

# **THE LITTLE STONY MAN CLIFFS OF THE SHENANDOAH NATIONAL PARK**

***A GUIDE FOR CLIMBERS (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)***



Edited by

**David Raboy (Chairman)**

**Vince Penoso (Secretary)**

**Potomac Mountain Club**

**(Mountaineering Section of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club)**

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**[WWW.POTOMACMOUNTAINCLUB.ORG](http://WWW.POTOMACMOUNTAINCLUB.ORG)**

If you have questions or comments on this guide please contact us at:

[info@potomacmountainclub.org](mailto:info@potomacmountainclub.org)



# LITTLE STONY MAN CLIFFS<sup>1</sup>

## *A Guide for Climbers*

### **Introduction**

As a service to area climbers, the Potomac Mountain Club (aka Mountaineering Section of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club) is pleased to provide this free guide to climbing the Little Stony Man Cliffs in the Shenandoah National Park. The guide will provide route information and ratings to the more obvious routes at the crag, which otherwise can be quite confusing, and is not intended as an instruction manual. Always remember that rock climbing is a potentially dangerous activity and each climber, or climbing team, is solely responsible for his/her/their safety.

In this Guide, we have provided route descriptions of the logical natural lines in the different regions on the cliffs. We have limited the number of routes to avoid contrived lines. If, however, others believe that a line should qualify as an individual route, please contact us and we will consider adding it to the guide.

### **Why Little Stony Man?**

Why? Because quite simply Little Stony Man Cliffs offers some (Old Rag takes the prize) of **the best trad climbing** close (within two hours) to the Washington DC metropolitan area. There are a sizable number of routes and variations of all levels, all over 80 feet (the majority over 100 feet), and most leadable. These routes are contained in a relatively compact area. The belays at the top of each pitch offer spectacular views and a pleasant breeze to enjoy while you bring up your second. The rock is beautiful and varied, and the crag is never crowded. The approach is short. There is a casual, social atmosphere shared by climbers, hikers, and other passersby alike. And, most important in summer, LSM is substantially higher than 3,000 feet above sea level, which makes it 10 to 15 degrees cooler than the sweltering crags at lower altitudes. Even when it's 95 degrees in Washington, LSM can be quite comfortable.

### **LSM Ethics**

#### ***National Park Service Rock Outcrop Management Plan***

LSM is in the midst of a significant change in official management of the area. The National Park Service has developed a Rock Outcrop Management Plan (ROMP), which

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<sup>1</sup> You probably have noticed that we changed the spelling of the name of the cliffs in this edition. There is a bit of historic confusion. After the initial purchase of land, according to the NPS, the *Stony Man* Mining Company was established in 1858. When the company proved unsuccessful, resort development was considered and the *Stoneyman* Park Preserve established. The name reverted to *Stony Man* later on. Although many climbers have used the antiquated spelling, the NPS officially designates the cliffs as the Little Stony Man Cliffs, and so shall we.

includes an Environmental Assessment (EA) and Climbing Guidelines. There are a couple of key goals for rock outcrops in general, and LSM in particular. The first has to do with protecting unique vegetation in the vicinity of the various outcrops. The second concerns addressing the serious erosion in the obvious downclimb that splits the LSM cliff face.

What absolutely is not an NPS objective is to curtail climbing. Indeed one of the goals stated in the Climbing Guidelines is to: “Provide rock climbing and other climbing-related opportunities.”

The important actions listed in the Climbing Guidelines are the following:

- The AT may be relocated from the cliff top to the cliff bottom, now the Passamaquoddy Trail. Hikers will be directed by a sign to the overlook on the bottom trail. If the AT is relocated, the top trail will not be closed, but will be renamed.
- A section of boulders at the far north end of the crag near the overlook will be closed to activity by use of low impact barriers.
- An area 35 meters north of the downclimb that splits the cliff face (known as the “Chute”) and all of the cliff face south of the Chute will be closed to activity through use of low impact barriers.
- All top-rope anchor gear will be required to be placed between the edge of the cliff and the top-of-cliff trail (currently the AT). It will be prohibited to have webbing, static rope, or any other TR gear cross the trail.
- Due to the problems of erecting top-rope anchors, permanent fixed TR/rappel anchors will be installed at various points on the cliff face. The PMC will be participating in this project.
- The Chute will be “hardened”, most likely with stone steps, to make it safer and less vulnerable to erosion.

The PMC agrees with all of the components of the Climbing Guidelines, and will participate in their implementation.

### ***A Note on Top Roping***

Two of the most important components of the Climbing Guidelines affect top-roping, and a special explanation is in order.

In this guide we emphasize trad climbing, but many people TR at LSM as well. But there are issues with TRing at LSM that don’t exist at other local crags like Carderock and Great Falls, and we better address this issue from the get-go. The Appalachian Trail currently runs directly on top of the cliffs, and is located between the cliff face and the trees

that would otherwise be obvious top rope anchors. It also turns out that a variety of unique vegetation resides in proximity to these relatively small trees.

As previously stated, fixed TR/rappel anchors will be installed at LSM, but is unclear when this will actually occur. In the interim climbers would be well served to realize that there are special problems in setting TRs at LSM. Anchors should be set, as will be discussed in more detail, by slinging boulders and employing rock protection, with all anchor-related gear on the rocky area between the edge of the cliffs and the AT (or whatever the trail is eventually called). Climbers should not use the trees across the AT for anchors. First, it is obnoxious to force hikers to navigate through a maze of static ropes and webbing when using the trail. Second, messing about in the vegetated areas where the trees are is going to do damage to the vegetation and cause problems. Until the fixed anchors are installed, all climbers should keep any TR anchors and anchoring gear on the cliff-side area adjacent to the current AT. No exceptions! There we've got that out of the way, so let's move on.

### ***Leading versus Top-Roping***

There is some concern that once fixed anchors are installed there will be conflict between TR groups and those that are leading routes. We believe that simple courtesy can prevent any problems. At the Gunks they have an ethic that if a lead and TR team arrive at a route simultaneously, the lead group has priority. This makes sense, because the trad team will be off the route quickly whereas the TR group will probably hang around for a while. A second principle is that TR groups should not hog routes. At LSM, where for the most part trad climbers will be building top anchors to bring up seconds, common sense will allow TR groups and trad teams to coexist. The TR team can easily stop activity for a little while to let a leader or second make the few moves needed to get out of the way of the TR rope. Trad teams should avoid using fixed anchors to bring up seconds if there is even a hint that a group may wish to set up a top rope on that anchor. Similarly, TR groups have priority over those wishing to use a particular anchor to rappel. After all, there will be plenty of rappel options, and there's always the downclimb on the renovated Chute. Finally TR groups should never leave ropes hanging from fixed anchors that are not being used. Ultimately there is a lot of territory out there, and with common courtesy, as well as common sense, we all should be able to "just get along."

### **Why this Guide?**

The answer to this question is simple. There is no reliable, detailed source of information regarding LSM climbing at this juncture. And climbers like to have guides, including directions, ratings, names, locations of climbs, and other information. So the purpose of this guide is twofold. First, as part of our efforts to aid the NPS, we wanted to survey the crags in order to be able to recommend the best locations for fixed anchors. While we were doing this, however, it made sense to identify, name and rate climbs and variations, since to our knowledge no one else has done it satisfactorily. We therefore decided to produce a free on-line guide for the climbing community.

