

John Myers by Peter J. Barr

Landowner & conservationist John Myers was the catalyst, visionary, and champion of conservation, trails, and public recreation access in the Upper Hickory Nut Gorge. With his partner Jane Lawson, he purchased and later permanently protected—in partnership with **Conserving Carolina**—a total of 232 acres of land, including the Upper Hickory Nut Gorge Trailhead and the northern slopes of Little Bearwallow Mountain that host Little Bearwallow Falls crag (AKA Gerton Ice, AKA John Myers Rock and Ice Climbing Area), and scenic Wildcat Rock.

The Wildcat Rock Trail which reaches these breathtaking destinations is a segment of the budding Upper Hickory Nut Gorge Trail loop, a bold vision that John Myers proposed to connect the network of surrounding conserved lands--including nearby Bearwallow Mountain and Florence Nature Preserve—in one continuous footpath. Once just his lofty dream, Conserving Carolina has implemented 13 miles of the Upper HNG Trail and will reach 20 miles and its completion by 2021.

John's vision and follow through of these significant conservation and trail projects will perpetually ensure these majestic lands remain naturally beautiful, and forever enable them to be enjoyed by hikers, rock and ice climbers, and all lovers of the natural world.

A lifelong rock climber, John Myers also advocated for access and conservation of climbing areas throughout the southeast, including championing the acquisition of the magnificent Laurel Knob tract--the highest cliff in the eastern United States--by the Carolina Climbers Coalition. The climbing area at Little Bearwallow Falls—where he frequently enjoyed climbing in his own backyard--is dedicated to John Myers in honor of his immense and timeless contributions to conservation, public access, and climbing.

At Little Bearwallow Falls, John envisioned a small but varied climbing area, where beginning climbers and advanced climbers alike could scale the rock or seasonal ice. Several of the original top rope anchors were placed by John several years ago, but he had hoped for an area that could hold reasonably protected lead routes at a variety of difficulty grades. John knew that top roping (scrambling to the top of a rock climb and



tossing a rope down over the cliff) was an unsustainable practice for the climbing public at Little Bearwallow due to fragile cliff top vegetation trampling, and he knew that lead routes needed to be installed in order to make climbing sustainable here. Once the Carolina Climbers Coalition and Conserving Carolina partnered to create the Little Bearwallow Falls Climbing Management Plan in 2017, John's decades-long vision for the area was finally realized. Climbers can now lead routes from the bottom and stay on rock the entire climb. The rock itself is a beautiful patina Gneiss with perfect friction and water sculpted holds. Special thanks to Pat Thompson and other Carolina Climbers Coalition volunteers for their work replacing hardware and documenting.

The ice is a rare treat as well. This may be the first ever designated ice climbing area in the Southeastern United States. The ice forms more regularly than most, and is only a 30 minute drive from the climber-friendly town of Asheville, NC. It also boasts a beautiful sustainable trail to its base, as opposed to the typical 2 mile bushwhack to many other Tarheel ice locations. Enjoy and please consider joining the CCC and CC!





Conserving Carolina by Peter J. Barr

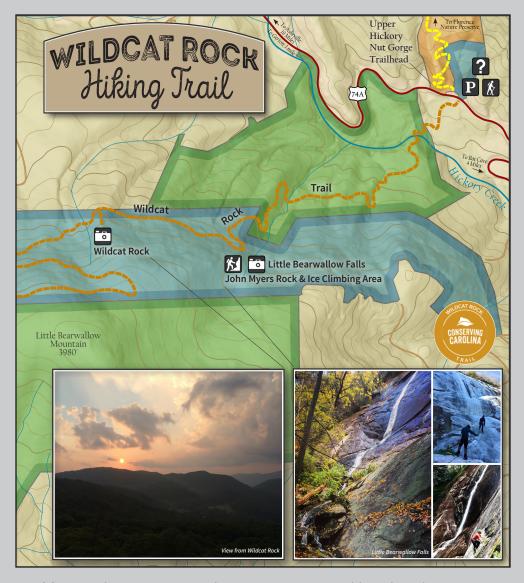
Conserving Carolina is dedicated to protecting and stewarding land and water resources vital to our natural heritage and quality of life and to fostering appreciation and understanding of the natural world. The local land trust has protected more than 35,000 acres in Henderson, Transylvania, Rutherford, and Polk counties in western North Carolina including the Hickory Nut Gorge, Blue Ridge Escarpment, and French Broad River watershed.

To date, **Conserving Carolina** has also developed 25 miles of public recreation trails in the Hickory Nut Gorge and has partnered with the **Carolina Climbers Coalition** to open two climbing areas (including Eagle Rock).

