BIRDWATCHERS CRAG

Summer 2026



View from the Farside down to highway 68. From here, you can see when your friends show up to the crag.

BIRDWATCHERS CRAG Summer 2026

This crag consists of 30 sport climbs and 6 trad climbs (with more routes being developed) on high quality sandstone just a 40-minute drive from Calgary. Located on Highway 68, just inside of Kananaskis, a 20–25-minute approach (1 km, 230 m) leads to a variety of climbs between 5.7 and 5.12c on tricky slabs, burly roofs, and techy faces. All routes are single pitch up to 30 meters and equipped with dual ring anchors. A 60-meter rope and 12 quickdraws are sufficient for all routes. This crag is an absolute suntrap with the great climbing occurring even mid-winter, as clear days allow for comfortable climbing even around 0 degrees. This, along with the quick approach and travel time from Calgary makes it an ideal off-season crag. Furthermore, the crag and approach have minimal seeping from regular snow melt, so Chinook climbing is a great – provided there was no major snow dump the day before! As of summer 2025, there is decent cell reception at the crag.

While the routes have been extensively cleaned, the area is new so please be careful and wear a helmet at all times. The routes are also often sandy (it is sandstone) when they have not been climbed for a while, so brushing may be necessary. Especially after rainfall, ledges get quite dirty. However, the drying time is short, and I have not yet seen any effect of moisture resulting in holds breaking more easily. Climbing after rainfall is currently fine, but this could change if more information comes to light. Closed projects are marked by flagging tape on the first bolt or a fixed rope hanging from the anchors. These often have loose rock/are missing bolts, so please do not climb.

If new routes go up, bolts are added, or closed projects are opened, I will post the changes on Sendage ASAP! I will also have a living document in a google drive with route updates and a GPX track for the approach:
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/18rBMY4ut_3Yqk_mcmPQhHeCflfUQSYnV?usp=sharing

The crag consists of a long cliff band broken into four main areas: the Sandcastle, Old Growth, the Farside, and Beyond the Farside. The Sandcastle is the smallest sector, marked by near vertical face climbing on pale sandstone. Hard moves are found in short sections that are nearly blank! Old Growth is the largest area, found 5 minutes further. It is a long wall surrounded by large, beautiful trees, affording some shade to the belayer. The tallest climbs are found here, on some of the most textured and bullet-proof rock. The Farside is another 10 minutes past Old Growth, and is the sunniest area, making it the best for winter climbing. Even in January, this area sees direct sun between 11am and 3pm. Beyond the Farside is found just up the hill and is the end of the cliff.

Happy climbing!

Dan Padeanu

Any questions or concerns? Is there a spinning bolt, missing hanger, or a loose block? Please email at dapadeanu@gmail.com

*Note: Greg Cornell bolted a handful of mixed routes in and around this area. Some evidence of these routes and abandoned projects can be found from the presence of low bolts for rope soloing. Climbing these routes is inadvisable, as they are not well documented, and have a large amount of loose rock. For the sake of safety, stick to the routes in this topo unless **absolutely** sure of what you are getting into and have the trad gear necessary. Further information about these climbs can be found online.*

Acknowledgement

This crag has been an undertaking of a handful of people, and I thank them all for their help cleaning, bolting and climbing routes. These people consist of the birdwatchers: April Woods, Braulio Lombardi-Puerta, Dave Cumming, Jessica Zawalykut, Nadja-Lina Eigler, Nick Randell, and Patrick Dwyer. Special thanks goes out to Martin Schön, for his initial stoke on getting this crag started. Special thanks also goes out to Evan Gabert, the only person willing to put in so many hours helping with trail development in +30 to -30, and who helped shoulder the brunt of the work. I would also like to acknowledge Shaun King developing new trad climbs and cleaning up a few old Greg Cornell lines.

In the topo photos, approximate bolt locations and anchors are indicated. Trad and mixed climbs are in white, while sport routes are colour coded to show the grade: Blue routes are ≤5.9, green routes are 5.10, orange routes are 5.11, and red routes are ≥5.12. Closed projects are included in purple. When these are open, the fixed line will be removed from the top and their description updated on the google drive topo.

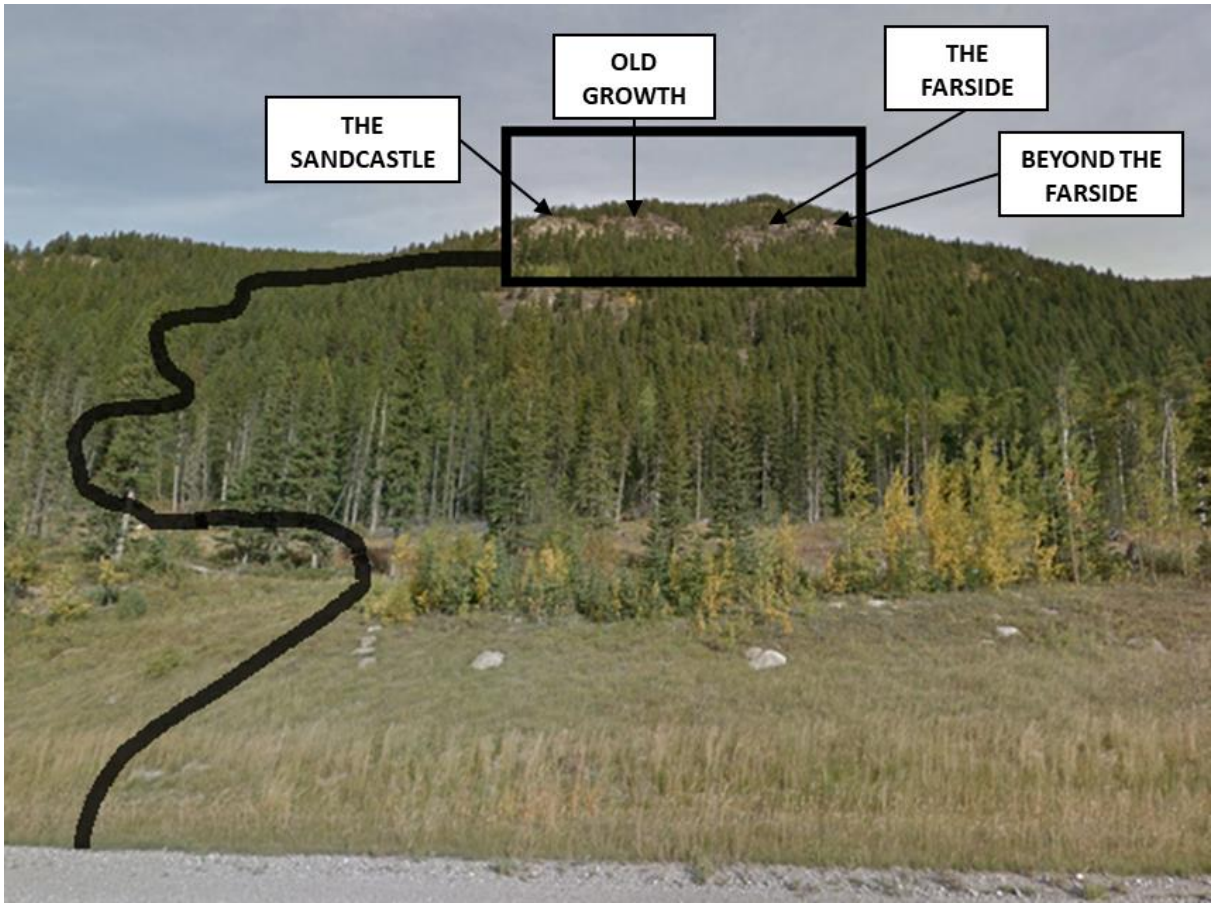
TØBVØR

If you like the climbing here, or anywhere else in the Bow Valley, please support TABVAR. The bolt fund makes crags like this possible.

CLIMB AT YOUR OWN RISK. NEITHER THE PERSON WHO PLACED THE BOLTS NOR THE TABVAR CLIMBING ORGANIZATION WHO HAS POSTED THIS ROUTE INFORMATION TAKES RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SAFETY OF THIS CLIMBING ROUTE. ASSESS THE RISKS BEFORE ATTEMPTING ANY CLIMB.

Approach

From Calgary, drive to west to Highway 40. Head south for 8 kilometers until you reach the sign for highway 68 (sign for Calgary). Drive 4 kilometers down highway 68 (gravel road) until you reach a small pullout on the right (south) side. Either park in the pullout (not recommended due to the muddy nature) or along the north side of the road. Alternatively, take highway 68 from the turn-off on highway 1 before Scott Lake hill. Approximate parking location: 51.041438, -114.984759



The approach from the road up to the crag. It is close, but steep!

