltstone and argillite—there is not much conglomerate or sandstone visible.

Rock Composition of Cumming's Lake—Rock Candy Mountain

According to the GeologyOntario Spatial Search website map most of the cliff at Cumming's Lake lies in a band of Nipissing mafic sills, mafic dikes and related granophyre. Part of the southern end of the cliff (the right side of the right end) lies in a band of "conglomerate, sandstone, siltstone, argillite" belonging to the Gowganda Formation of the Cobalt Group of the Huronian Supergroup.

Rock Composition of Other Cliffs along Highway 129 and the Mississagi River

Pullout Rock - Nipissing mafic sills, mafic dikes and related granophyre.

Stoney Creek - Massive to foliated granodiorite to granite of the Superior Province of the Canadian Shield.

Roadside #1, Kayak Cliff, Bench, Slab-Bottom Cliff, MBO, Bog Wall - Tonalite to granodiorite - foliated to gneissic - with minor supracrustal inclusions of the Superior Province of the Canadian Shield.

Little Trout Creek, Peshu Lake Cliff, Roadside, Roadyard, Hinckler, Jack's Wall - Massive to foliated granodiorite to granite of the Superior Province of the Canadian Shield.

Rock Composition of Havilah Mountain

According to the GeologyOntario Spatial Search website map most of the cliff at Havilah Mountain is quartz-felspar sandstone, argillite and conglomerate of the Mississagi Formation of the Hough Lake Group of the Huronian Supergroup of the Southern Province of the Canadian Shield. Part of it (far southern and northern ends) is Nipissing mafic sills and dikes.