Little Bearwallow Falls climbing area, the Wildcat Rock Trail, and the natural land that surrounds it is owned by **Conserving Carolina**, who acquired and protected the land from John Myers in 2013 with the help of the Donald Jones Foundation, Fred & Alice Stanback, and many other partners.

The Wildcat Rock Trail that traverses it was constructed in segments between 2014 and 2017 by an assemblage of Trail Dynamics, Vermont and North Carolina Youth Conservation Corps, Benchmark Trails, American Conservation Experience, Carolina Mountain Club, Conserving Carolina's Rock Crushers Trail Crew, and REI Asheville volunteers. The trail received a national award for design and construction from the National Coalition of Recreational Trails in 2018. Conserving Carolina partnered with the Carolina Climbers Coalition to open Little Bearwallow Falls to rock and ice climbing in 2017.

Conserving Carolina's Upper HNG Trail--including the Wildcat Rock Trail that accesses Little Bearwallow Falls--is only a component of a broader plan of 100+ miles of future public trails that will traverse the length of the entire Hickory Nut Gorge, connecting Chimney Rock State Park and circumnavigating Lake Lure by linking trail segments including the Weed Patch Mountain Trail, Eagle Rock Tunnel Trail, Youngs Mountain Trail, and more.



Parking: At large Upper Hickory Nut Gorge trail head Parking on 74A in Gerton, NC.

Approach: Cross the street and hike the Wildcat Rock Trail just over a mile to Little Bearwallow Falls

Weather: Dry weather needed for rock routes. Summer, fall are best. **No Commercial Guiding** (note: this is due to grant stipulations when Conserving Carolina first acquired the land)

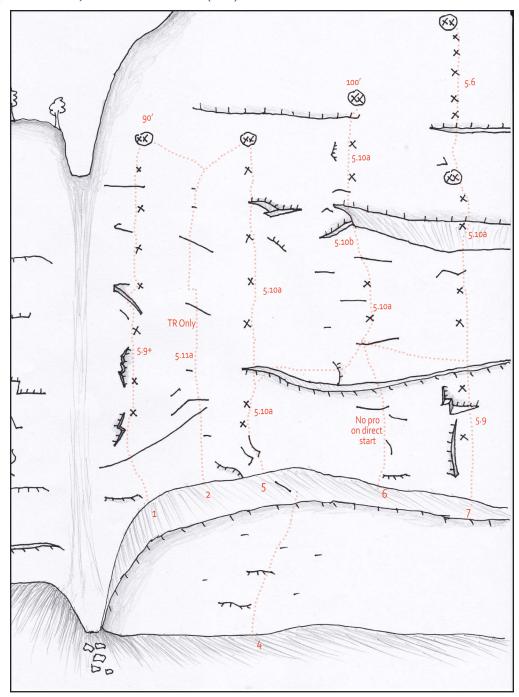
No Fires No Camping Dogs on a leash No collecting plants

Sport

2 Top Rope

5 Trad or Mixed

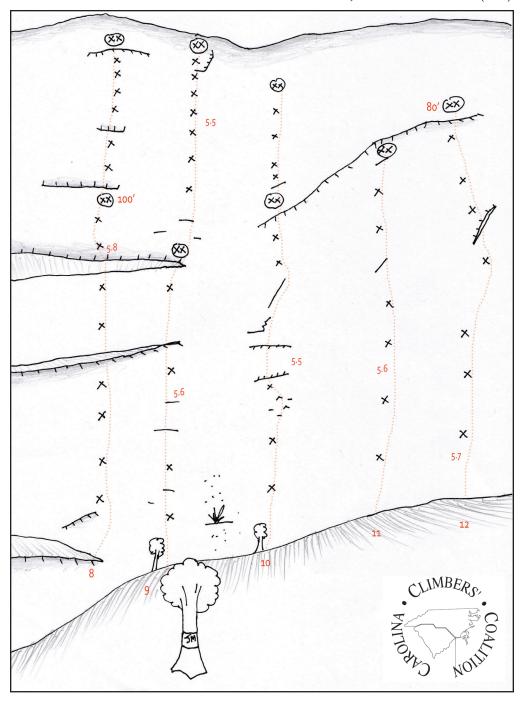
Main Wall, Little Bearwallow Falls (rock)



Main Wall (rock):

- ☐ 1. Laughing Waters 5.9+ ****
- ☐ 2. Muir Mirror (top rope) 5.11a **
- ☐ 3. Ursa Tradversa 5.4
- **□** 4. **Kids Slab** 5.0