Once parked near the pullout, walk west along the road about 200 meters to a sign on the north side of the road warning about an erosion area. After another 50 meters along the road head up towards a **single tall pine** in a gap in the trees. (flagged with pink tape) Choose the best-looking path through the meadow, aiming for the north-west corner where a series of wooden steps starts up an obvious trail next to a boulder. This heads up through the trees on switchbacks and reaches the left side of the crag within 25 minutes. Follow the cliff band to the first climbs. **Total distance**: **1 km**, **total elevation**: **230m**

Approximate crag location: 51.043827, -114.988473

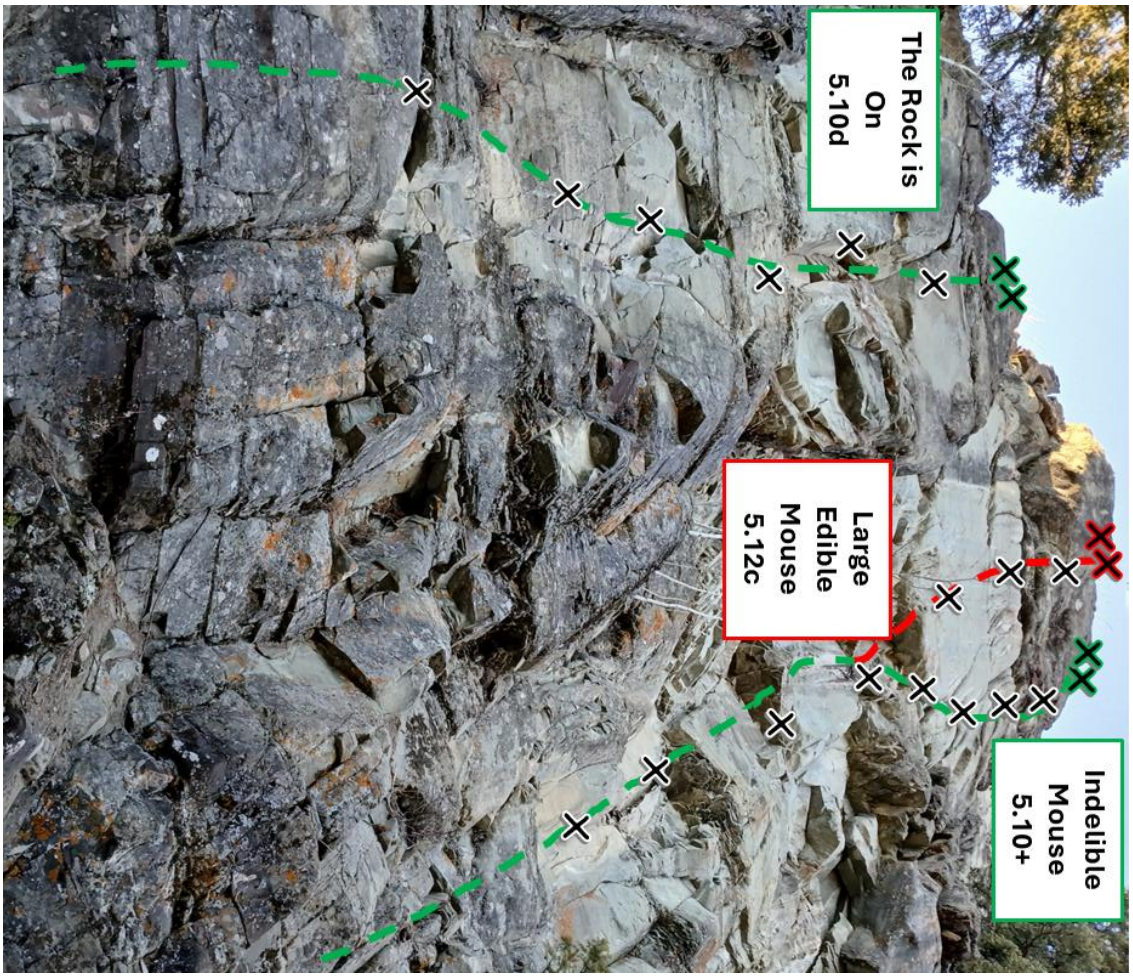
All routes, listed in order of grade				
#	**Grade**	**Name**	**Area**	**Year**
1	5.7	Conversational Cows	The Farside	2023
2	5.7*	Len's Den	Old Growth	???
3	5.7*	Immortal Shrub	Old Growth	2024
4	5.8	The 100 Meter Mosey	The Farside	2024
5	5.9*	Skaha Corner	The Sandcastle	2025
6	5.9*	Naughty or Gneiss?	The Sandcastle	2025
7	5.9	Successful Monkey	Old Growth	2022
8	5.9†	Purple Hippopotamus	Old Growth	2025
9	5.9	Throwing in the Trowel	Old Growth	2025
10	5.9	Krummholz	Old Growth	2024
11	5.10a*	Bowling for Cars	Beyond the Farside	2025
12	5.10a†	Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow	Old Growth	2025
13	5.10a†	T.P.	Old Growth	2022
14	5.10a	Chocolate Almond	Old Growth	2025
15	5.10b	Indelible Mouse	The Sandcastle	2025
16	5.10b†	Chicharrón Tactics	The Sandcastle	2026
17	5.10b	Domino	Old Growth	2026
18	5.10b*	Boys of Summer	Beyond the Farside	2025
19	5.10c	68 Special	Old Growth	2023
20	5.10c	Full Fledged	Old Growth	2023
21	5.10c	First Pants, then Shoes	The Farside	2023
22	5.10c†	School for the Gifted	The Farside	2023
23	5.10c	The Chickens are Restless	The Farside	2023
24	5.10d†	The Rock is On	The Sandcastle	2022
25	5.10d	Nature Abhors a Vacuum	Beyond the Farside	2026
26	5.11a†	Bee in my Car	The Farside	2023
27	5.11a	Squidheads Anonymous	The Farside	2025
29	5.11a	Socks and Sandals	Old Growth	2025
30	5.11a†	Der Falkner	Old Growth	2023
31	5.11b	Eigler Nordwand	Old Growth	2025
Link	5.11b	Chickens in Hell	The Farside	2024
32	5.11b	Boneless Chicken Ranch	The Farside	2025
33	5.11c	Reciprocal Space	Old Growth	2024
34	5.12a	End of a Good Thing	Old Growth	2025
35	5.12a	Scotty in Hell	The Farside	2023
36	5.12c	Large Edible Mouse	The Sandcastle	2024
37	~5.11-	Closed Project 0	The Sandcastle	-
38	~5.??	Closed Project 1	The Sandcastle	-
39	~5.??	Closed Project 2	Old Growth	-
40	~5.6	Closed Project 3	Beyond the Farside	-
41	~5.10	Closed Project 4	Beyond the Farside	-

* - Trad route, read description! † - Chain anchors equipped with a steel carabiner for easy cleaning

The Sandcastle

This is the first, small area that is reached and is named for the sandy beige coloured rock. It covers a few dispersed walls, currently with five sport climbs, including the hardest of the crag, *Large Edible Mouse*. It also contains two trad lines and one closed project.





The Sandcastle Left

Skaha Corner **(5.9) 20m trad, Gear to 3"**

Prep + FA: S. King

This is the first climb you will find, located just before a large prow of rock where the approach trail goes through a boulder. This takes the obvious clean corner crack up to a tricky chimney at the top that can be climbed a couple of different ways.

The Rock is On **(5.10d) 15m 6 bolts + anchor**

Prep: M. Schön. FA: N-L. Eigler

Easy climbing to the third bolt leads to some interesting moves to gain a tricky blank face. Follow the seam past this to pull funky pockets to get to a victory jug and clip the anchors right at the top of the block. This climb can go completely on gear with good placements!

Large Edible Mouse **(5.12c) 25m 7 bolts + anchor**

Prep: M. Schön, D. Padeanu. F.A: D. Padeanu

Easy at the top and bottom, but real hard where it looks hard. An excellent boulder problem on slopers and tiny feet. Scramble to the first bolt and then put on your shoes. A fixed draw protects the last move of the crux.

