

Love Gap

A photograph of a large, layered rock formation on a mountain peak. The rock face is composed of several distinct horizontal layers of grey and brownish rock. The formation is surrounded by a dense forest of bare, deciduous trees, with some evergreen trees growing on the rock face. The sky is a clear, bright blue with scattered white clouds. The overall scene is a natural, rugged landscape.

A Climber's Guide

Love Gap: A Climber's Guide

Note: The climbing area is not technically at Love Gap as shown (back cover photo) which is located on the Blue Ridge Parkway at approximately mile 15.5. This is a ½ mile north of the turnoff for Campbell's Mountain Road and the climbing area. It has taken on this name because of its close proximity to Love Gap and through popular use over time.

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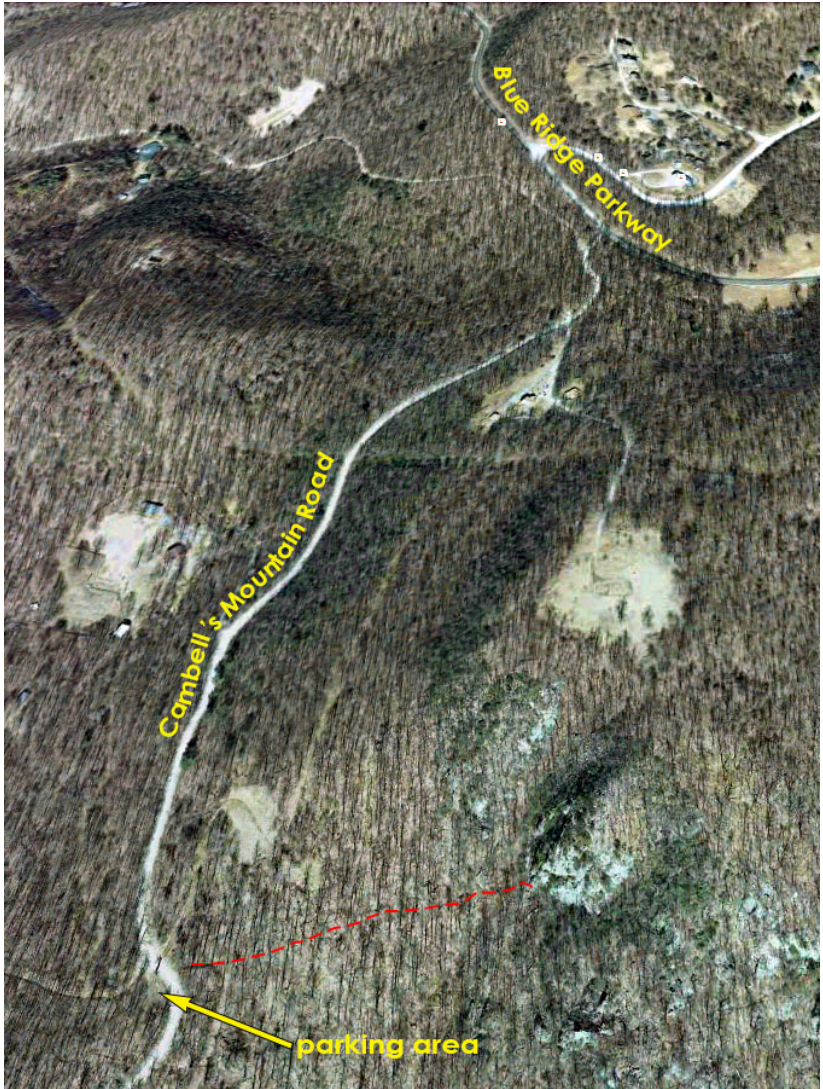
Love Gap, compared to Seneca or Franklin, is an insignificant crag. It is definitely not a destination crag. However, it's a great place to climb if you're a local or staying in Charlottesville, Staunton, or Harrisonburg. It consists mainly of easy to moderate trad climbing. Due to the wandering nature, multiple possible lines, and decomposed granite, it can be a bit of an adventure until you're familiar with the routes. Most routes can be top-roped or traditionally lead, and there is one sport lead. Most routes will require you to lead an easier route in order to set a TR (the exception being the far right-hand end of the crag where several routes can be set by hiking up and around). There is a wide variety of climbing including friction, slab, crack, OW, steep face crimps, huge roof projects, and yes, choss! :-). Helmets are advised for both leading and belaying. We have pulled off everything from crimper to softball-sized chunks while climbing.

Most climbs are a single pitch, 60'-100' with one route having two options for a second pitch. It's climbable year round but since it's southwest facing, it's especially good from fall through the winter to spring. Even at close to freezing temperatures in winter, if the sun's out and there's no wind, it can be enjoyable climbing. In the summer it can be hot, sticky and the rock often has a humid/damp feeling which makes it less suitable than Raven's Roost or Little Stony Man with their west faces and the prevailing westerly breezes.

Location: From either the west side or east side of the of the Blue Ridge: Exit 64 at Afton and go south on the Parkway until you reach mile marker 16, then turn left onto Campbell's Mountain Rd. (Route 814). Proceed about a ½ mile on Campbell Mountain Rd (dirt) to a turn out area on your right. Alternately from the east, you can access the Parkway way by going up past Wintergreen, then south on the Parkway for ~2 miles.

The parking area is on private land and if there's not a line across it (usually during hunting season), the owner has given permission for climbers to park there. Please do not block his driveway or gate and make sure you don't leave any trash. If it is lined off, you can pull off to the side of the road and park. Proceed across the road and start down a rough Forest Service access road for about 50'. On your left there's (often) a stone cairn marking the start of the trail between two trees. Further down the access road you will see a gate. If you've reached that, you've gone to far. Follow the trail traversing basically

straight across the hill to the base of the crag, which is about 5 minutes walk. You'll see evidence of private land markings on your left. However, the trail itself is on National Forest land. When the leaves are down it's easy to see the rocks from the midpoint of the trail. However, after the leaves are out you won't see the rocks until you're almost at them. The routes are listed from left to right and the approach trail joins the crag at route 4.