- ☐ 5. John Myers Memorial Route 5.10a
- ☐ 6. **J.M. Squared** 5.10b ***
- ☐ 7. White Horse 5.10a ***



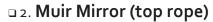
- 8. Men in Granite 5.8 ***
- **□** 9. **Rico's Suave** 5.6 ***
- ☐ 10. **PAPSCH** 5.5 **
- ☐ 11. No Holds Barred (AKA Peter's
- Route) 5.6 **
- ☐ 12. CC's Route 5.7- **

Main Wall (ice):

- ☐ a. Little Bearwallow Falls W13 ****
- ☐ b. Center Ice WI3 ****
- ☐ c. Right Ice WI3 ****

□ 1. Laughing Waters 5.9+ **** 95 ft. Just to the right of the waterfall and named for John Myers' beautiful preserve. This was one of the routes that John spoke emphatically about, and why he wished this area to be open to public climbing. Expect wonderful patina edges and perfectly formed holds. The down side is, this is the last route to dry on the cliff and requires days of no rain. It will often be running water in the AM, then dry in the PM. Have your belayer set up on the ledge that is 20 feet off the ground.

FA: John Myers FFA: Mike Reardon Sport, 7 bolts, anchors. Some may wish to plug a cam to reach the first bolt but the climbing is 4th class.

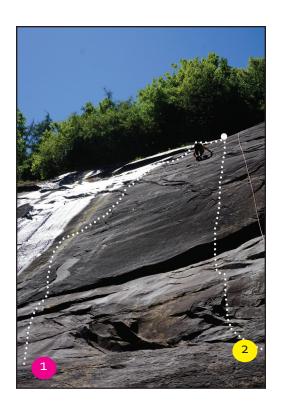


5.11a **

95 ft. This is a top rope-only route, set up after leading Laughing Waters or the John Myers Memorial Route. The climbing is high quality, albeit a three move wonder. We left it as a top rope, figuring more bolts in this region would be an eyesore. Climb the criss cross features near some brown splotches 10-15 feet right of Laughing Waters. Fierce crimps and foot finesse will be your magic wand.

FA: John Myers

Top rope after leading Laughing Waters or JM Memorial Route. No Gear



□3. Ursa Tradversa 5.4

200 ft. Start the same as Laughing Waters, up to the horizontal crack. Traverse right on the crack/ ledge for about 100 feet until reaching the anchors on PAPSCH. Continue on P2 of PAPSCH.

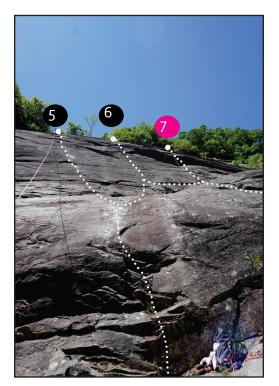
FA: John Myers FFA: Pat Thompson Standard rack to 4".

□ 4. **Kids Slab** 5.0

30 ft. The low angled slab that leads up the base of surrounding routes. You can by pass the "technical" climbing on the right or left of it, but the slab is nice to set up for small kids. Trad gear is needed for the anchor and can be found on the ledge.

Bring several slings or a static to equalize anchor.





Sean Reckert on the FFA of the John Myers Memorial Route, 5.10a Photo: Mike Reardon

a 5. John Myers Memorial Route 5.10a ***

95 ft. Great edges and crisp flakes make for a worthy gear and bolt protected outing. Cruxes are bolt protected since the rock rarely relinquishes natural pro. Gear placements mitigate the easy run outs. Start on obvious features past two bolts down low (first crux), get a .75 cam on a ledge, then climb mini flakes past three more bolts. A purple TCU can be found to cut the last run to anchors.

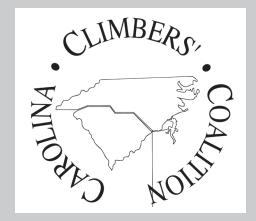
FA: John Myers FFA: Sean Reckert .75 cam, small TCU's, 6 bolts, anchors.

□ 6. J.M. Squared 5.10b *** 100 ft. Four distinct cruxes and some tricky foot work mark this route. Start on either White Horse (5.9 start) or JM Memorial (5.10a start) past the first two bolts, then get gear on the giant ledge (note: there is a direct start that is .9+ but has no gear). Clip a bolt off the ledge with a tricky slab move, then past another bolt. A red TCU fits perfectly in a slot above that second bolt off the ledge, protecting another crux leading to the right facing flake feature. There is a hidden blue TCU placement where the flake meets the rock. Move up and slightly left to huge holds, then follow bolts past the final crux section. Right or left of these final bolts offers the same trickery.