Our project started with a team of PMC climbers on a cold, snowy day in November 2006. During spring and summer of 2007, PMC Secretary Vince Penoso and I (Dave Raboy), with various other PMC members, have climbed at LSM virtually every weekend to lead routes and gather beta (tough job but someone's got to do it).<sup>2</sup> Along the way we met other climbers who offered their opinions, and LSM regulars like Chad at Shenandoah Mountain Guides, who gave us very good information.

To say we've had a blast would be an understatement. And since we are not aware of any other detailed guides to the area, we've taken certain liberties. First, we've named the routes. Second, as described below, we have rated the climbs.

This raises an important point. There may be climbers out there who have a lot of experience at LSM and disagree with some or most of the content of this guide. We welcome input, critiques, history, arguments about grades, etc. The beauty of an online guide is that it is easily changed. In particular we would love to learn about the history of climbing at LSM. We're constantly coming upon old rusted pitons, so we know someone was out there a long time ago. Because we know so little about the history of the place, we have not included any information on first ascents in this guide. Although we are brazenly naming and rating the climbs, we are well aware that these cliffs were climbed long before we placed our sticky rubber on LSM's greenstone.

## **The Climbing and Gear**

The rock at LSM is a beautiful, multicolored greenstone. The cliff band runs roughly North/South and the climbs have a western aspect. This means sun in the afternoons, but given the altitude (about 3,400 feet), the crag is comfortable even on hot summer days. The cliffs are 80 to over 100 feet high. The climbing is extremely varied with face, blocky pillars, cracks, slabs, off-widths, chimneys and overhangs. Some of the rock, including some big blocks, is loose, so caution is advised. Many of the climbs are naturally divided into "lower" and "upper" parts. The lower part is often characterized by moderate climbing on a blocky face or equally blocky pillar, which leads to a ledge. "The difficulties" often begin above the ledge, with the upper part including steep slabs and faces, cracks and overhangs. Each climb will therefore have a lot of variation. Many of the climbs are primarily moderate climbing with a couple of serious cruxes thrown in. Others are sustained over their entire length.

### ***Trad Gear***

Most climbs at LSM are leadable. Although they are all single-pitch, the pitches are long, 80 to 100+ feet. This in and of itself leads to our prejudice that racks be a bit larger than normal for a local crag. Also remember that most climbs are quite variable, with thin nuts and cams needed for the lower, blocky parts, and larger gear (sometimes very large) for the

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<sup>2</sup> Other PMC participants have included Jason Salmanoff, John Watson-Jones, John Oster, Mike Dannhardt, Bob Graver, Michael Doyle, Matt Murray, and Reed Bumgarner. If we have forgotten anyone, please excuse us and let us know.

cracks up top. But small gear is also needed in the upper parts of the climbs in order to take advantage of the small face cracks. There are even off-widths where only a #3 Big Bro will do! Finally, you actually have to build an anchor to bring up your second, rather than just slinging a tree. Given the rock variability, some imagination is required, so your top anchor can eat up some gear.

The configuration of the rock leads some to place more gear on moderate ground than they otherwise would. On the blocky lower sections, there are often little ankle-breaking ledges, or family-ruining horns, jutting out in inconvenient places. The moves are often easy, if a bit awkward, but the consequences of even a short fall could be severe. As a result, many prefer not to run it out even on easy ground.

Ultimately the size of a rack is a personal choice, but given the short approach, there is little downside in bringing everything but the kitchen sink, knowing that a lot of it may end up in the rucksack at the bottom of any given climb. At least until you know the climbs well...

### ***Top Rope Gear***

We have already discussed the problems with setting up TR anchors at LSM, but at the risk of being obnoxiously repetitive: All TR gear must be between the current AT and the cliff face. **No anchor-related gear should cross the trail.** This will require some creativity.

The two tools of TR anchors at LSM are slinging boulders, and placing trad gear. But the normal rules apply. Three cams equalized by a cordelette is not a TR anchor (unless you are belaying from the top and can monitor the anchor), it is a component of a TR anchor. At least two anchor points are required. The typical LSM TR anchor could include one slung boulder as one anchor point, and three equalized pieces of trad gear as the other point. Or two boulders may work. If there are no appropriate boulders, a safe TR anchor can be built from two or three separate trad-gear anchors, each with three equalized components. The individual anchor points are equalized using static rope or webbing, with two opposite and opposing lockers at the power point.

It should be obvious that building top rope anchors at LSM is not for beginners. Indeed, given the variability of quality and configuration of the rock, one really needs to be an experienced trad leader in order to build a reliable TR anchor at LSM without violating the ethics of the area. This is the reason it is so important to install fixed anchors at LSM. It's a matter of safety.

Finally, the routes at LSM are long. If you want to sling-shot belay from the bottom, you will need a 60 m rope.

### ***Helmets!!!!!!***

Whether you are a trad climber, climbing on TR, belaying, or just hanging around, you must always wear a helmet at LSM. First some of the rock is loose, and climbers have been known to send some rocks down. Also there is something about a cliff-top trail that triggers

some primitive compulsion to throw rocks off the cliff. We've had some near misses due to cliff-top rock flingers, and at other crags famous climbers have been recently killed by rocks thrown from above. PMC has placed signs at the cliff tops, and we scream like banshees at anyone who throws rocks off the cliffs, but it still should be considered mandatory to wear a helmet at LSM.

## The Ratings Game

*Into the valley of Death Rode the six hundred. "Forward, the Light Brigade!" Was there a man dismay'd? Not tho' the soldier knew Someone had blunder'd...– Alfred Tennyson: "The Charge of the Light Brigade."*

*Once more into the breach, dear friends... – William Shakespeare: "Henry V."*

Alas, we must enter the ratings war, though no good can possibly come of it. But as we began the debate about assigning ratings to LSM climbs, we realized there are distinct choices that can be made, and as long as the choices are explained, and the resulting rating system used uniformly, we might escape with something approaching dignity. In fact, when you break it down, as will be explained, we have to choose between two implicitly distinct ratings systems that happen to look numerically similar.

Here's a hint. One weekend at LSM we watched two climbers approach a route, and the one queried the other as to the rating. The response: "It's a Seneca 5.4." Not it's a 5.4, but a **Seneca** 5.4. Seneca Rocks has notoriously "stiff" ratings, but there is nothing wrong with that. Seneca is one of the most historic, cherished rock climbing venues in this country, and maintains very strong traditions. One of these traditions is the way climbs are rated. The same rating tradition exists at the Gunks, and this tradition has influenced ratings at Carderock, Great Falls and even Sugarloaf. But when you compare ratings at these Eastern areas with those in the rest of the country, or around the world, you realize they're just different.

Although these areas claim to use the Yosemite Decimal System (YDS), despite the obvious numerical similarities the "Seneca Decimal System" is distinctly different regarding the difficulty associated with each grade, at least in the "moderate" grades where most of us live. To see this all you have to do is visit Yosemite; after all, the name comes from there (although the system was invented at Taqhuitz Rocks), and Yosemite isn't exactly known for soft grades. A new climber with a bit of trad experience would have no trouble with the classic Yosemite 5.6, Munginella. The same climber, after maybe a bit of a struggle on P 1, could savor the six-pitch experience of the 5.7 classic (Super-topo rating) After Six on Manure Pile Buttress in the shadow of El Cap. But drop this climber at the base of Soler at Seneca and he/she would be horrified!