Route ratings: The ratings are based on the crux moves of a route. We all know how contentious and subjective route ratings can be – from sandbagged to inflated. The same applies to this area – so take them as a guide only. We have been reticent to put numbers on them, but it is expected these days and can be somewhat helpful to judge the approximate difficulty of a route. The grades are based on ours and others’ experiences, strengths, weaknesses, and what has been passed down by word of mouth to us over time. Most routes do not involve sustained climbing at its rating. If a route has a ~ before it, it means we were undecided about the grade and it’s our tentative thoughts for it. If the route has an asterisk before it, it means it’s one of the better routes in our opinion. If you have input re the grades, please pass them on to us and we’ll try and reach a consensus with other’s input, and hopefully update the guide over time.

Because of the nature of the rock, there are many possible alternatives to the ones listed in this guide. Be aware that as you venture onto some of the less used routes, the rock quality will vary greatly. Use caution, especially if leading. Most climbs at Love Gap are PG as far as protection because of run-outs on easier climbing. There are also a few G routes. Both the PG and G routes are not marked since they are considered the norm here. For those that we feel are R or X, they will be marked unless they’ve primarily been TR’d.

Regarding route names, since we have not been able to find any specific route info in old or current guides, nor on the web (except for a passing mention on rockclimbing.com and mountainproject.com), we have taken the liberty to name the climbs we've been climbing for years. We haven't listed FAs because people have been climbing at this "unknown crag" years without any formal documentation. It’s a “social crag” in that information has mainly

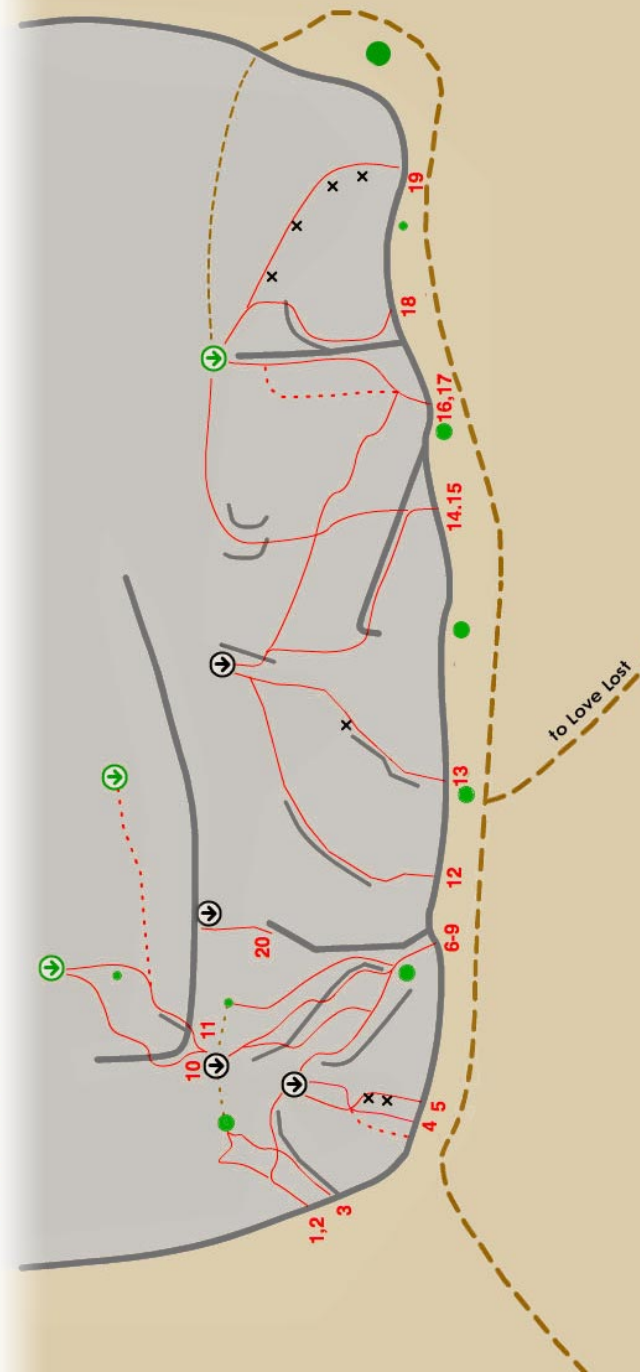
been passed down by word of mouth. It would be hard to track down who really did the first ascent of each route.