FA: John Myers Small TCU's and cams to 1", 6 bolts, anchors. 190 ft. A bit of a two move wonder but certainly worth a go. Stick clip. P1 (5.10a, 95 ft.): Climb the fun right facing swoop past bolt one, then gear on easy terrain if needed, then up to bolt two. Move up and right on a giant ledge to another optional gear placement before clipping the third bolt. The roof/bulge is the crux and devious but well protected.

P2 (5.6, 95 ft): Mostly easy climbing with big holds and features. The rock did not yield any natural placements so expect 5 bolts for pro.

FA: John Myers FFA: Shannon Millsaps Sport, optional 1-2 pieces of gear. If you only brought quick draws, this is still a reasonable lead. One or two TCU's will help cut the very easy runs between bolts two and three on P1.





Little Bearwallow Falls is opened to hiking and climbing because of these two organizations. Support them!



□ 8. **Men in Granite** 5.8 ***

190 ft. A two pitch bolted line that yielded no natural pro. Regardless, the patina edges down low and fun bulge move should lure you in.

P1 (5.8, 100 ft): Start at a tree island on dark, patina rock. There is a bit of a slab crux down low, then a stopper move at the bulge. The climbing between is mostly 5.6. If only climbing this pitch and rapping WATCH ENDS OF YOUR ROPE! A 60M is just enough to get you off P1.

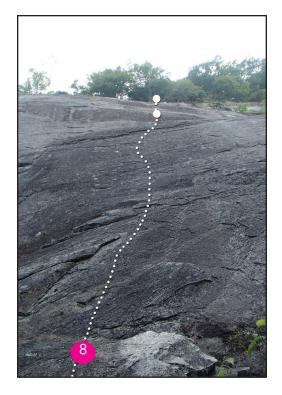
P2 (5.6, 90 ft.): Head straight up over the anchors to a bulge, then to a friction section. Combining pitches is reasonable with long runners to mitigate drag. FA: John Myers FFA: Jimmy Baker Sport.

□ 9. **Rico's Suave** 5.6 ***

190 ft. One of the first to dry on the cliff. Offers great position and fun climbing on P2.

P1 (5.6, 90 ft.): Start at a tree island and follow bolts and gear to an anchor on the far right side of the roof band 90 feet up.

P2 (5.6, 100 ft.): Fantastic features lead past one piece of gear down low, then bolts to the top anchor. FA: John Myers FFA: Pat Thompson Standard rack to 1", mostly bolts.





□ 10. **PAPSCH** 5.5 **

160 ft. The rippled face and flake on the first pitch make for enjoyable, easy climbing.

P1 (5.5, 80 ft.): Starts near a downed tree. Note the rippled face forty feet up. Find the anchors on a giant ledge.

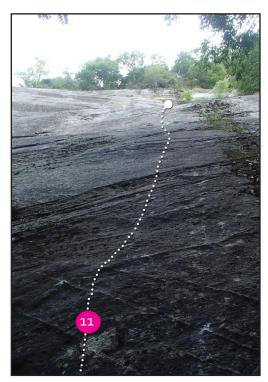
P2 (5.4, 80 ft.): Continue past bolts to an anchor below the tree line. FA: John Myers FFA: Pat Thompson Standard rack to 1", mostly bolts.

□ 11. No Holds Barred (AKA Peter's Route) 5.6 ***

70 ft. Aptly named for a man who put a lot of solid trail and access work into the area. The horizontal edges are nice on this one. There is a neat hole at the top of the climb for a #3 cam but not needed. FA: John Myers FFA: Pat Thompson Sport, 6 bolts, optional #3 cam and finger sized cam would protect very easy climbing.





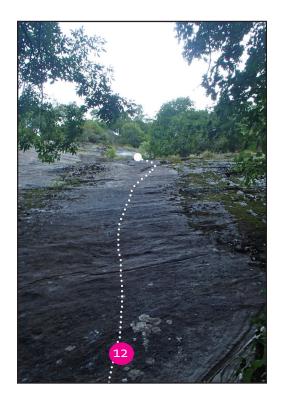


Main Wall, Little Bearwallow Falls (rock)

□ 12. **CC's Route** 5.7- **

90 ft. Furthest right route on the main cliff. Stick clip advised since the friction crux is down low. Start on small undulations. Continue up past an optional finger sized cam past bolt three, then head into a fun right facing flake.

FA: John Myers FFA: Pat Thompson Sport, 7 bolts. Optional finger sized cam protecting very easy terrain.





WE'VE GOT YOUR BACK.