The same picture emerges if you compare ratings at traditional places such as Joshua Tree with those at Seneca (or the Gunks). This is reflected in international ratings comparisons as well. Many guides (including Dick Williams' guide to the Trapps in the Gunks) feature a table translating grades from one country into grades from another. For

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example, French 5c typically translates to U.S. 5.9. (Williams equates it to 5.10!) The French system is used throughout Western Europe. I (Dave Raboy) have climbed a lot of 5c in Europe, and I guarantee it doesn't translate to Seneca 5.9!

We have no problem with the traditions of historic climbing areas like Seneca and the Gunks, and it would be ludicrous to want these areas to re-grade to conform to national and international norms. But for this guide we are going to use ratings that we consider to be TRUE YOSEMITE RATINGS.

The second principle we employed when rating climbs was ALL CLIMBS WERE RATED ON LEAD. This is especially important at LSM where moves on TR might seem very easy, but even with decent pro might feel quite committing on lead, because all sorts of stuff is sticking out of the rock and, with rope stretch, even a short fall could result in a broken ankle or loss of the family treasure. Trust us – there are climbs at LSM that feel like walk-ups on TR, but can be quite scary on lead.

The third principle is that ALL CLIMBS ARE RATED BY THEIR HARDEST MOVE. This is important for a couple of reasons. First, as previously stated many climbs at LSM are characterized by mostly moderate climbing punctuated by one or more stiff cruxes or committing moves. These moves define the grade, because they give notice that just because a leader runs up the first 40 feet does not mean that there are no “difficulties.” This is a safety factor. LSM climbs can look deceptively easy from the ground. Second, understanding this principle should lessen the accusations that routes are over-graded.

The ratings result from a consensus. After we posted the first edition of this guide, a lot of PMC members have used it. Surprisingly, most agree with the ratings. A few minor adjustments have been made in this edition. Finally we use the traditional G to X ratings for protection availability. If there is no pro rating, it means the protection is good.

## **Directions**

### ***Driving to the Trailhead***

To get to the LSM trailhead from the DC metropolitan area, take 66W to Exit 40 (Route 15 – this avoids the Gainesville problems on 29). Take 15 S until it intersects with 29, and then take 29 W (right). Follow this to Warrenton where a right turn keeps you on 29 Business/211. Follow 211 through Sperryville, and continue to the Thornton Gap Entrance to the Shenandoah National Park. Head south on Skyline Drive. Just past mile marker 39 you will see a small parking lot on the right, which is the LSM trailhead. Driving from PATC headquarters in Vienna to the trailhead takes no more than 1½ hours.

### ***Approach***

Head uphill from the parking lot on the trail for just a little ways and you will intersect the AT (stone marker). Turn left. You are now on the Stony Man Trail. Continue up the switchbacks until you come to another stone marker. Take the right (straight) fork which puts



you on the Passamaquoddy Trail (which may become the AT) to the bottom of the LSM cliffs. (The left fork is the continuation of the current AT and takes you to the top of the cliffs, and then to Stony Man Mountain.) On the Passamaquoddy Trail (or future AT), you know you are at beginning of the cliffs when you arrive at an overlook with a fantastic view of the valley. The entire approach is less than 15 minutes.

## Orientation and Grouping of Climbs

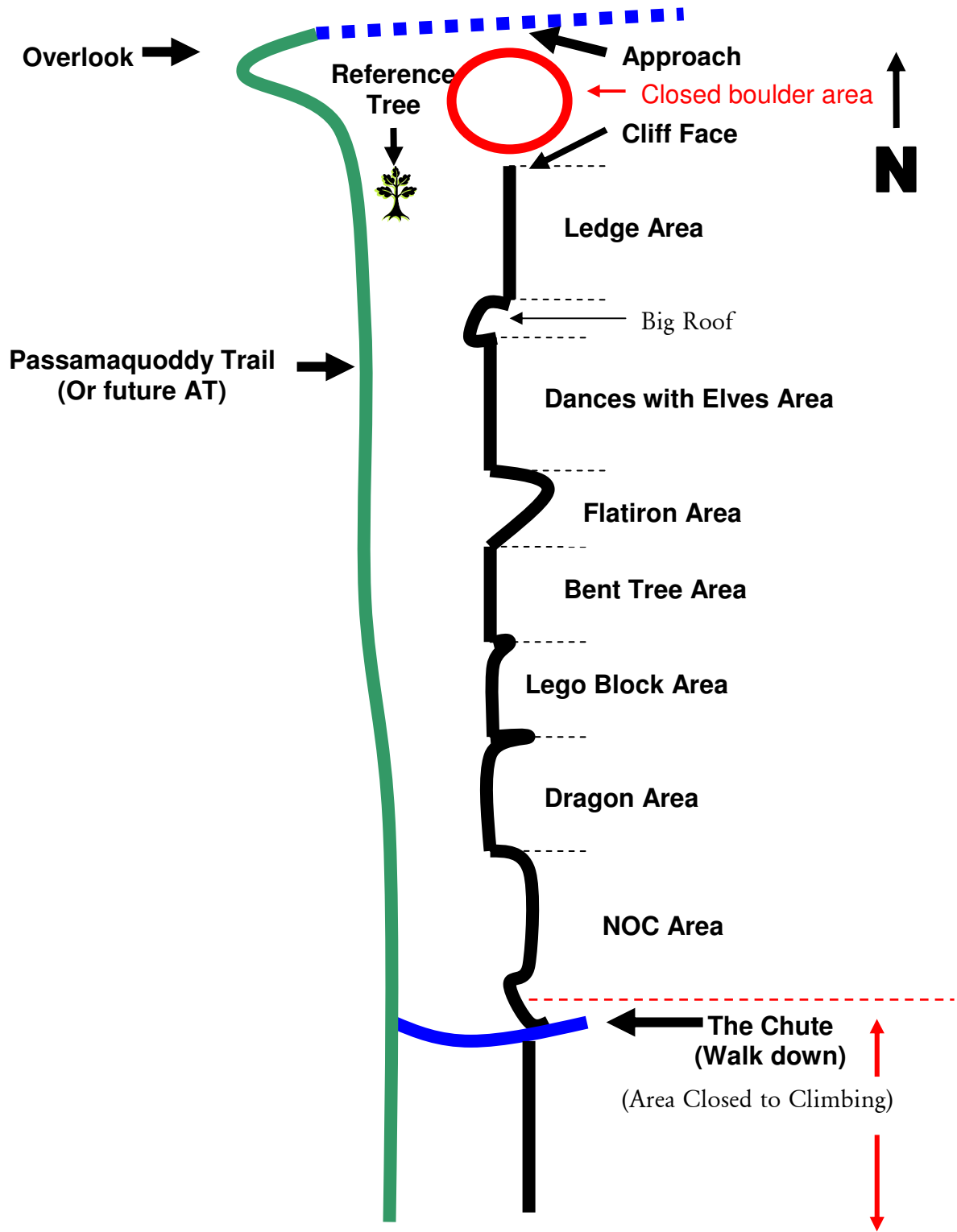
On the Passamaquoddy Trail (possible future AT) you are entering the climbing area from the North, and the cliffs will be on your left. The cliffs begin at the overlook and continue

for c. 500 feet, with a downclimb, the Chute, splitting the cliffs about 340 feet from the end of the overlook. We have divided the cliffs into small, identifiable areas, with up to a half dozen climbs in each area. The names of the areas are the Ledge Area, the Dances with Elves Area, the Flatiron Area, the Bent Tree Area, the Lego Block Area, the Dragon Area, and the NOC Area (North of