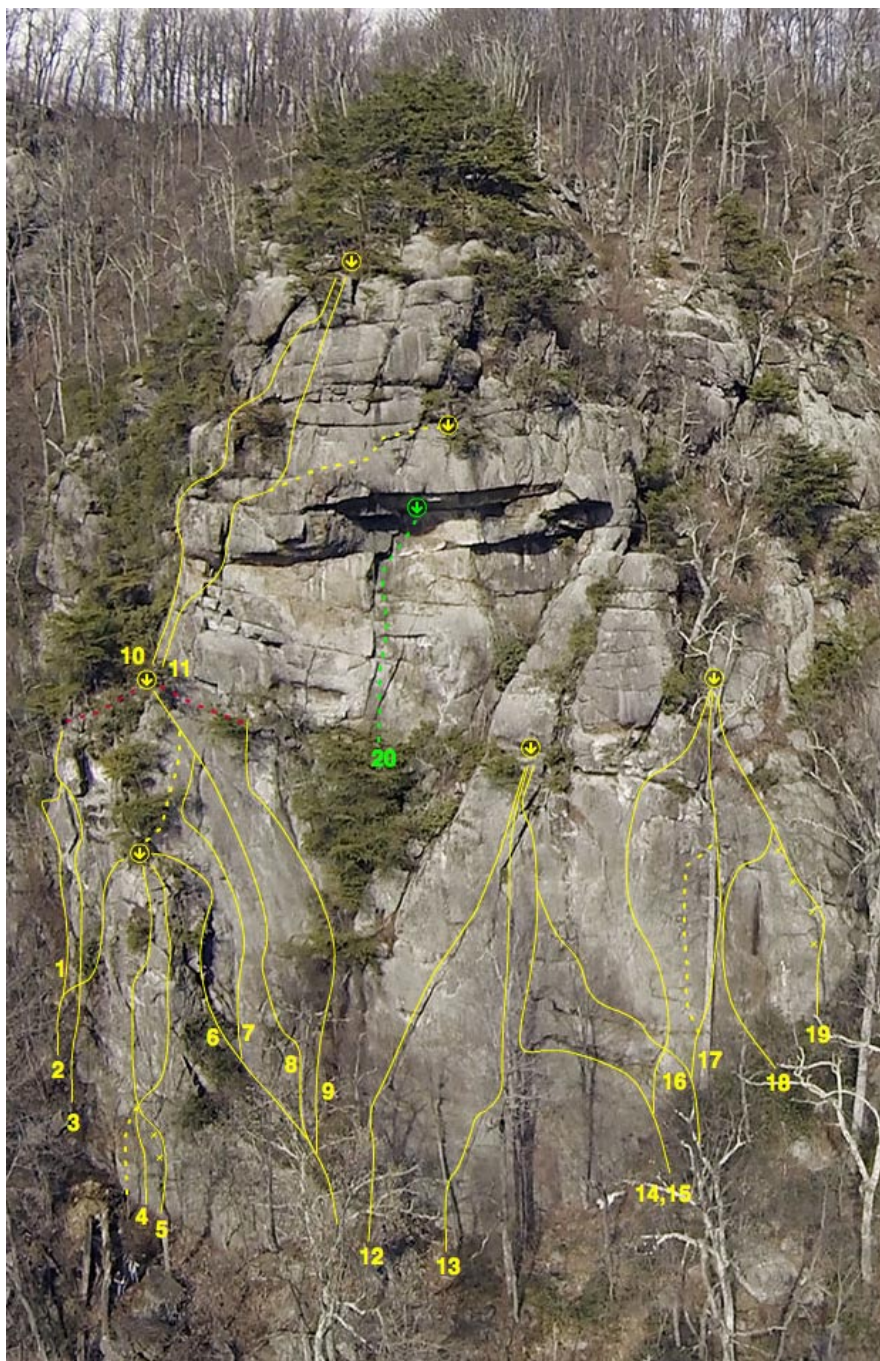
The photos in the guide (except the cover/overview photo) can be somewhat misleading because of the low-angle (ground level) the photos were taken at and the distortion due to foreshortening: the bottom parts of climbs are exaggerated and the top parts are compressed and difficult or impossible to completely discern. However, the route photos along with the quadcopter photo, the crag topo and descriptions, you should be able to discern the basics of each route.

Most of the obvious lines have been explored. However, there are still possibilities for more routes and variations. There is some potential up the hill on the left side of the crag, where there is a multiple tiered face that might hold a route or two. Also, There's also bolts/pitons up underneath the large roof that is either someone's project or maybe an aid climb. If you have knowledge about these or know whose project they are, please let us know.

(Note: there is also PDF floating around on the web for *Love Lost* crag, which is another 15 minutes hike east. The climbs there tend to be bolted, harder and shorter. There are also some boulders a minute or two down-slope and east of the main crag.)

- trail
 - 4 route number
 - approximate route line
 - ... alternate route line
 - tree
 - x bolt
 - ⊙ bolt rap
 - ⊕ webbing tree rap
 - ⏟ crag outline or feature
- 1 Zig Zag (5.?, 60')
 - 2 Nice 'n Easy (5.6, 55')
 - 3 Rip the Tips (5.8+, 60')
 - 4 Caoilfhionn's Dilemma (5.9, 80')
 - 5 Caoilfhionn's Delight (5.8, 80')
 - 6 Jungle Blocks (5.4, 75')
 - 7 Ante Up (~5.7, 90')
 - 8 Warm-Up (5.6, 100')
 - 9 Hangman's (~5.9, 90')
 - 10 Bungle in the Jungle (~5.6, 75')
 - 11 Crack a Smile (5.8, 55')
 - 12 Time for Tim (~5.11, 100')
 - 13 Heinz 57 (5.9, 100')
 - 14 Undercling Slab (5.7, 100')
 - 15 Hi-C (5.8, 85')
 - 16 Easy Access (5.3, 100')
 - 17 Green Gully (5.7, 65')
 - 18 One Move Wonder (5.10, 75')
 - 19 Hump'n the Arete (5.10, 70')
 - 20 unknown / project ???