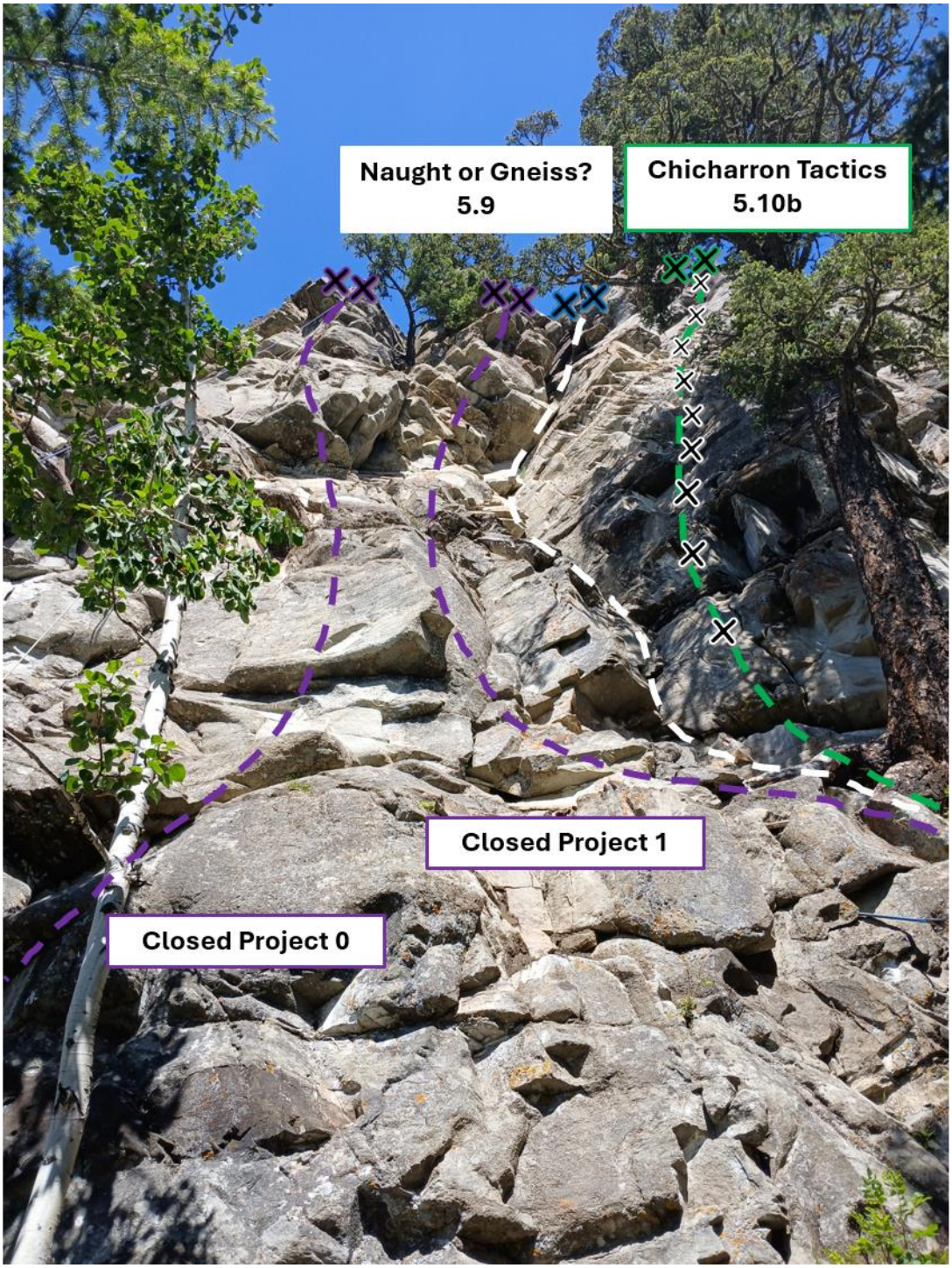
Indelible Mouse **(5.10b) 25m 8 bolts + anchor**

Prep + FA: D. Padeanu

Named for the persistence of the packrat that live near these routes. Head up *Large Edible Mouse* but break right after clipping the fourth bolt. Traverse carefully through some really sandy rock and watching out for packrat poop to get to interesting moves on side pulls and pinches to the anchors. The bottom isn't great, but the top is fun!

The Sandcastle Right

The next set of routes are 20m up the hill at an obvious flat belay platform beneath an impressive tree growing straight out of the rock



Closed Project 0 **(~5.11-) 28m**

Prep: E. Gabert

Nearly finished. If there is no fixed rope on the line, it is ready to be climbed. Nice moves up cool features at the bottom lead to a puzzling crux at the arret. Pull hard! Then, continue straight up to a final airy move.

Closed Project 1 **(~5.??) 24m**

Prep: D. Padeanu

A tough looking route that tackles a series of stacked roofs. Early in development and lots of cleaning to do.

Naughty or Gneiss? **(5.9) 23m trad, Gear to 3”**

Prep + FA: S. King

Climb up the easy ramp right of the tree to gain the ledge. Then, head up the interesting corner above with a small roof to navigate and fun stemming above. This route is long and eats up gear but can be done with a single rack if you take advantage of the nut placements. #5 BD or Big Bro optional.

Chicharrón Tactics **(5.10b) 23m, 9 bolts + anchor**

Prep + FA: B. Puerta

This route is just behind the large tree and is the last climb in this area. Climb up the easy ramp right of the tree to gain the ledge. Cruxes low and high, with adventurous face climbing in between. Tight bolting down low prevents awkward ledge falls.