Chute). As previously stated, the region 35 meters north of the chute and the entire cliff south of the Chute will be closed to activity. For each separate area we will give distances to the area from a common point, GPS coordinates,<sup>3</sup> identifying features, and descriptions and pictures of the routes. All distances to areas are measured from a large tree with a blue blaze (if this trail becomes the AT, we assume the blaze will be white) on the left side of the trail, about 50 feet from the end of the overlook. The following map provides the general layout of the cliffs.

<sup>3</sup> At best, GPS coordinates are good to only about 30 feet, so don't be surprised when the difference in the Northings between two areas does not match with the difference in linear distance in feet from the reference tree.



## THE CLIMBS BY AREA

The areas and climbs are described from North to South (climber's left to right when facing the cliffs). Distances to the center of each area are measured from a large tree with a prominent blue blaze that is on the cliff side of the trail, about 50 feet past the end of the overlook.

### The Ledge Area

This is the area that begins directly after the overlook. Remember that the Climbing Guidelines call for the closure of the boulder area near the overlook. We interpret this to mean that we should limit our climbing to routes beginning at the reference tree, and ranging to the south. Therefore the area is bounded by the reference tree on the climber's left (north) and the gigantic roof on the climber's right (south). The informal trails that exist on the area north of the reference tree should not be used.

The Ledge Area is a great area for beginning leaders. Although the climbing is easy, it is interesting, with excellent pro. The area starts with a low angle wall which leads to a very broad ledge. At the back of the ledge is a wall that goes to the top of the cliffs. All the routes we describe can be led from the bottom all the way to the top. Although there are many variations, we describe four distinct routes, three of which are suitable for beginning leaders.



Reference Tree

### *Evergreen 5.7*

The start is directly in front of the reference tree on a somewhat kilted ramp in a left-facing corner which gains a small ledge. Continue behind the obvious Evergreen tree (sling it), and follow the weaknesses. This brings you to the left side of a bulging overhang, covered with lichens, but with cracks for holds and pro. This is the crux. Negotiate the bulging overhand (awkward) and go up and over to easier ground. At this point you are on the prominent ledge. You can either belay here in cracks behind the ledge (the climb would

be 60°) or continue up the easy wall (5.0 if that) at the back of the ledge, which will bring you to the top of the cliffs. If you decide to belay on the ledge you will still have to scramble up the back wall to the top. Absolutely do not traverse north (climber's right when looking down) down the social trails, or bushwhack that way to gain the trail at the bottom. This is the area that is closed under the Climbing Guidelines.

### ***Lichen Leadin' 5.2***

Although it appears to be dirty, this is a great first climb for a new leader. It has some interesting moves. The start is about 5 feet right of Evergreen. There is a little alcove which leads to a heavily lichened buttress. Start by taking the easiest route up the buttress, avoiding the overhangs, and following the traverses behind the various ledges. By following the weaknesses you will avoid the lichens. Your target on this first buttress is a tree at the top. A little scramble will put you on the main ledge. On the ledge is a pillar with cracks, chimneys and other features. Go up and over this pillar making it easy or difficult at your discretion. Once this is completed, you will find yourself at the back wall that leads to the top of the cliffs. This is the easiest part of the route, and is no more than 5.0. But still practice your pro placements on it!

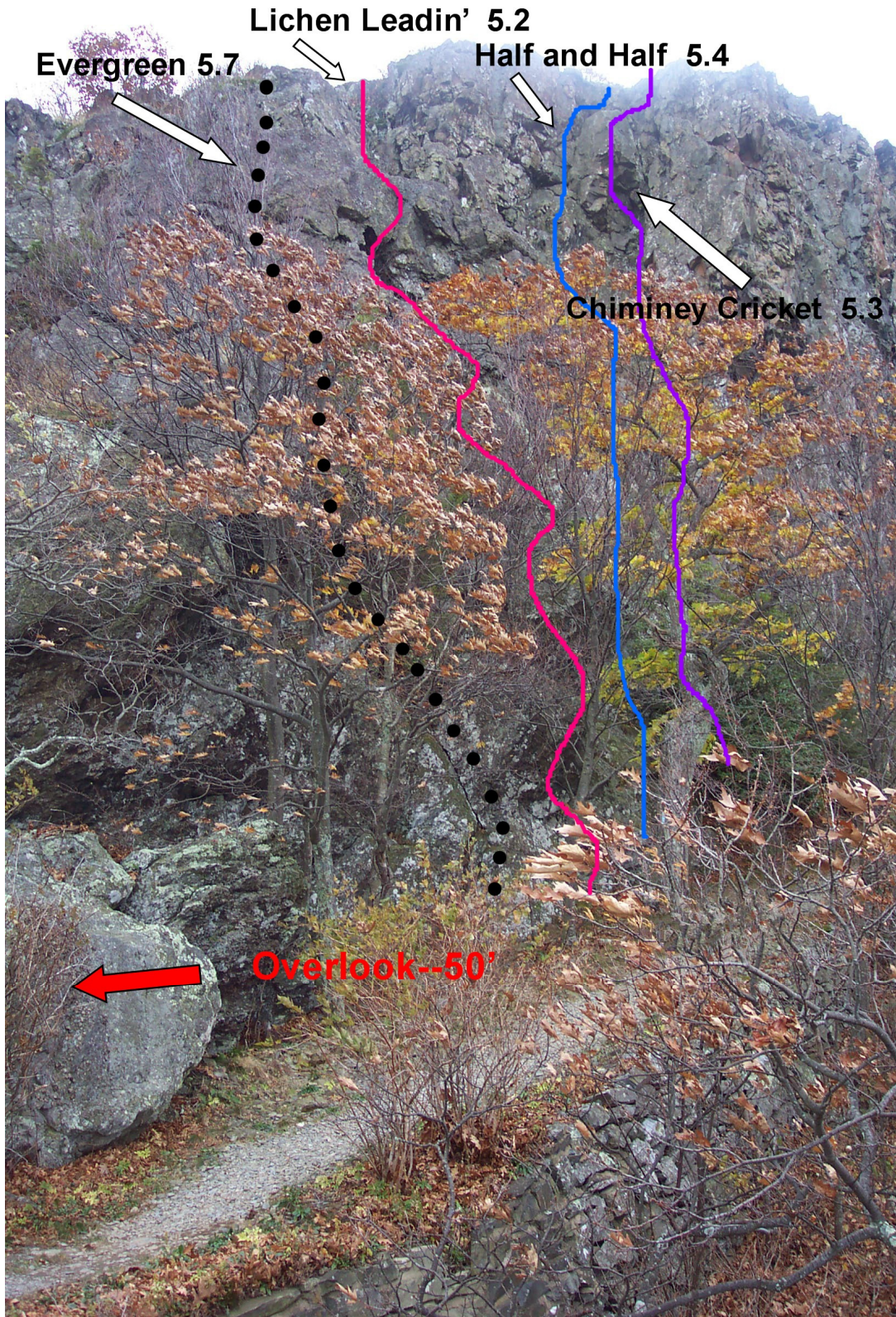
### ***Half and Half 5.4***

A few feet right of the start of Lichen Leadin' is another alcove with a low angle rock wall which gains the main ledge. This is the direct start for Half and Half. Negotiate this wall by following the weaknesses and the pro opportunities. Once on the ledge walk back and to the right until you find the left-facing corner formed by the gigantic roof on the right and the back wall. Directly in the corner is a large chimney. A few feet to the left of this is, towards the top, a left facing corner/ramp. Climb the wall left of, or directly below the corner, then climb the corner/ramp and exit on the top of the cliffs.