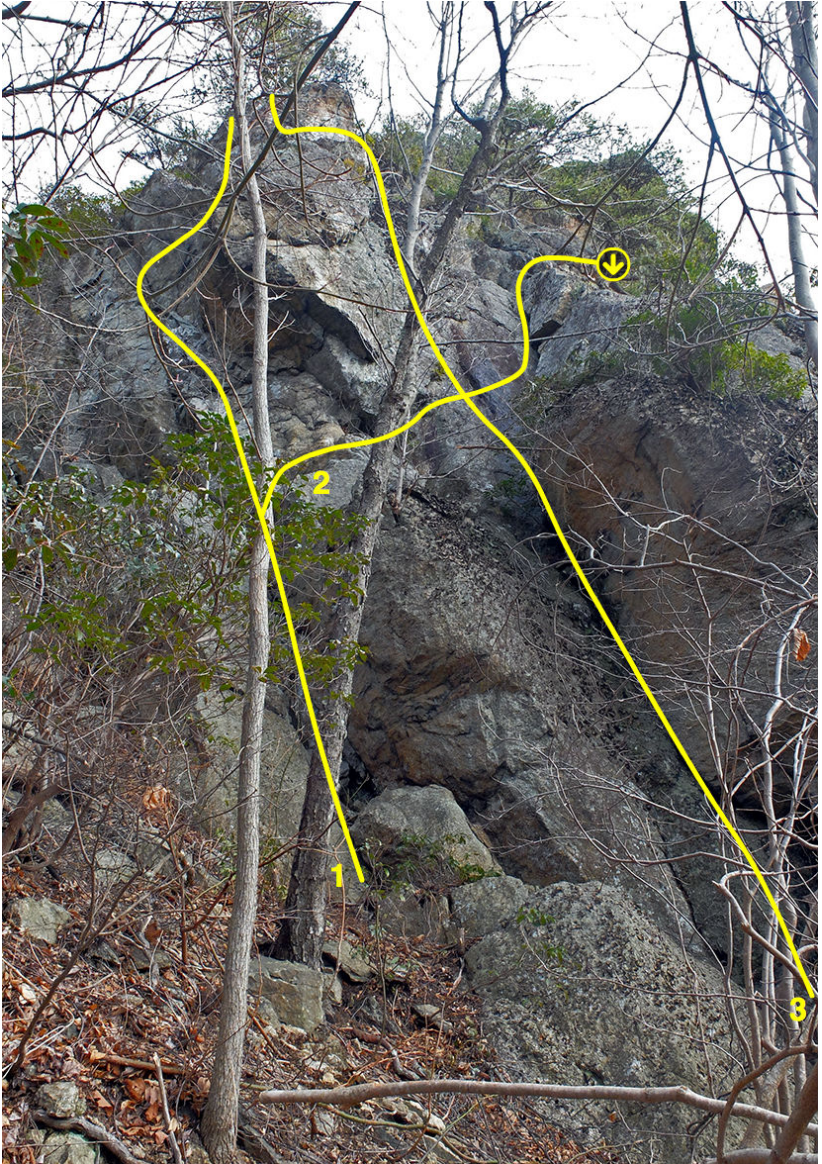




1. *Zig Zag* (5.?, 55') 15' left of *Rip the Tips* at the base of some large blocks with the same start as *Nice'n Easy*. Diagonal your way up and left. Then when you reach a short, 'blank' wall, work your way back across the face and then up to a tree at the top edge. To rap, proceed right at the top for about 40 feet to the anchors above *Warm-Up*. This climb is probably best done as a TR. To set TR either lead *Rip the Tips* or *Warm-Up* and proceed 40' left to set anchor on a large tree about 10' back from the edge along with a smaller tree on the edge.



2. *Nice N Easy* (5.6, 55'): Use the same start as *Zig Zag* and follow the corner and crack up for about 10'-12' then transition right across the top of a block and traverse right across a thin face into the left-facing corner crack. Follow it up to easier ground until you reach the anchors at the top of *Caoilfhionn's Delight*. For an alternate start, use the first 25' of Route 3 below.



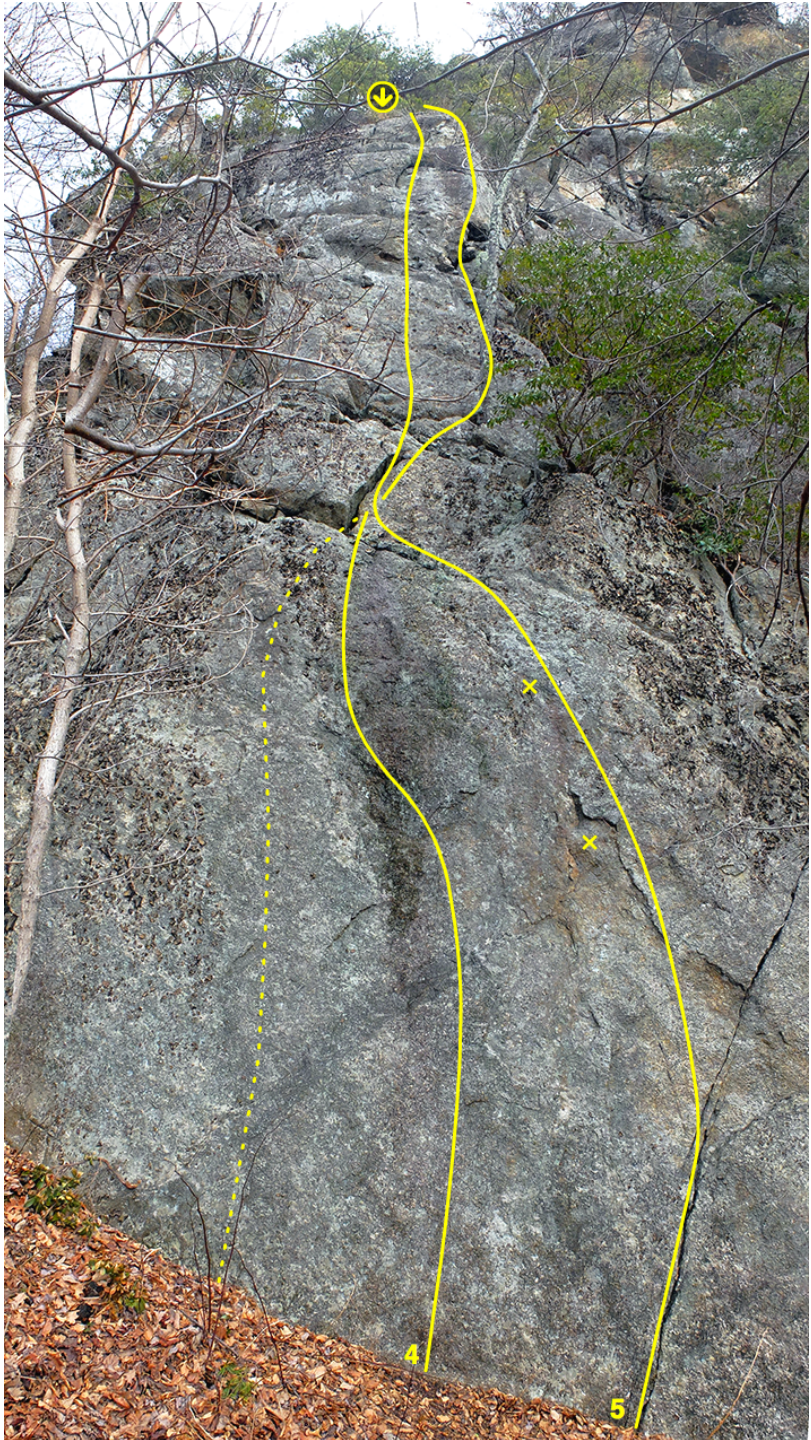
3. *Rip the Tips* (~5.8+, 65') Start ~40' left, up the hill from *Caoilfhionn's Delight*. Start up the wide crack in a left-facing corner and work your way up. After about 20'-25', transition slightly left to flared finger cracks (or a bit further left and pull the bulge to get established on the face - 5.9+). Follow face/cracks up to a slot, then around to the left of the block/bulge and up to a small tree on the edge of cliff (there's a larger tree about 12' back from the edge.) To rap, make your way over right a short distance to the anchors on *Warm-Up*.