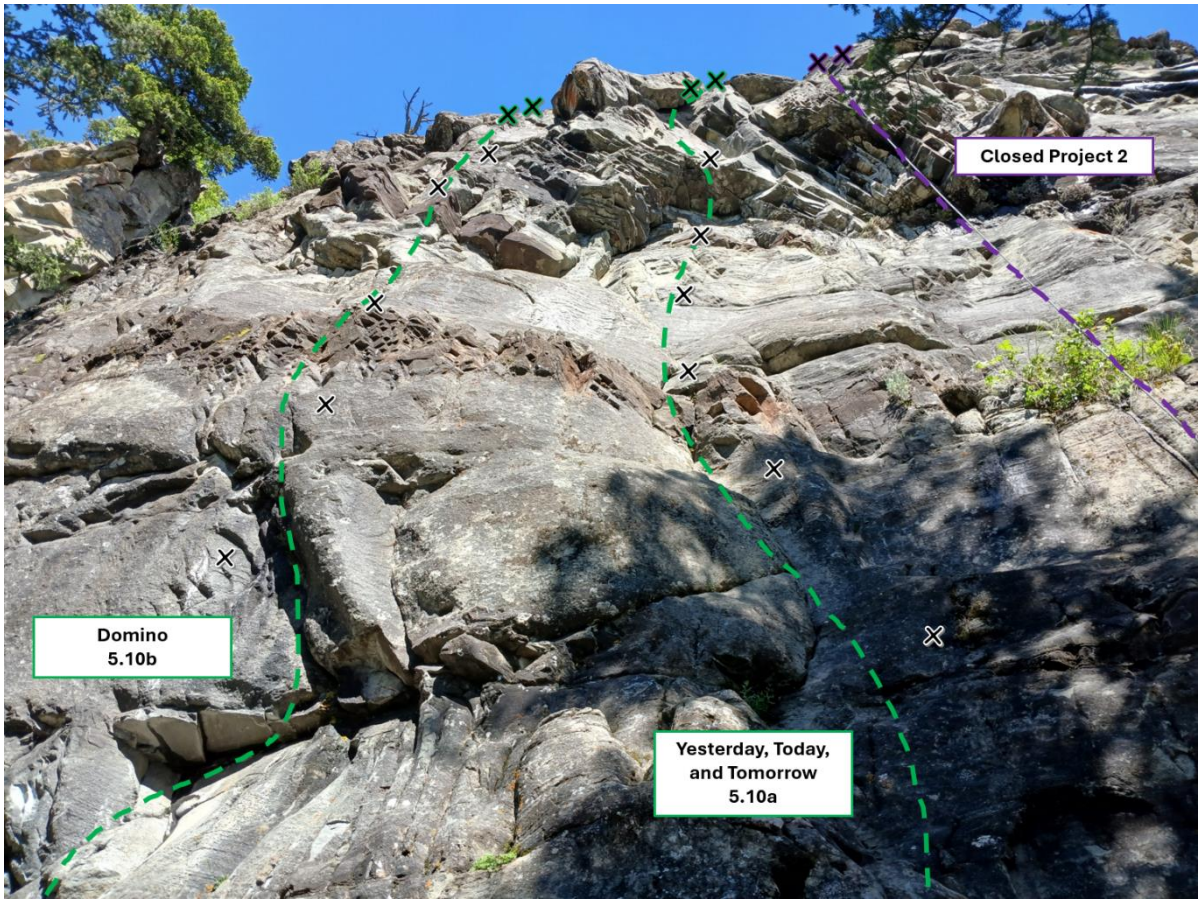
Old Growth

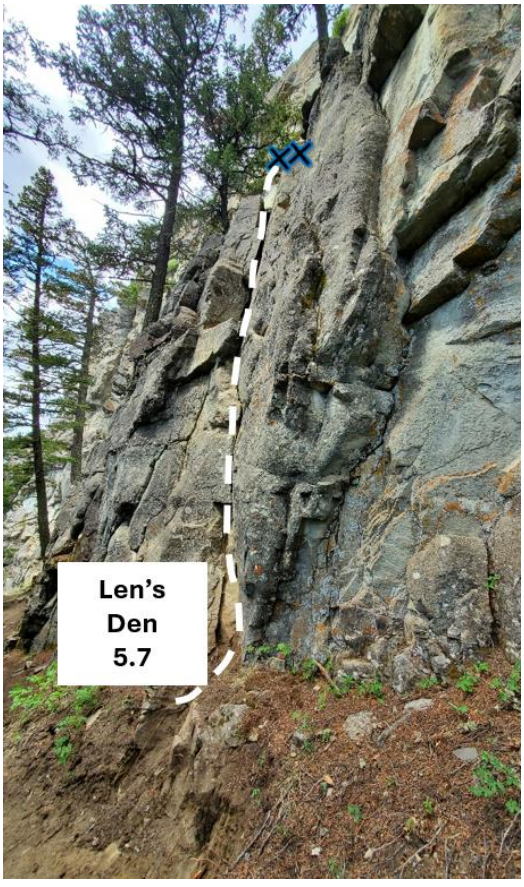
This area was named in reference to Greg Cornell's old mixed topo. There are numerous large trees in the area, which provide shade for the belayer on hot days. Many of the low bolts found here were set up for top-rope soloing of mixed routes. Please make sure you are starting up the correct routes! To get here, head East from the Sandcastle along the cliff band. The trail will climb sharply and then level out. Once you get amongst the large trees, look up towards the routes. This area stretches for the longest part of the cliff band, currently containing 15 sport and 3 trad routes. You will find the longest routes here, as well as some short ones that pack a punch! The routes here range from 5.9 to 5.12a and are listed as follows from left to right.

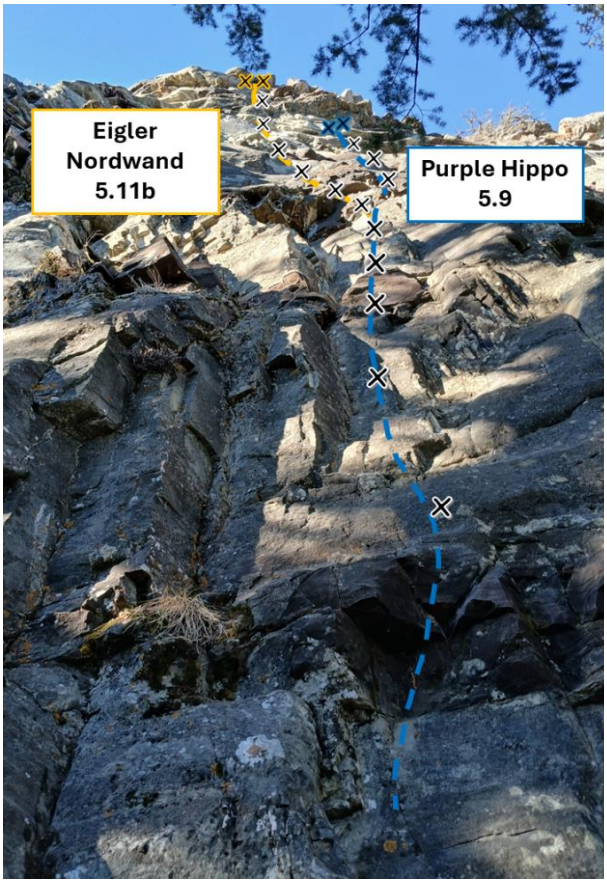


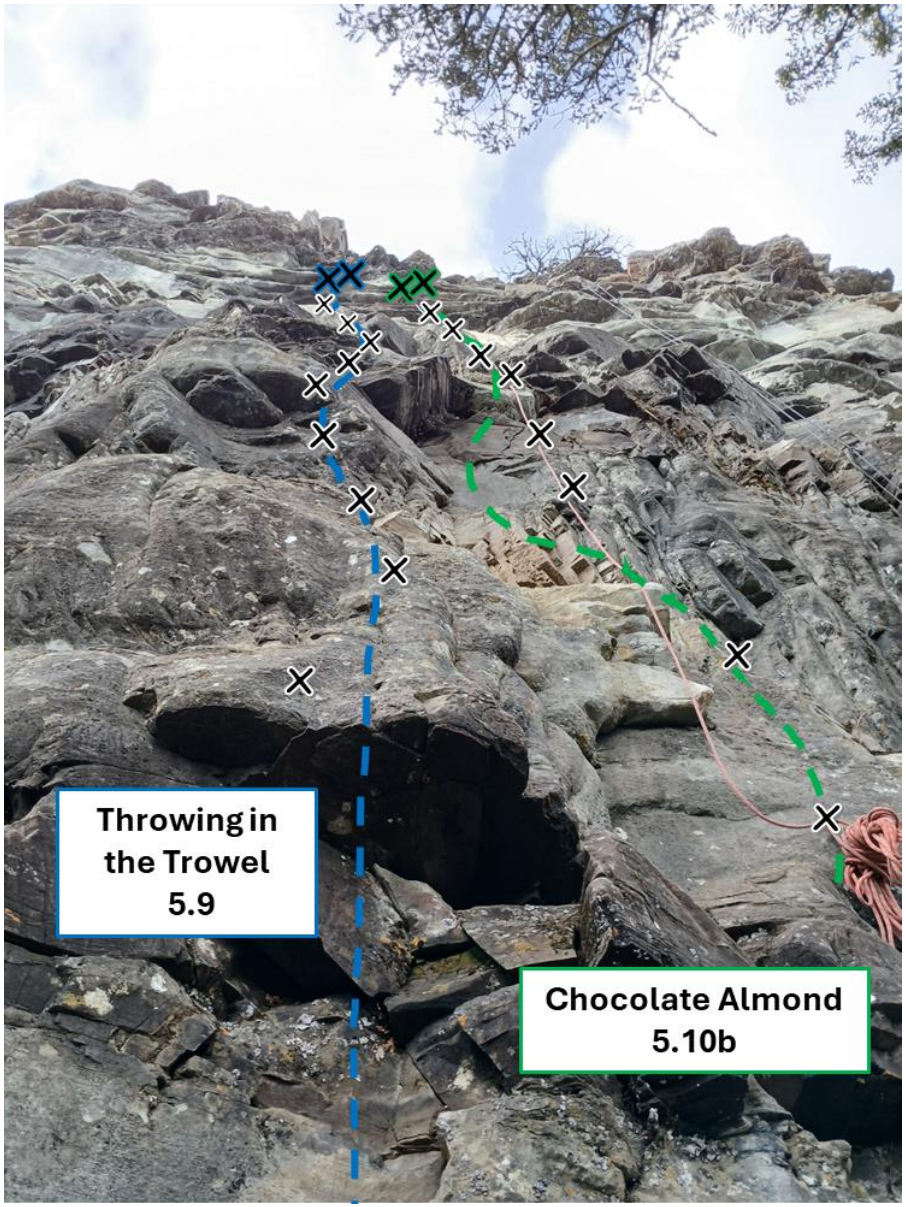
Braulio Puerta pulling into the crux on *Der Falkner*, 5.11a