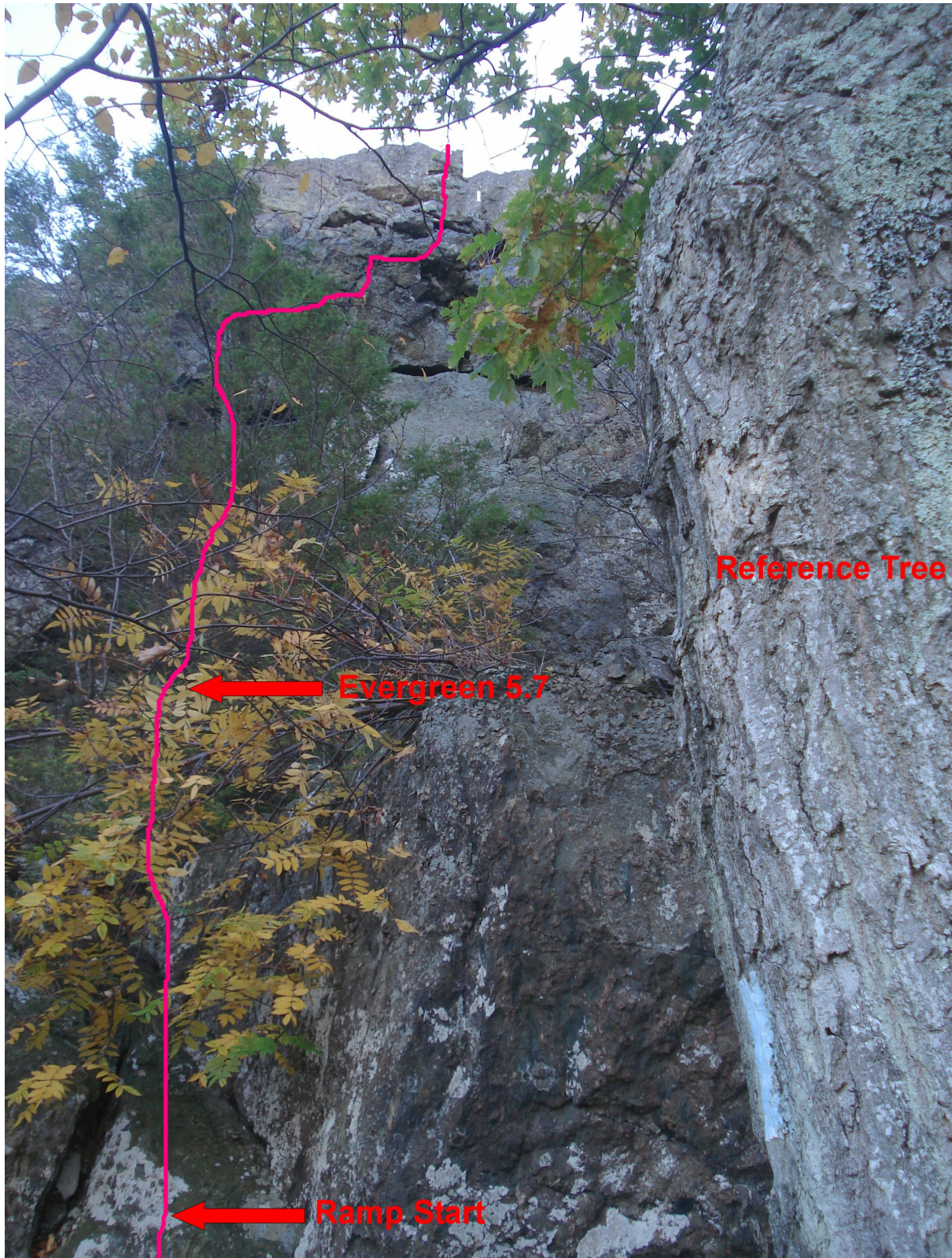
### ***Chimney Cricket 5.3***

A few feet right of the Half and Half direct start is the Chimney Cricket direct start. You'll know you're there when you are at a low angle wall directly below the massive roof that forms the right border of the Ledge Area. Climb the wall until you reach the ledge. Then walk directly on the left of the giant roof until you reach the left-facing corner formed by the roof and the back wall. The chimney is right in this corner. Climb it any way you want, there are some really fun moves and great pro, and exit at the top of the cliffs.