4. *Caoilfhionn's Dilemma* [pronounced KEE-lens] (5.9+, 80' R/X)
Starts just left of *Caoilfhionn's Delight*. There's no pro for the first 25' so it's probably best to set a TR by leading *Caoilfhionn's Delight* first. Parallel *Caoilfhionn's Delight* for the first 25' feet then cross over to the right at the small ledge. Continue on up on the right, staying close to the edge of the arête. Alternative start (~5.11): 5'-6' further left on 'blank wall' then join the rest of the route at the ledge and proceed to top.

5. **Caoilfhionn's Delight* (5.8, 80') A mixed route with two bolts in the first 25' and a bolted anchor at the top. Start at a thin right leaning crack for first 8' then leave crack and proceed up clipping the bolts and gradually diagonally left across the face to a short crack by a small ledge. Proceed on up the face to the bolt anchors. A slightly harder alternative start, proceeds straight up from the base of crack instead of using it.

It's also possible to extend the length of this climb by clipping the anchors and proceeding up past them on the right. A few of steep moves will allow you to join the last part of the low angle slab of routes 7 and 8 on up to their anchor. Because of the wandering nature of this extended route, there can be significant rope drag (~120').



6. *Jungle Blocks* (~5.4, 70') Same start as *Warm-Up* but at the large tree 15' up, proceed left up a vegetated and bushy gully. Follow it up till it gets steep and turns into cracks and blocks. Follow them up and slightly right until the angle slacks off and you can continue over to the anchors at the top of *Caoilfhionn's Delight*. This can provide a way to set a TR on *Caoilfhionn's Delight* if you don't want to lead it or use it as an 'escape' from *Ante-Up*.
7. *Ante Up* (~5.7, 90') Same start in the gully as route 6, left of *Warm-Up* route tree. About 25 feet up the gully there are twin cracks on the right. Proceed up the right-hand crack until it ends, then diagonal and traverse up left up along the face. Make a balancy move or two (make sure to set gear) and mantle the crux up onto the last 25' of *Warm-Up* to its anchors.





8. **Warm-Up* (5.6, 100') You can either start at ground level or scramble up to the large tree 15' up and belay from there. It is probably one of the three most popular routes at Love Gap. The route goes up a right-facing corner with small broken ledges. When the corner runs out, cross over left onto to the left side of the slab and follow low-angle left-facing corner up a few moves. After 10-15' feet, pull up and right out onto the slab face (crux), follow slab up to the bolted anchor. At the crux there is a yellow TCU placement in small pocket on the slab face – don't miss it, as the slab is slightly run out.

9. *Hangman's* (~5.9, 90') Use same start as *Warm-Up* but stay right of the *Warm-Up* corner in another corner. You'll need to be creative with pro unless you're doing it on TR. Follow it straight up until it ends then pull the lip and get established on the slab. Follow lower angle slab on its right side in the low-angle left-facing corner until you reach a 15' headwall. Proceed up the headwall (crux) below an overhanging tree. Be careful of loose blocks & small holds that peel. For belaying up second or TRing, use over-hanging tree, backed up with gear in the wall behind. The back wall can also be used for a directional so the belayer can anchor in at the bolts on the top of *Warm-Up*.