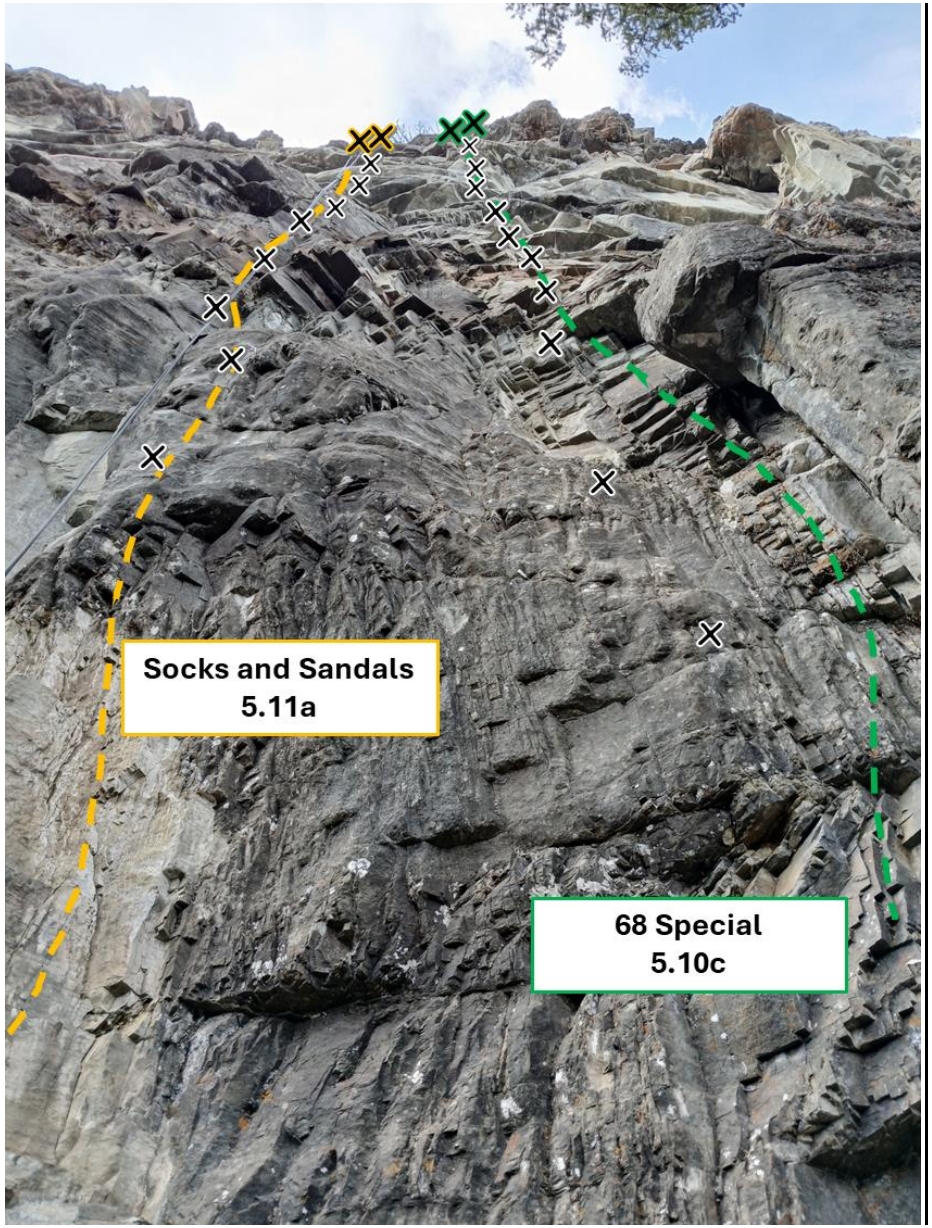
Old Growth left side








Throwing in the Trowel 5.9
Chocolate Almond 5.10b


Socks and Sandals 5.11a
68 Special 5.10c

Old Growth left side

Len's Den **(5.7) 9m trad, Gear to 3"**

Prep + FA: G. Cornell

This climb is short but good and climbs an obvious right-facing crack.. An old line recently re-cleaned by S. King. This only has quicklinks as the anchor, so rappelling is recommended.

Domino (5.10b) **16m 5 bolts + anchor**

Prep + FA: D. Padeanu

This is the first sport climb past the Sandcastle, on the short part of the Old Growth wall. Glue-in bolts. This route heads up through some forced beta on pockets before some much easier climbing. Essentially a V1-ish boulder problem into 5.9 climbing, these moves were too neat not to put up. This one is for all you boulderers out there.

Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow **(5.10a) 16m 6 bolts + anchor**

Prep + FA: E. Gabert

Just right of Domino on the shorter part of the wall. Head up a juggy crack to reach the vertical section. From here, move side to side and avoid ever having to pull a roof despite the angle getting steeper and steeper. Climb left at the last bolt to get to the giant crack at the top and clip the anchors. This climb can go completely on gear with good placements!

Closed Project 2 **(5.??) 15m**

Prep: P. Dwyer

Just right of *YTT* tackles a blank slab into a tough roof. If there is no longer a fixed rope on this route, it is ready to climb.

Eigler Nordwand **(5.11b) 25m 11 bolts + anchor**

Prep + FA: N-L. Eigler

Found just right of *Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow* on the tallest part of Old Growth. This shares a start with *Purple Hippopotamus* but continues left after the fourth bolt. Keep cruising to the sixth bolt, where you are suddenly met with a beautifully blank section. Once getting past this and taking a few deep breathes at a no-hands rest, use a flake to pull the overhang up top.

Purple Hippo **(5.9) 20m 9 bolts + anchor**

Prep + FA: D. Cumming

The same start as *Eigler Nordwand*, but head right at the fourth bolt. Nice climbing on high quality rock with good hands and feet gets you to the last draw at 5.7. Then, clip this and step out onto a blank face trusting a good side pull to get some good jugs and pull up to the anchors.

Throwing in the Trowel **(5.9) 20m 10 bolts + anchor**

Prep + FA: N. Randell

A nice adventure climb that starts just right of Purple Hippopotamus. Climb through some chunky but solid blocks down low, and up through some harder, but well protected moves. Pull a roof, then rest on a ledge. Repeat until reaching the slab up top. Named for the shovel broken from the amount of excavation required to remove the dirt from the ledges. Good fun and long like its neighbours.

Chocolate Almond **(5.10a) 20m 8 bolts + anchor**

Prep: P. Dwyer, D. Mundy. FA: D. Mundy

The centre line of the tall wall, this weaves up a weakness in the rock to find good hands and feet. Reach a no hands rest around the halfway point and then tackle a boulder problem through a V-shaped notch. A final slabby section near the top where a large flake came out guards the anchors!

Socks and Sandals **(5.11a) 20m 8 bolts + anchor**

Prep + FA: M. Guichon

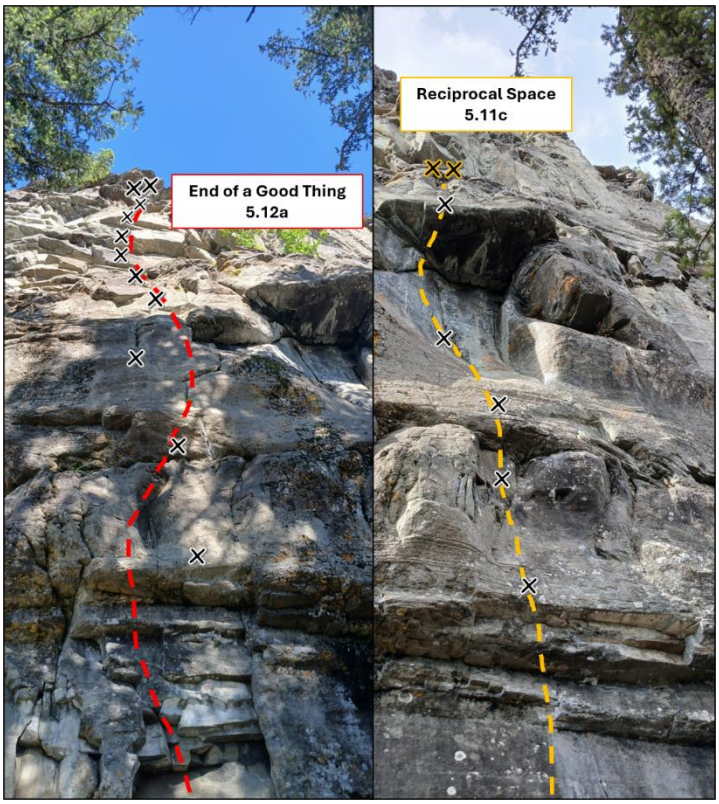
Found just left of *68 Special*. A high first bolt is accessed by easy climbing on large ledges or stick clipping. Then, fight your way through a thin and technical sequence through the bottom three bolts to gain easier climbing above. Named for the FA forgetting his shoes and having to clean the route in Birkenstocks.