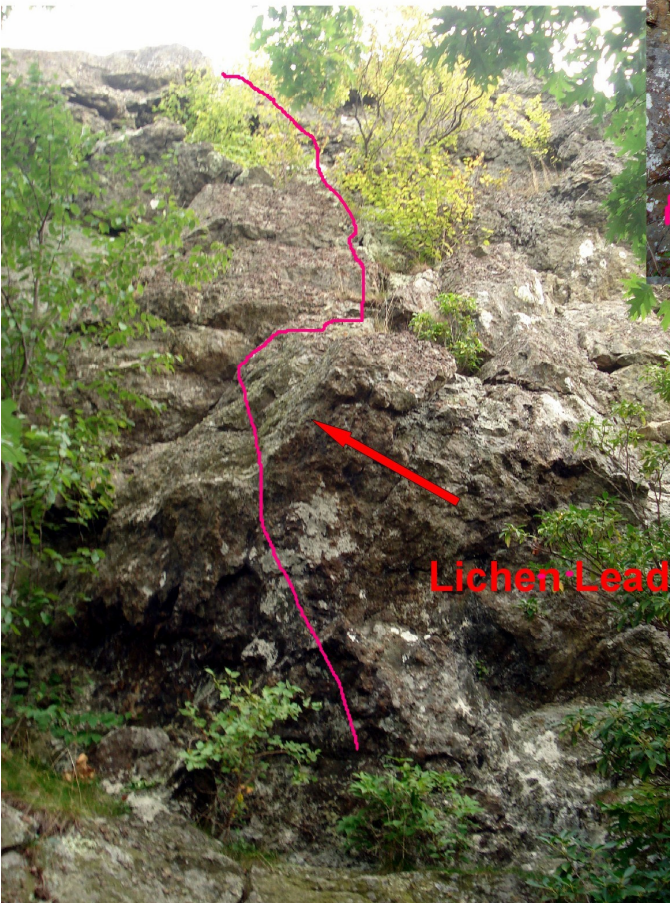
## Ledge Area Overview



## Ledge Area Details

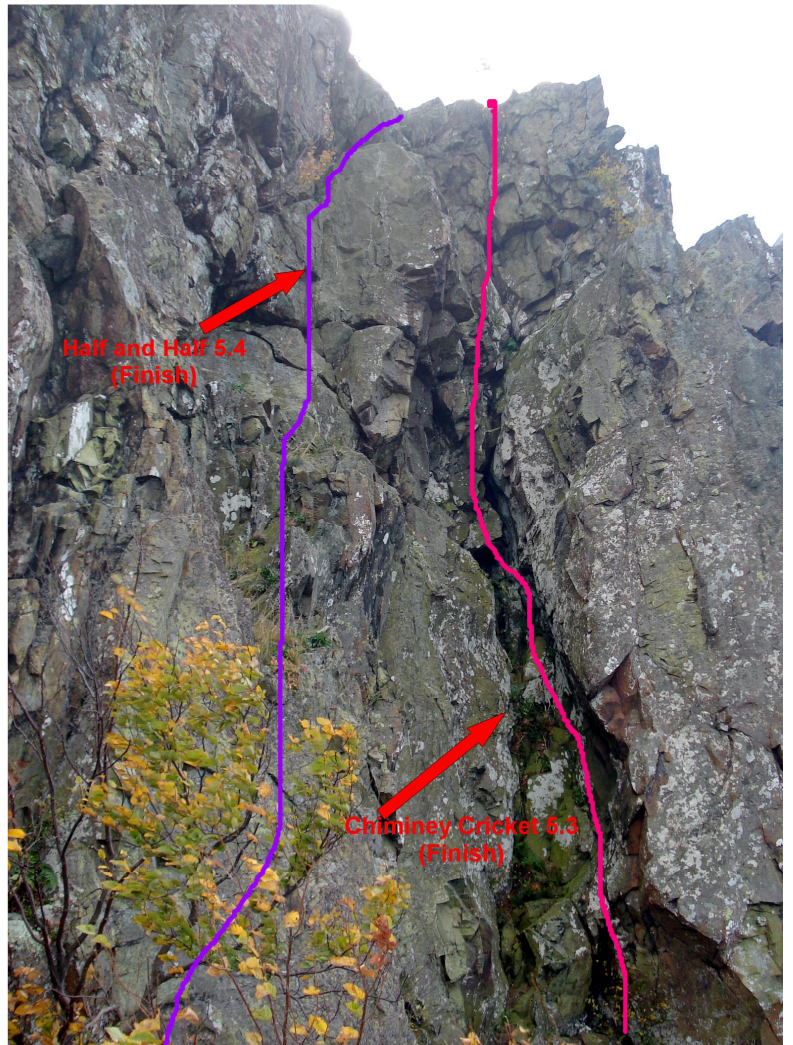


## Ledge Area Continued





## Ledge Area Continued



## **Dances with Elves Area**

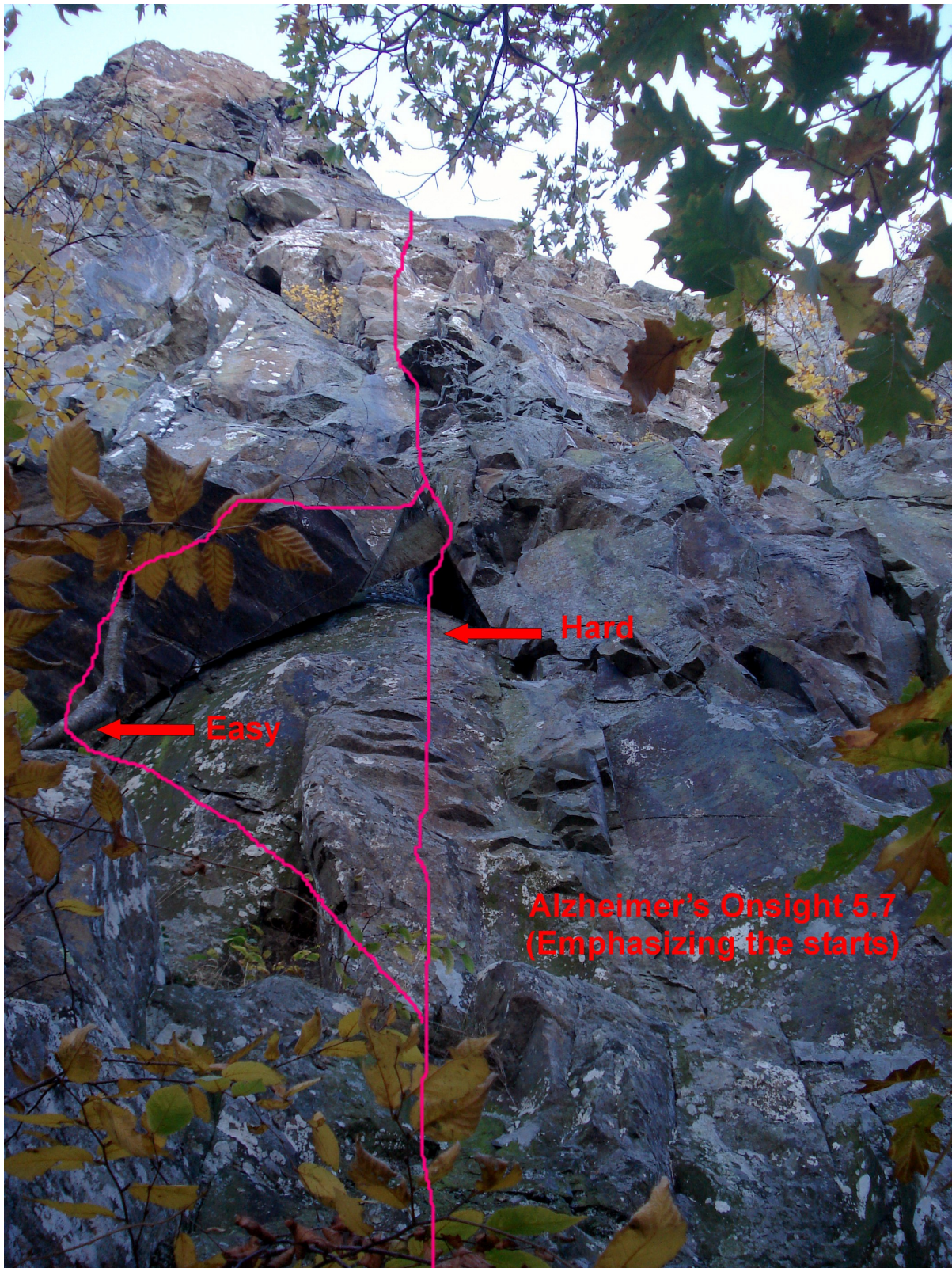
GPS coordinates: E 0729191, N 4276060. Distance from reference tree to center of area c. 80 feet.

This area is directly south (climber's right) of a very large roof that bounds the Ledge Area. It is a large featured wall. We have identified only one distinct leadable line, although there are several TR possibilities.