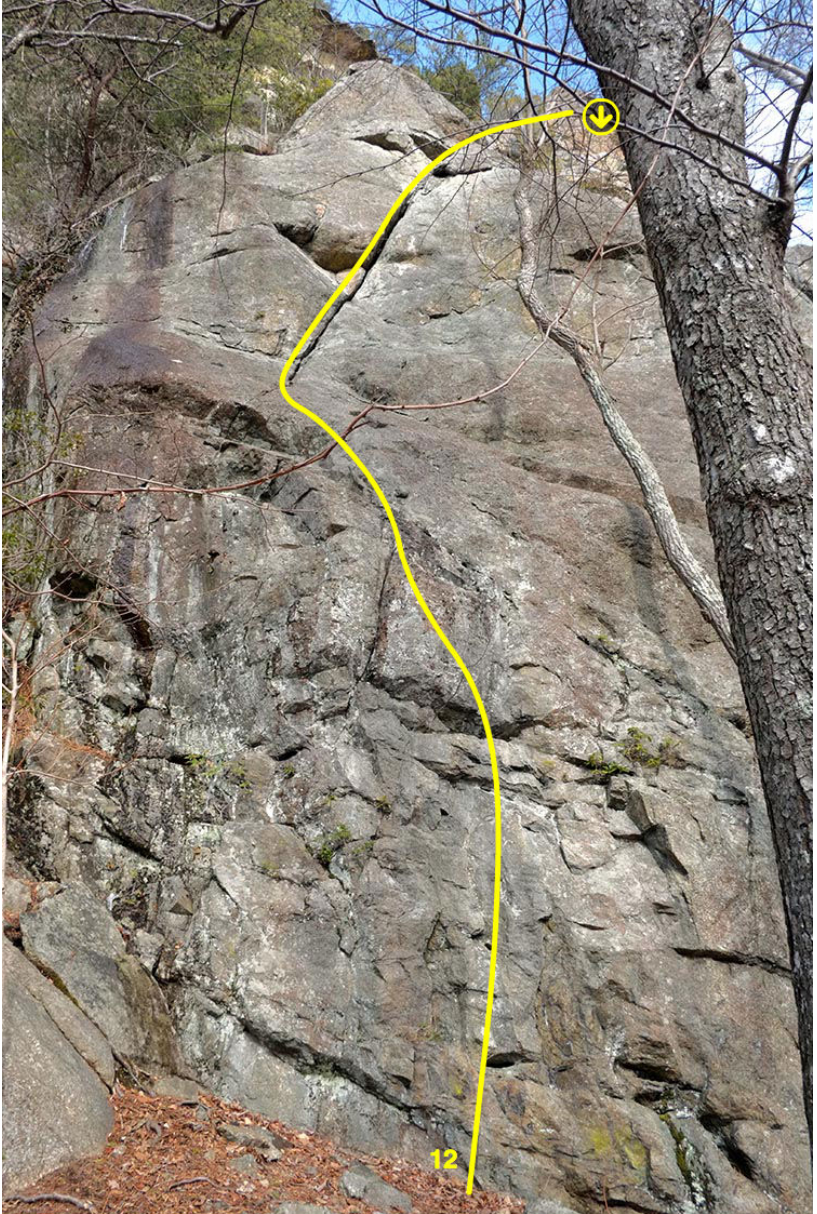
10. *Bungle in the Jungle* (5.6, 95' PG/R) This is a second pitch above *Warm-Up*. Start from the tree at the top of *Warm-Up* and move up the low angle arête until you come to a steep face. Proceed straight up the face and pull the lip of the over-hanging block. Continue up and left on some steep broken terrain avoiding the sticker-bush gullies until you reach the tree anchor on top (same as for *Crack a Smile*).



11. *Crack a Smile (5.8, 90') This route offers another possible 2nd pitch above *Warm-Up*. Go straight up from the anchor through a lower angle broken terrain and cracks to the base of the off-width crack. Climb inside and grunt your way up a short but sweet crux and 'crack a smile' when you're successfully through it. At top of the OW there is a choice of going straight up on a lichen slab to a rap sling around a tree (same as used by route 10 above), or you can traverse out right another 50'+ to another tree with a webbing anchor. Either way, you'll have a free-hanging rap over the large roof. If you chose the later, you'll touch down at, or near, the anchors at the top of routes 12-14.

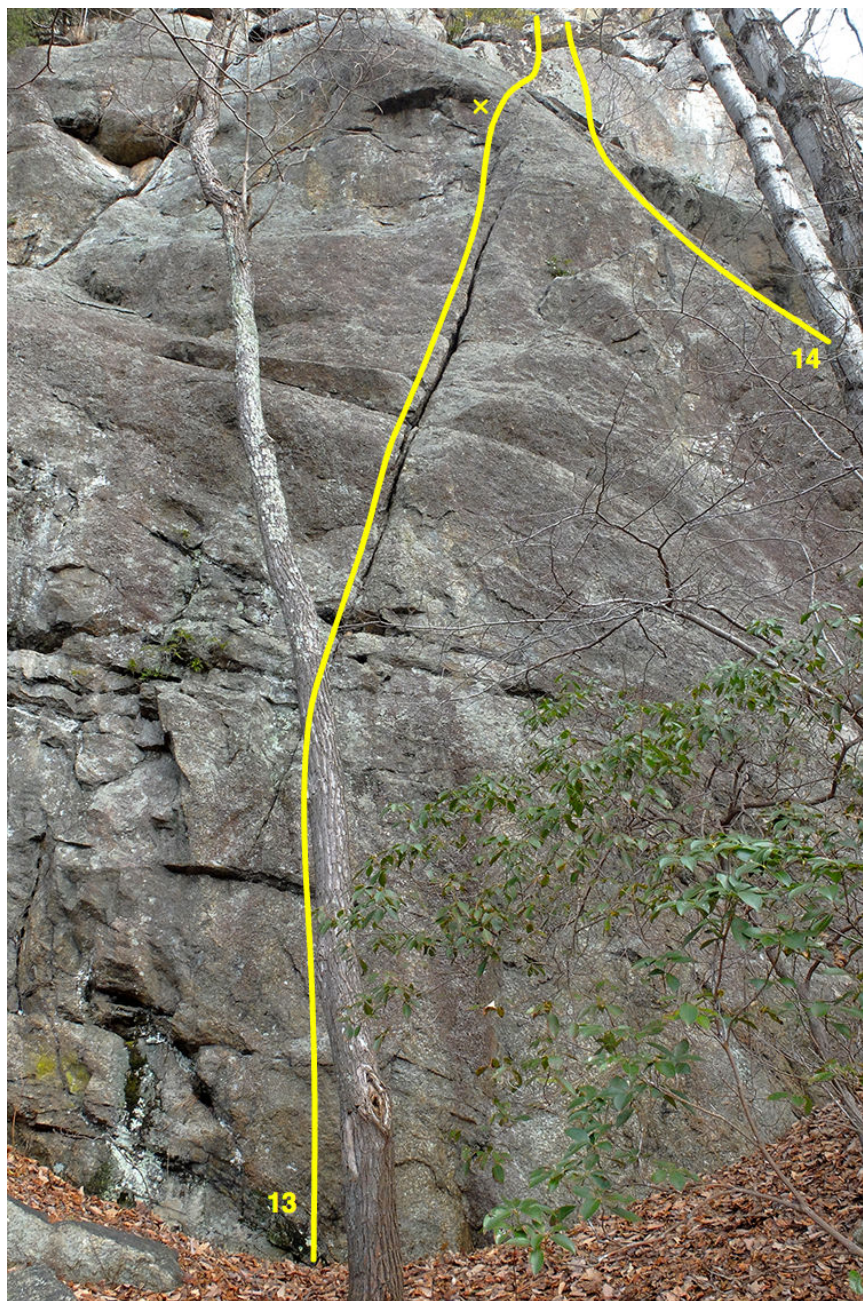


12. *Time for Tim* (~5.10+ R, 100') An interesting climb that has three major types of climbing involved – steep/thin; fist/off-width; and friction. Start slightly to the right of *Warm-Up*. Find a line straight up the steep wall, work your way up with long reaches, through slopers and phantom holds to a slanting shelf.