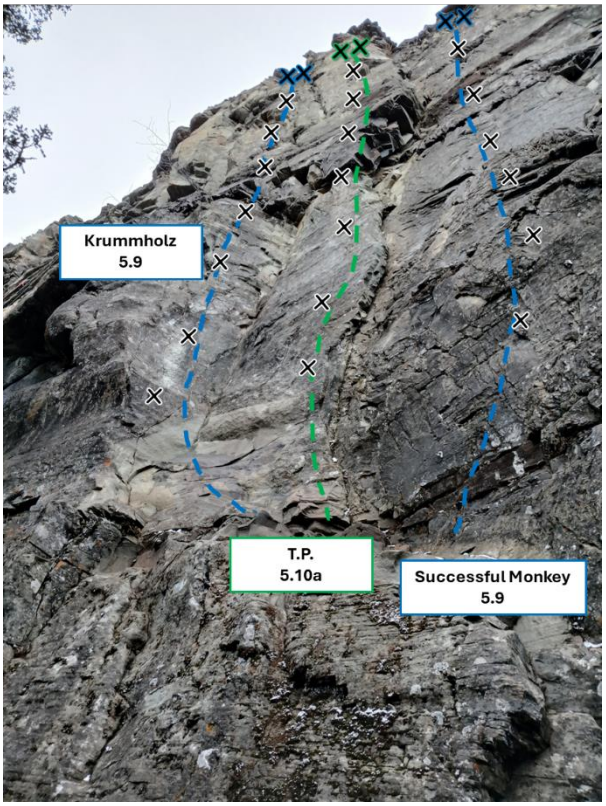
68 Special **(5.10c) 22m 10 bolts + anchor**

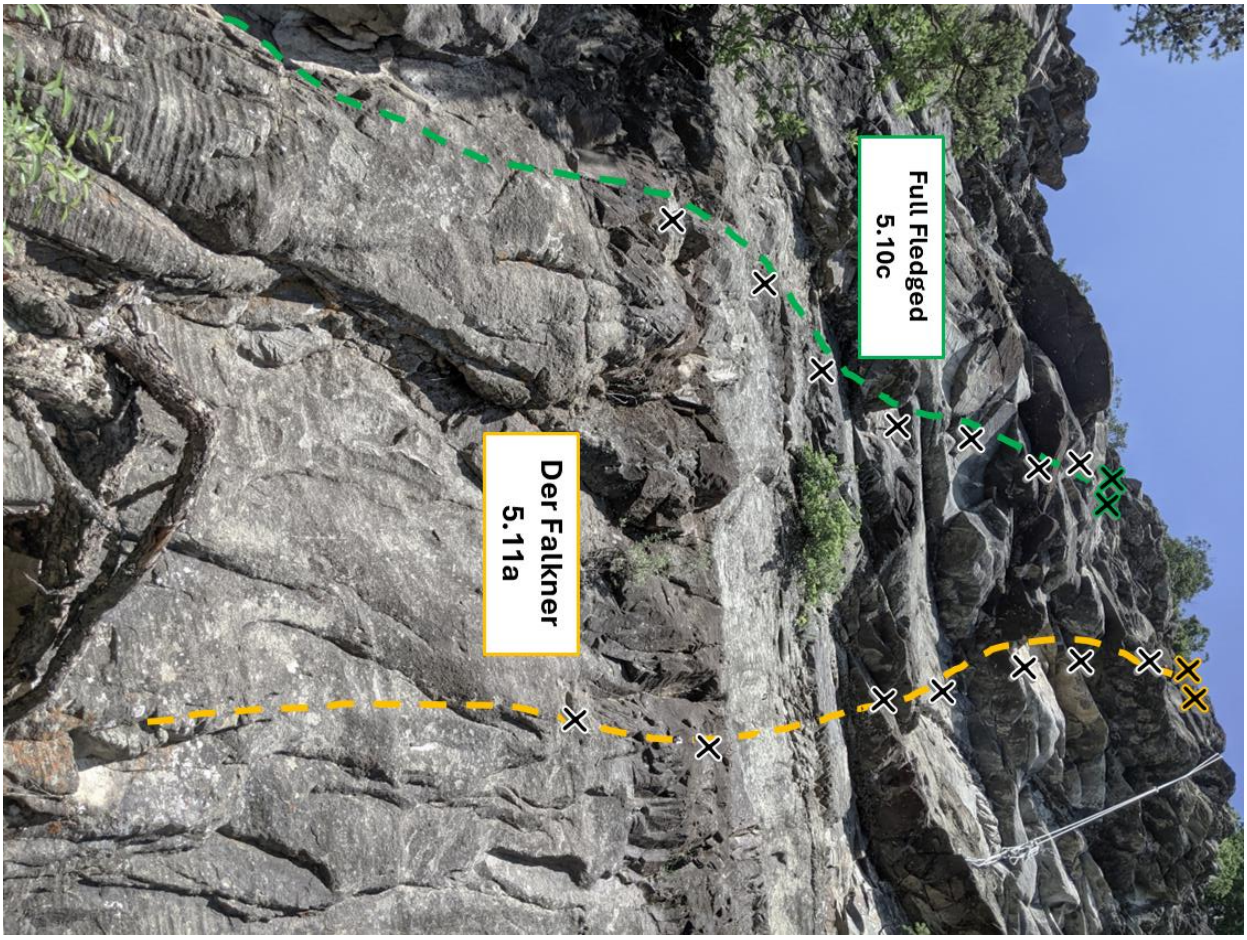
Prep + FA: D. Padeanu

This adventurous route heads up a pillar to the right of the bolt line using some unconventional corner climbing before reaching flowy face climbing past the fourth bolt. Push past a very specific crux sequence on the blank white rock up high to get to the anchor. Some people prefer to stick clip the first bolt, as the line is quite a bit right of it due to the rock quality.

Old Growth Right







End of a Good Thing **(5.12a) 22m 9 bolts + anchor**

Prep + FA: D. Padeanu

Glue-in bolts. Start on the slab just around the corner from *68 Special*. Cool moves follow an obvious weakness in the rock until reaching a good rest on a ledge. Then, easy climbing will get you to the blank part of the rock where the climbing gets hard. Permadraw on bolt #8. Sadly, the last route on the tall part of Old Growth.

Reciprocal Space **(5.11c) 12m 5 bolts + anchor**

Prep + FA: D. Padeanu

On the short roof feature right of *68 Special* and left of *Krummholz*. Might be easiest to stick clip the second bolt but is safe without it. Short but neat. Tricky moves all the way until you get over the roof. Check out the weird pocket between the 3rd and 4th bolt, and don't get *trust-itus* on the slabby feet!

Krummholz **(5.9) 16m 7 bolts + anchor**

Prep: D. Padeanu, E. Nicolau. FA: D. Padeanu

This route and the next two are found 15 meters right of *68 Special* in an obvious corner feature. This is the leftmost off the ledge, which climbs the corner. Stem up the corner to a no hands rest. Then, follow good side pulls up the arch to reach the anchor.

T.P. **(5.10a) 16m 8 bolts + anchor**

Prep: D. Padeanu. FA: J. Zawalykut

This is the central climb off the ledge. Scramble up the ledge to get to the first bolt (put your shoes on here) and back clean it before continuing. It climbs the crack at the bottom and then follows the column all the way to the top. It starts to feel airy up high as the column gets thinner, but good jugs are abundant!

Immortal Shrub **(5.7) 16m trad, Gear to 3"**

FA: Ethan Heinrichs

Found in the crack system between *T.P.* and *Successful Monkey*. Climb the right facing flake and use a mix of corner and face climbing to navigate around a "roof" with broken rock. A quality nut placement can protect these moves. Continue up the crack to the *T.P.* anchor. The first good placement may be high – use the first bolt of *T.P.* to protect it if nervous.

Successful Monkey **(5.9) 16m 7 bolts + anchor**

Prep: D. Padeanu, E. Gabert. FA: E. Gabert

This route goes up the slab just to the right of *T.P.* Once again, scramble up the ledge to get to the first bolt, and back clean if wanted. It climbs simple but quality rock, with an inviting crack to the left at the top. When in doubt, head towards easier terrain!

Full Fledged **(5.10c) 18m 7 bolts + anchor**

Prep + FA: E. Gabert

This route is found another 20m right of ***Successful Monkey***. It heads up an easy slab before a good rest. From this, trust the feet on the blank-looking white rock and fire up through a small roof on a critical hold and continue to the anchors above.