### ***Alzheimer's Onsight 5.7***

The start is in the alcove that opens up to the wall. There is an easy start, and a hard start. Slightly up the wall is a large block that leans onto another block, with space underneath. The direct start, which takes you over the intersection of the two blocks, is a bit tricky. The alternative is to traverse under and then around the left side block, which brings you to the same place. At this point continue up the steep wall, following the pro, which in places is a bit sketchy. Eventually you will come upon a large roof/flake. You have, again, two choices. You can traverse under the roof, and climb the right side, and then a series of steep to overhanging flakes, and an awkward traverse over a block to gain the exit. Or you can go directly to the left of the roof up a corner system which will take you to the same exit. This route is sustained at the grade from beginning to end.

## Dances with Elves Area



## Dances with Elves Area Continued



## The Flatiron Area

GPS coordinates E 0729188, N 4276054. Distance from reference tree to center of area c. 115 feet.

The Flatiron Area is an amphitheater between two buttresses with a prominent roof at the top. It is named after the rock feature that rises up on the right side of the area above the obvious pillar. There are two routes with several variations here.



### ***Sucking Crack 5.8***

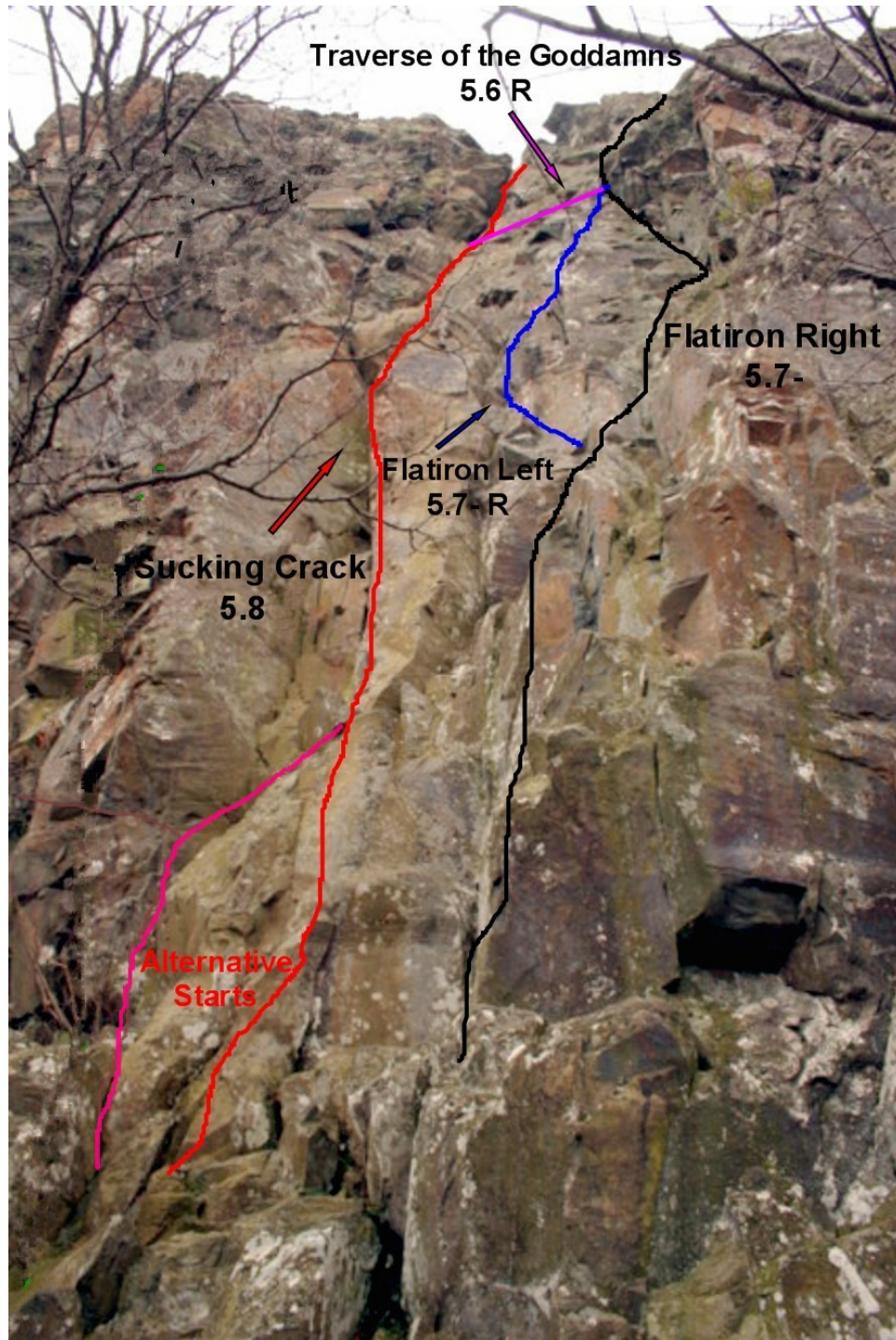
There is a prominent crack that splits the area and leads directly into a roof with a slot running through it. There are several starts. The pillar can be climbed in any number of ways, which then requires a small leftward traverse to gain the crack system. The most direct start is a manky, vegetated flaring off-width, right off the ground to the left of the pillar, which leads directly to the crack. (Do us a favor, don't be lazy, find a way to protect it.) Once in the crack system climb directly to the roof where pro is available. Then awkward and strenuous moves using the slot, the face directly to the right of the slot, and maybe a few holds left of the slot will get you through the crux. Easy ground then leads to the top. The name derives from the fact that many climbers get sucked up in the crack, get stuck under the roof, and can't figure out the crux through the slot. The only alternative at that point is to traverse over to the right corner, but the problem is the paucity of feet, hands or pro on the traverse. The traverse variation is the Traverse of the Goddamns (5.6 R), based on the utterances of climbers on the traverse prior to placing the "thank God" nut in the corner, as well as a cheesy reference to famous Eiger Norwand feature. Once in the corner (the end of the Flatiron routes), the climbing is moderate with great pro. The main route is sustained throughout.

### ***Flatiron Right 5.7 –***

Find any way up the pillar on the right side of the area. From the top of the pillar bear right into the corner at the beginning of the Flatiron. Continue to the top of the Flatiron and follow the corner system above to the top. Two different exits exist on the right, either will do. There are two cruxes on this route, which give it its 5.7- rating. We won't spoil the secret, except to say that one is a committing step-off. Otherwise the climbing is quite easy. One can also vary

the climb by ascending the left side of the Flatiron (5.7 – R), but the pro is sketchy.

## The Flatiron Area



## The Bent Tree Area

GPS coordinates E 0729184, N 4276042. Distance from the reference tree to center of area c. 150 feet.

The Bent Tree Area begins with a wall, then a jutting pillar that rises all the way to the top, and then a dihedral with a roof at the top. It gets its name from a tree right off the trail on the cliff side that grew horizontally for about a foot before growing vertically. There are four routes plus variations in this area.



### ***Snow Easy Finish 5.7***

This climb gets its name from that cold November 2006 day when the PMC LSM project began. It was the last climb of the day. When the leader climbed it, it was snowing! The climb is on the left of the area, and climbs directly up a pillar, and then up the steep face to finish in a little notch in the wall. Its grade is sustained throughout.