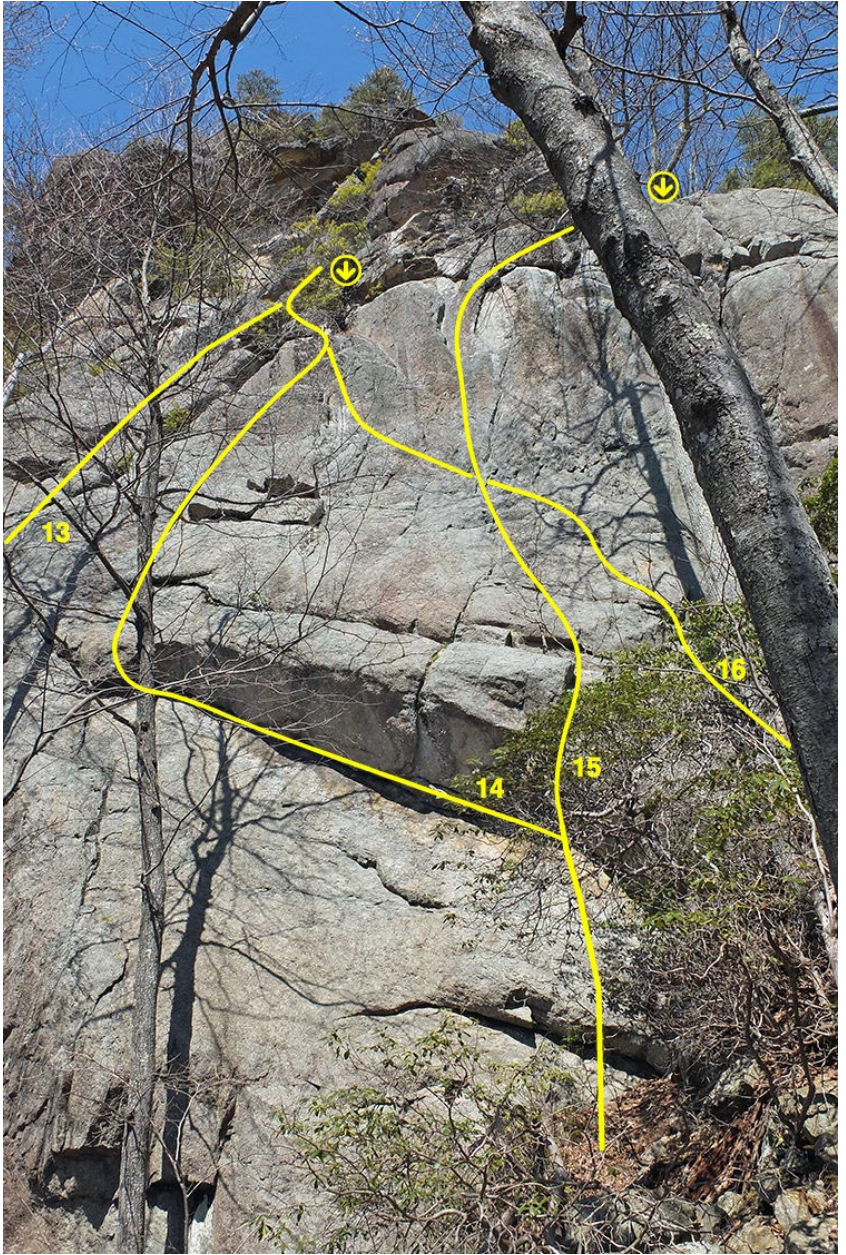


Gear is minimal. Proceed up the wide crack to its end and proceed up the friction face trending right towards the anchors. The top part of the climb parallels or joins the last part of route 13. This climb can be set up as a TR from the anchors above routes 13, 14 & 16. The protection in the first 25' is minimal and has pulled on at least one occasion resulting in a ground-fall. Use caution. The first 25' can often be wet or weeping depending upon the season. In spite of that, When the conditions are right, it's a great climb.

13. **Heinz 57* (5.9 PG, 100') One of the three most commonly done climbs – it's got a little bit of everything! Start near the base of tree that's below the start of the crack. This is approximately 25' right of the start of *Warm-Up*. Face climb up the steep face to a short awkward hand crack to a shelf (first crux). Some people prefer to start about 15' to the left and traverse over to crack in order to get pro in a bit sooner. However, it also creates more rope drag and your second could pandulum if they came off. Continue on up the discontinuous finger crack to a bolt. Clip the bolt and friction on up to the right (2nd crux), then follow the friction slab up to the bolted anchors behind a small tree (shared with route 14, *Undercling Slab*).