Der Falkner **(5.11a) 18m 7 bolts + anchor**

Prep: D. Padeanu, N-L. Eigler. FA: N-L. Eigler

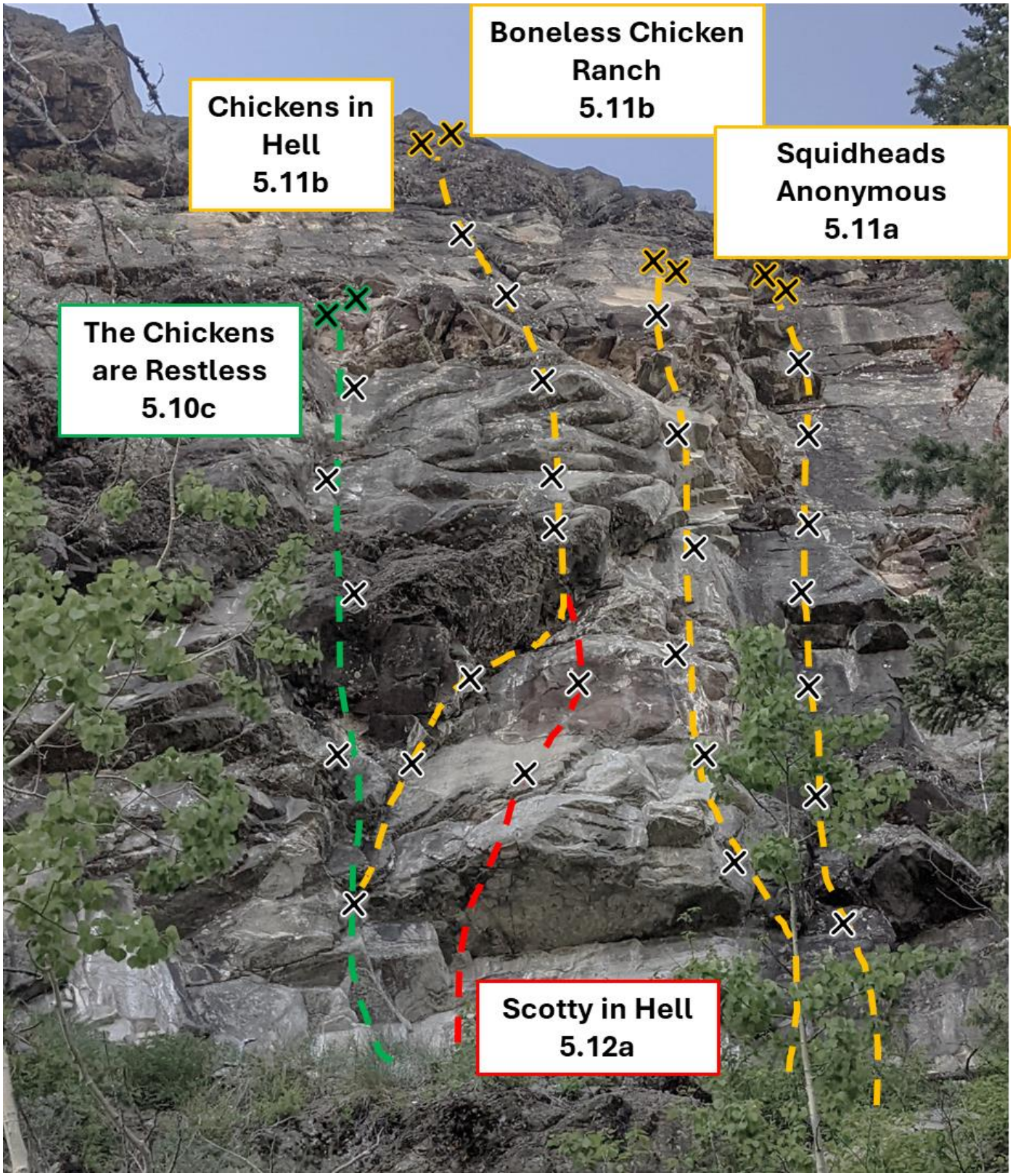
This route starts off the ground on a surprisingly tricky slab which eases off before reaching the folding point, where the angle changes abruptly to an overhang. Climb through odd but surprisingly good hand and foot holds before pulling the final power move to get up to the anchors. An excellent climb! Stay right at the last roof for full value. This is the last route of the sector.

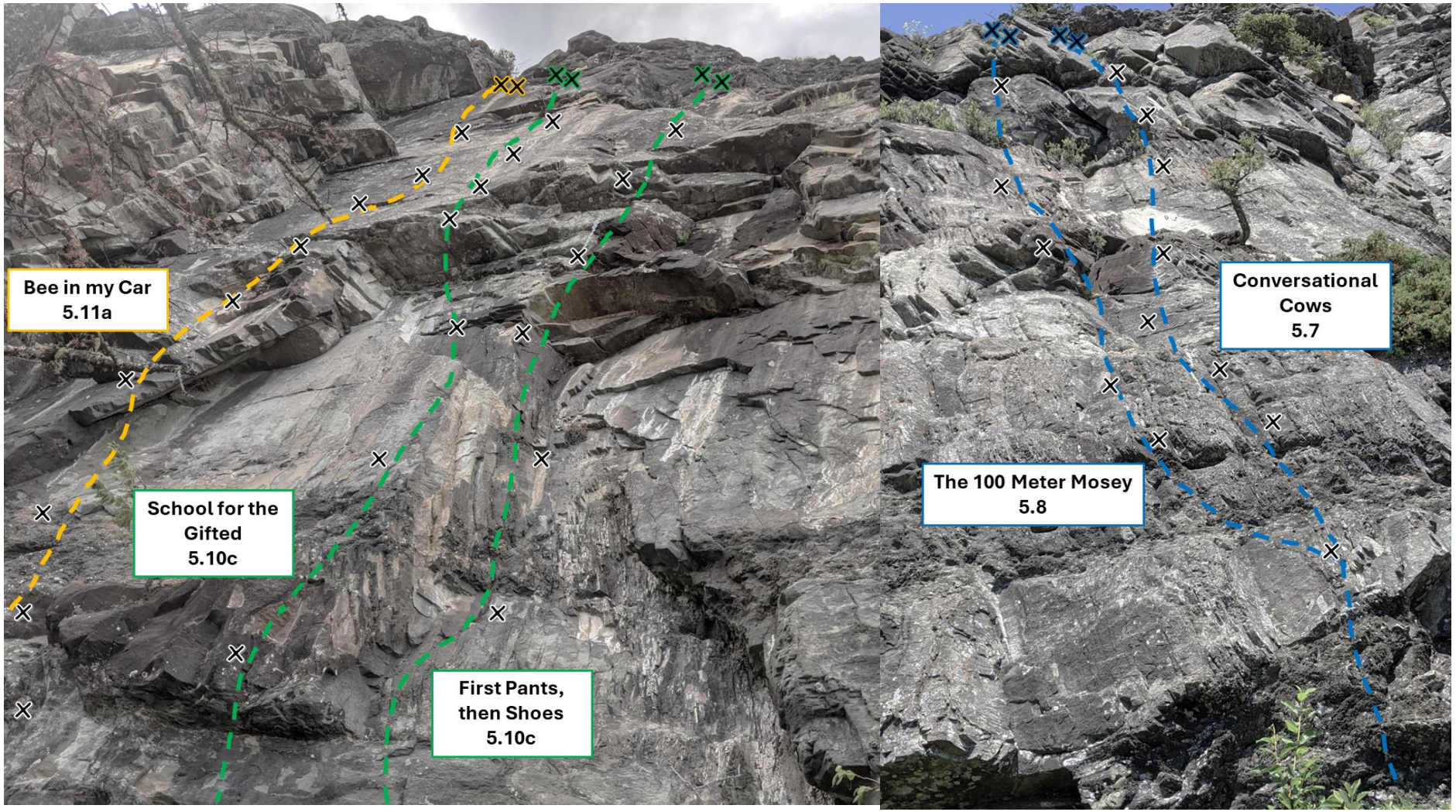
The Farside

This part of the crag was the first to see major development, but the furthest from the trail. Names inspired by the work of Gary Larson. From the Old Growth Sector, continue east along the trail. You will cross past a gully with a rope to assist travel in the winter and follow switchbacks up to the wall. The routes here see the most sun and are the best to climb in the winter. On the left most part of the wall, the overhang contains four routes. In the middle, a vertical wall has another four routes. This wall has many different rock bands running through across it, giving a variety of holds. Further to the right, slightly up the hill are two routes on the slab. The routes range from 5.7 to 5.12a and are listed below from left to right.



Nadja-Lina Eigler tackling the flake on *Bee in my Car*, 5.11a


Boneless Chicken Ranch 5.11b
Chickens in Hell 5.11b
Squidheads Anonymous 5.11a
The Chickens are Restless 5.10c
Scotty in Hell 5.12a


Bee in my Car
5.11a
School for the Gifted
5.10c
First Pants, then Shoes
5.10c
Conversational Cows
5.7
The 100 Meter Mosey
5.8

The Far Side

The Chickens are Restless **(5.10c) 10m 5 bolts + anchor**

Prep + FA: D. Padeanu

This climb is the furthest left, heading up the steep face left of the flat route. Good jugs and holds to the left will get you through the overhang. Try to find the secret pocket! Originally bolted to the top of the cliff, the rope drag was not worth another 8 meters of 5.4 climbing. Reachy - this will feel a bit stiff if you're short! The second bolt is hidden in the scoop.