### ***Head First 5.6***

This was climbed on the same day as Snow Easy Finish, when climbers' fingers were completely numb. The leader on this climb had finished "the difficulties," and was on a little stance about 8 feet above the last piece leaning back (dumb) looking for a placement when he curiously slipped off the stance and took a 15 foot upside down whipper, which when caught left him dangling upside down a few feet above a ledge. The climb begins on a pillar with a horn coming out of it. At the top of the pillar, traverse into the left facing corner or adjacent face for some real pleasure climbing – steep, but with great holds and pro.

### ***Longhorn 5.8- PG***

Climb directly up the previously mentioned pillar with the horn sticking out directly to the blank face below an overhang. If you traverse right and gain the arête to exit, the route goes at 5.8-. Pulling the overhang directly raises the rating to 5.9.

### ***The Shield 5.8***

Next to the ***Longhorn*** pillar is a right facing dihedral topped with a roof that looks like a small medieval shield. Climb in the corner where there are good if awkward holds on the left, and precious little on the blank face to the climber's right. The crux for the normal variation is below the roof (pro in crack). Once at the roof, stem left and layback the flake on the left to gain the arête to the left of the route. Climb up 20 more feet to exit via a right sloping ledge. A harder variation (5.9+) involves climbing through the crack in the right of the roof.

## The Bent Tree Area

Snow Easy Finish  
5.7





## Bent Tree Area Continued



## Lego Block Area

GPS coordinates E 0729172, N 4276032. Distance from the reference tree to center of area c. 195 feet.

Above a large pillar is a very big, detached block which fortunately rests on rock that slopes backwards into the face. Although the block sounds like a kettle drum when you bang on it, we think it's safe to climb on, although pro placed behind it is suspect. This area has three routes.



### ***Chimney in a Chimney 5.6***

On the left side of this area is a large chimney which contains a smaller chimney on its left side. The route goes up this chimney in a chimney which ends with a roof. To get to the chimney, climb the pillar to the right and traverse, or third class it on the ramp to the left. Then use classic chimney technique or awkward holds until you reach the roof. The exit move for the roof is not immediately apparent, but when discovered makes the roof one of the easiest you'll ever pull. Above the chimney lower-angled face leads to the top.

### ***Lego Block 5.5+***

If you're tall, this route is only 5.4. Climb directly up the pillar beneath the Lego Block, and then climb the block or the face to the right. Continue up the face until you reach a blankish face near the top. This is the crux. After this, easy climbing brings you to the top. There is also a 5.7 variation at the top (Lego Crack). To the left of the normal exit is a hand crack. Climb directly up, using the crack and face to gain the top.

### ***The Bong Move 5.7***

Start at the far left of the area and climb the face until you dead-end at a roof. Using balancy holds, traverse right around the arête until you gain a face which brings you to a ledge. Directly above you is a large off-width crack which leads to an overhang. Climb the crack to the overhang (hint—a # 3 Big Bro is very useful here). Most then exit right onto the arête and to the top. Pulling the overhang would raise the grade probably to 5.8+.

## The Lego Block Area



## The Dragon Area

GPS coordinates E 0729169, N 4276020. Distance from the reference tree to center of area c. 210 feet.

The left edge of the Dragon Area is defined by a large chimney with a roof at the top. To the right is a large face with cracks in the upper area. The beginning is characterized by a wall with ribs that overhang in places. There are six climbs in this area.

### ***Stem City 5.7***

Climb directly up the back wall of the chimney to the roof. How do you get over this roof? What's in a name. . . Exit through the small notch.

### ***Wall of Kaza Dum 5.7***

Start in the right side of the alcove shared with the start for ***Stem City***. Climb up to a ledge on the right at about 30 feet, sling the tree, and continue into a short chimney section and then on to the face to the right of the ***Stem City*** chimney. Follow the line through the visible chock stone above. Pass a pin on the left, but continue through the chock stone which is bomber. A #3 Camelot is helpful above the chock stone. The start is fairly easy but the route becomes more sustained the higher you go. This gets very steep towards the top. Exit to the right of the chimney roof.



### ***Easy Does It 5.7+***

Directly to the right of the Wall of Kaza Dum is a left facing corner at the top of the face. Start on the face or pillar to the left of the Kaza Dum start and continue up the steep face to the corner. Here the climbing is steep and slabby to the left as you reach the steep corner. Continue in the corner to the top and exit by pulling the overhang (give yourself an extra half grade) or finding an easier exit around the overhang.

### ***Dragon's Back 5.7+***

Why Dragon's Back? Maybe because it looks like a dragon's back or maybe the leader who named it spends a bit too much time with his 4 year old daughter. Start on the wall with the overhanging ribs (good holds here), and head up to a small ledge directly below the steep upper wall. There is a large crack with loose stuff inside, but it is protectable with large cams. Climb the crack using crack and face moves to the top. The climbing is quite pumpy here. It is also possible to sling the huge block at the top of the crack.

### ***Dragon Cracks 5.8***

On the upper wall, to the right of the Dragon's Back crack, are 3 smaller cracks. Start as for Dragon's Back, or for a real challenge start to the right on a difficult and largely unprotectable boulder problem (this would raise the grade to 5.9 R). A bouldering pad might be useful for this option. Gain the ledge beneath the steep upper wall. Climbers usually find that at some point all three cracks are needed to get to the top.

### ***Right Crack 5.7***

This climb's rating is defined with respect primarily to the top of the climb, where the crack is, assuming the easiest start. There are, however, several possible starts, some of which are very difficult. The easiest is to the far right, which involves some minor traverses to find the easiest line. There are other more "bouldery" starts to the left, which include exposed overhanging moves right off the deck, placing gear from strenuous stances, or pre-placing gear to protect the difficult moves. The hardest start (direct on the left) would raise the grade to 5.9-. You'll know it when you see it. One can also use the Dragon Cracks start, traverse over, and pre-place some gear, before restarting. Once above the initial difficulties, the climbing is easy and brings you to the terrace below all the crack systems. This route goes up the farthest right crack, which appears as more of a lay-back crack than its neighbors to the left.

## The Dragon Area



## Dragon Area Continued



## **The NOC (North of Chute) Area**

The NOC area lies between the Dragon area to the North and the Chute to the South. It includes a wide wall which ends on the climber's right with an arête, directly to the North of the Chute. The broad wall is known as the NOC NOC Wall, and the arête is the Who's There Arête. Remember that climbing is closed in the boulder area 35 meters north of the Chute. All of the routes described here should be outside of the prohibited area.

### ***NOC NOC Wall***

This is a wide wall bounded on the north by the Dragon area, and to the south by the Who's There Arête. The wall is relatively featureless with many roofs and overhangs at the top. Some of the most difficult climbing at LSM is found on this wall. Unfortunately the many routes are unprotectable, and as a result the climbs must be top-roped. As these routes are not leadable, we provide no grades.

### ***Banana 5.2***

This is a great beginner lead route on the Who's There Arête. Start on the right of the arête and zig zag up, traversing to avoid the difficult bits, and finishing by climbing to the left of the sharp fin in the middle of the arête.

### ***Orange 5.6***

Start in the middle of the arête, to the left of the Banana start. Climb directly up the center fin, using the cracks to get through the slightly overhanging part. Continue directly up to the top.



## The NOC Area



## The NOC Area Continued