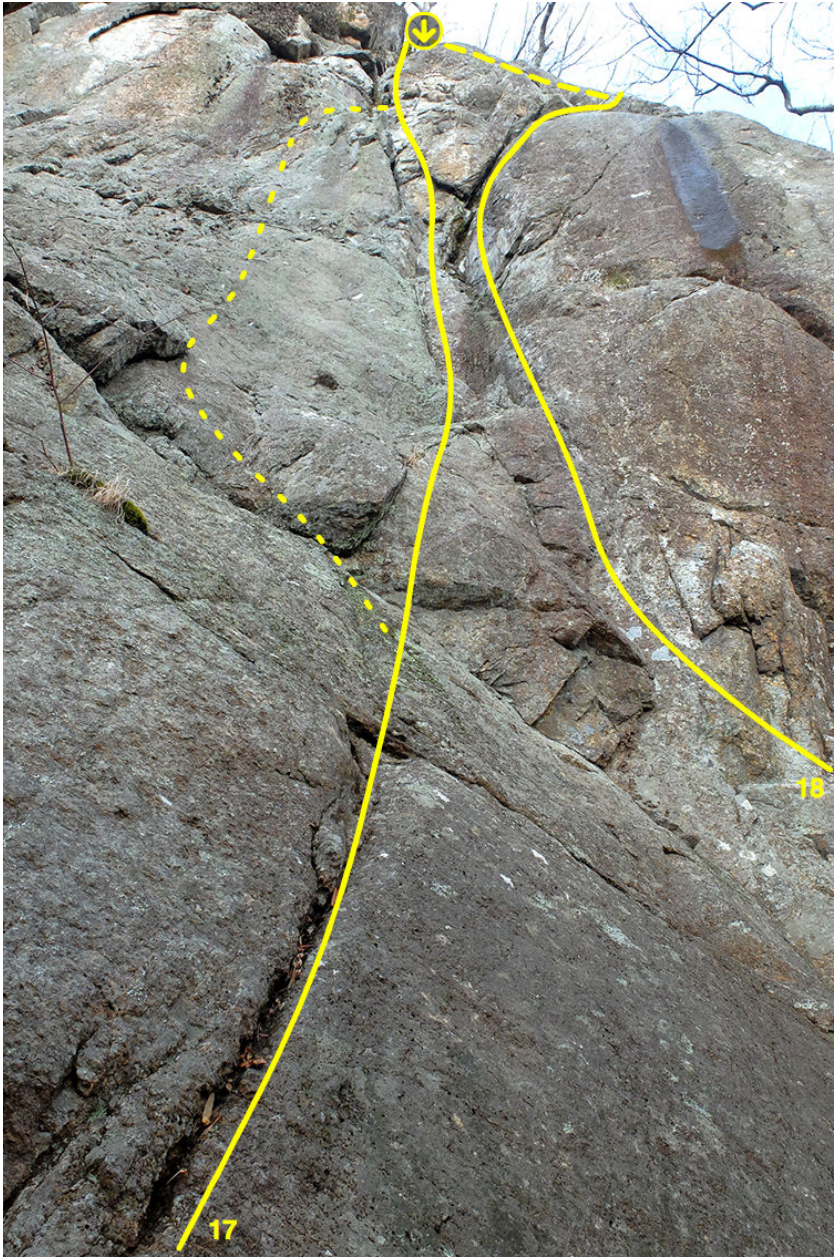


14. **Undercling Slab* (5.7, 100') The last of the 3 most popular climbs. Start near the right end of the long diagonal undercling crack. Follow the crack up and left to its end, setting pro as you go. Pull the crux up onto the face of the slab. Make sure you extend the last piece of gear at the end of the undercling with a double runner to minimize rope drag. Follow easy slab on up, until you get to wide crack. Here you can either pull up and out onto the slab face and finish up through the tree, or, you can stay right until the last 10'-15' and jam/lie-back the short vertical crack.
15. *Hi-C* (5.8, 85', R) Three distinct cruxes. Start directly below the right-hand crack that goes up through overlap. Climb up to crack through the overlap and head up the lower angle slab until you're directly below the left "C". Head straight up the face and find what little protection there is until you get up into a stance in the "C" and can get a piece in. When you reach the top of the C's, pull over the top and head up and right to the tree anchor of routes 17-19. This is a run-out lead at the crux. It can be done on TR though be a bit tricky to set up with a directional or two.
16. *Easy Access* (5.4 100') Start to the right of 14 and 15 beyond the end of the undercling crack at a short low angle small crack that allows you to work up and left above the undercling crack and follow a line that more or less parallels route 14 but is several grades easier. Traverse diagonally up and left, eventually joining up with route 14 for the last ~25' (depending upon the exact line you take). This route can be used for easy access for setting a TR on routes 12-14.



17. *Green Gully* (~5.7+, 65') Same start as route 16. Follow low angle crack up and right until it joins a steeper crack system/small gully that goes straight up. Get established in the wide crack and progress upward to the base of block-like shield that has hand-holds on both sides. Work your hands up on the right and/or left sides of the block, then transition back left into the crack/gully and follow it the rest of the way up to the webbing around a tree. Check condition of webbing and walk off if they're in poor condition (or replace if possible). Alternate ~5.9 (on TR): Climb up left of the crack/gully on sharp face crimps up towards a bulging face with lichen. Transition right back into the gully at the lichen (crux) and finish up the last 10-15 feet the same as *Green Gully*.

18. *One Move Wonder* (~5.10, 75') Start just to the right of route 17 on a broken rock face and progress up joining route #14 below the shield. Climb up and right of the shield and proceed diagonally out to a stance below the crux. Pull extremely thin face holds to get a rounded jug and pull up onto route 19 where you can clip the last bolt and the angle slacks off. Scramble on up and over to the tree sling anchor of route 17. A somewhat easier finish at the crux (~5.9) is possible by frictioning out right (instead of up) onto the lower angle arête, clip the last bolt of route 19 and follow it up to the tree anchor of #15.



19. **Hump'n the Arête* (5.10, 70') 4 bolts. Follow the base of the crag up right route 18. Start below a bolt. Climb up, clip bolt and work your way up and right to a stance below the second bolt on a steep face. Clip bolt and pull crux up onto the rounded arête and friction your way up the arête 'slab', clipping two more bolts until the angle slacks off and you can make your way over to the webbing around the tree above route 17. Check the webbing to make sure they're in good condition, if not walk off instead of rapping. This route can be TR'd by hiking up and around to the anchor, however you should rap down and clip the second or third bolt (from top) on your way down as a directional because of the possibility of a nasty pendulum across the face.



20. *Unknown or project???* (see crag overview photo on page 7)
This route has a possible start in the middle of the bushes at an overhanging crack that soon slacks off. Follow on up to the anchors (2 bolts/shuts ??) in the middle of the large roof.

Love Gap

ELEV. 2650 ft.

CREST OF THE
BLUE RIDGE