Chickens in Hell **(5.11b) 20m 9 bolts + anchor**

Prep + FA: D. Padeanu

Linkup. Start up *The Chickens are Restless*, clip the first bolt and head up the crack to the right. Climb cool lay-back moves through two draws before merging with *Scotty in Hell*. Climb this up to the top. Perhaps the more natural line? It is certainly more consistent!

Scotty in Hell **(5.12a) 20m 8 bolts + anchor**

Prep: D. Padeanu, N-L. Eigler. FA: M. Schön

This bouldery climb tackles the large flat roof under the overhang. Stick clipping the first bolt is mandatory since you are right into the crux off the ground. The climbing eases off past the third bolt but stays balancy, continuing on to high quality climbing to the top.

Boneless Chicken Ranch **(5.11b) 16m 6 bolts + anchor**

Prep + FA: D. Padeanu

This line goes up just right of *Scotty in Hell*. Some interesting moves on will get you up to an aesthetically pleasing flake. Use some side pulls to get up to an awesome jug at the lip of a roof. Finish up on easy but fun ledges to the anchor.

Squidheads Anonymous **(5.11a) 17m 7 bolts + anchor**

Prep + FA: D. Padeanu

This line goes up just left of *Bee in my Car*. Generally easy climbing on good holds, but a defined crux at the halfway point may leave you puzzled. At the top, choose between heading right out onto the face, or think skinny thoughts and go up between the two flakes.

Bee in my Car **(5.11a) 17m 9 bolts + anchor**

Prep: D. Padeanu, D. Cumming. FA: D. Cumming

Head up the first route on the vertical wall, starting with a small roof, into a massive flake. Squeeze your way up it until breaking right onto the face, then criss-cross the wall on small edges to reach the victory jugs at the top. A full value route.

School for the Gifted **(5.10c) 19m 7 bolts + anchor**

Prep: D. Padeanu, N Randell. FA: P. Dwyer

Start in the middle of the vertical wall and head up an angular column. About halfway up the wall, pull through the roof and continue charging up the wall on edges until the climbing ease off near the top.

First Pants, then Shoes **(5.10c) 16m 6 bolts + anchor**

Prep + FA: D. Padeanu

This route is obvious from the long chain permadraw at the fourth bolt. Start on the right of the vertical wall, merging close to *School for the Gifted* about halfway up. A hard pull into an interesting body position will get you through the roof onto easy climbing above.

The 100 Meter Mosey **(5.8) 14m 7 bolts + anchor**

Prep + FA: B. Puerta

Start on the same platform as *Conversational Cows*, get to the first bolt, and then traverse left, avoiding the big (and hard) roof off the ground. Continue heading leftwards and up through easy terrain on good side pulls and feet. Get to a big ledge, then pull a funky move to get through the final roof.

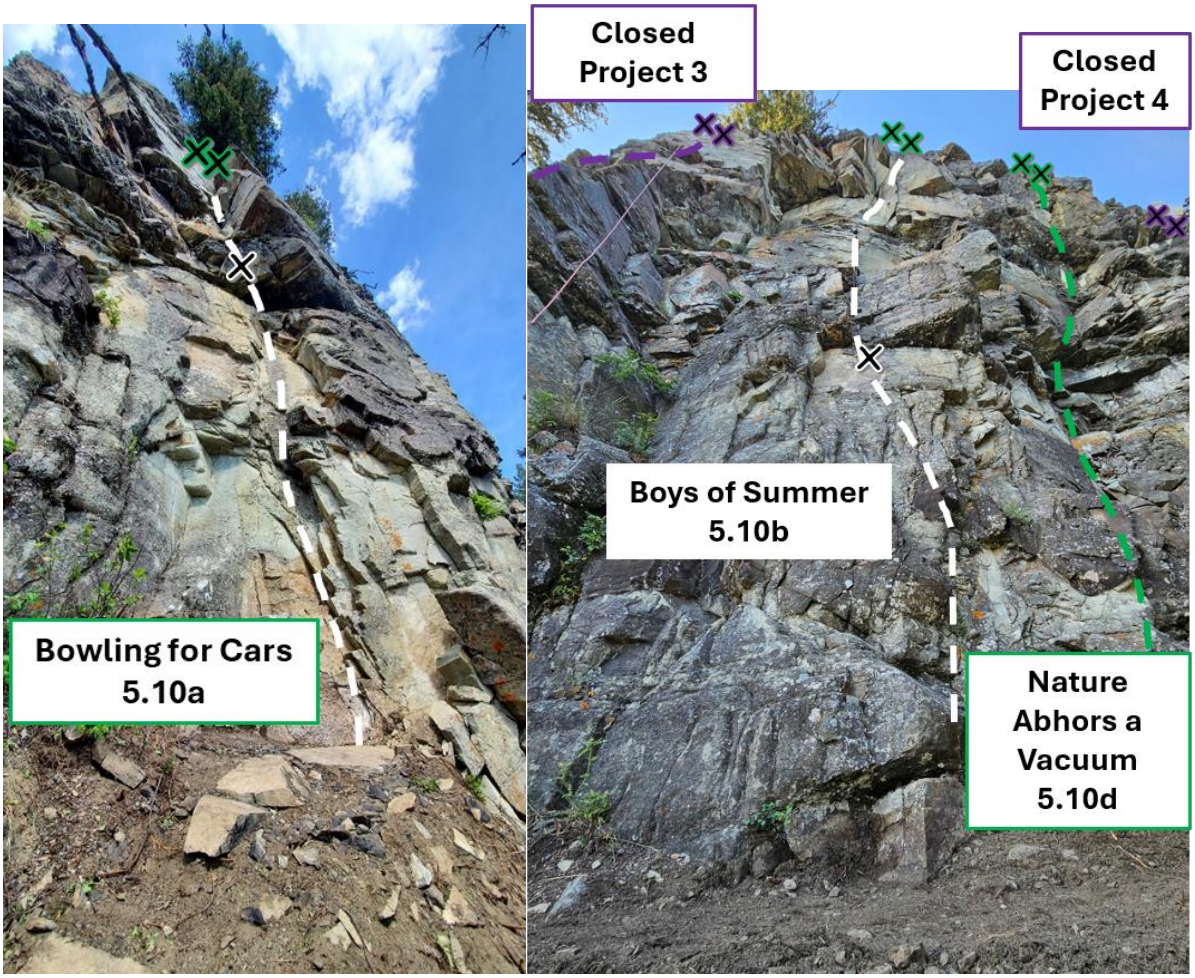
Conversational Cows **(5.7) 14m 8 bolts + anchor**

Prep: D. Padeanu. FA: N. Randell

This route is found 10 metres uphill from *First Pants, then Shoes* above a belay platform. The rock quality quickly improves past the first bolt and follows good jugs up to an interesting finishing move.

Beyond The Far Side

This area is found past the Farside (hence the name) to the east and is the newest area. Right now, two trad routes and one sport route found here but another 2-3 sport routes are being developed.



Bowling for Cars **(5.10a) 12m trad, Gear to 2"**

"Bowling for Cars" got its name from cleaning a 1000 lb pillar that crashed down though the trees and almost made it to the highway below. This climb cleaned up nicely and has a fun little traverse (single bolt) that connects two corners. Look for the big flat belay platform with steps leading to it.

Boys of Summer (5.10b) 18 m, S. King '25, Gear to 3"

From the large, flat belay platform, head up towards a right facing corner with a small cam placement out right and then clip the only bolt before continuing up the corner and into cool laybacking moves in the obvious stem corner at the top. Exit right and up to the anchor. A second small cam is needed unless you back clean the first cam after clipping the bolt.

Closed Project 3 **(~5.6)**

This will be a great addition once it is finished. A nice ramp leads to some nice moves on beautiful rock before the anchor. If there is no fixed rope up on this route, it is ready to be climbed.

Nature Abhors a Vacuum **(5.10d) 18m**

Prep + FA: D. Cumming

Follow the line of bolts up the centre of the wall, starting above a large, detached flake that now sits on the ground. A hard to read move through a small roof leads to some tricky vertical climbing at the end. Stick clip recommended.

Closed Project 4 **(5.??)**

Just to the right of Nature Abhors a Vacuum. Lots of cleaning left to be done…