Rock and ice can deliver a powerful high—but only if you can get out there. Across the country, climbing access is endangered. Through conservation and sustainable trails in Western North Carolina, we're helping to save it!

Conserving Carolina has helped protect over **22,000 acres of amazing mountain land** for recreation, including some of this region's most iconic climbing areas. Like Chimney Rock State Park. Eagle Rock. The boulders at Buffalo Creek Park. And the John Myers Rock & Ice Climbing Area at Little Bearwallow Falls.

PROTECT GREAT PLACES

Join Conserving Carolina and help keep the great outdoors open for climbing. Give. Volunteer. Connect. Check us out at **conservingcarolina.org**.



Main Wall (ice)

□ a. Little Bearwallow Falls WI3 ****

100-170 ft. RELATIVELY RELIABLE. Excellent ice climbing. Stays consistently 70 degree angle and forms fairly consistently as well. Important note: if the two bolt anchor is not iced over, you can be lowered with a single 60M rope to the base of the falls, but likely not all the way down where you stashed your gear at the stream. Have your belayer belay from the large shelf 20 feet off the ground. Watch the ends of your rope if lowering from the top anchor! It is also possible to take this up and right for another 100 foot pitch if conditions allow.

FA: John Myers

Screws. Anchors at 100 feet may be iced over. Bring two ropes to rap from trees if anchors are iced.

□ b. Center Ice WI3****

100-200 ft. RELATIVELY RELIABLE. Depending on the year, this zone forms most consistently. Most complete this in one pitch, even if headed to the cliff top.

FA: John Myers

Screws. Anchors at 100 feet may be iced over. Bring two ropes to rap from trees if anchors are iced.

□ c. Right Ice WI3****

100-200 ft. RELATIVELY RARE. Depending on the year, a third independent line may form right of the fatter, Center Ice.

FA: John Myers

Screws. Anchors at 100 feet may be iced over. Bring two ropes to rap from trees if anchors are iced.

Far Right Wall (ice)

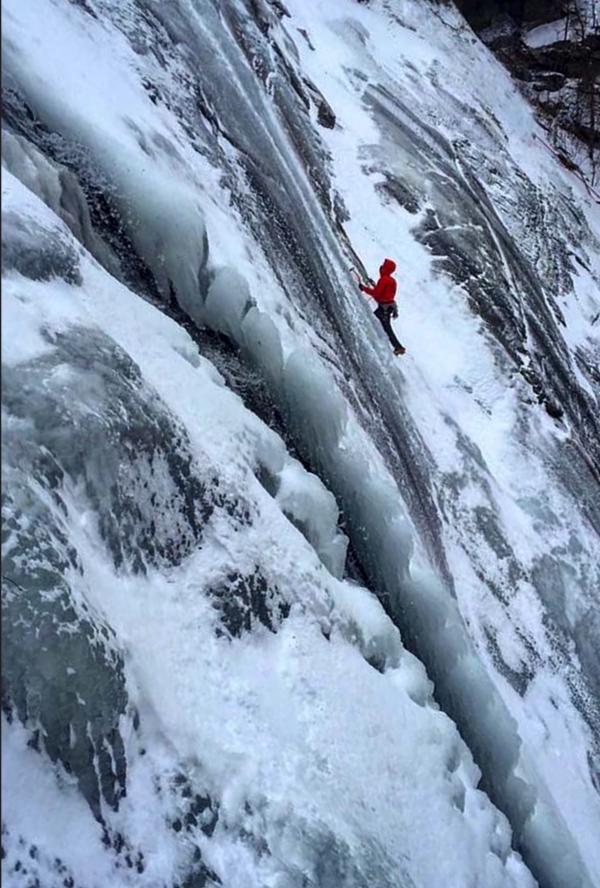
■ d. Far Right Ice WI3 ***

200 ft. RELATIVELY RELIABLE. From the base of Little Bearwallow Falls, continue right along the Main Wall, along the Wildcat Rock Trail up the nicely masoned stone steps about 1/4 mile to reach this next ice ribbon.

FA: John Myers

Screws. Bring two ropes to rap from trees.

Right: Fox Mt. guide Anthony D'Ercole on Center Ice, WI3
Photo: Karsten Delap/ www.foxmountainguides.com





Alex O'Neill on the Main Wall's Center Ice, WI3
Photo: Alex O'Neill

Baby Bearwaller Wall (ice)

From the base of Little Bearwallow Falls located on the Main Wall, walk uphill and left for about 200 feet and you will be at the Left Wall. Routes listed right to left (as approached).

□ e. Baby Bearwaller Ice WI2 **

100-170 ft. RELATIVELY RELIABLE. Might be one of the first ice climbs to form in the state. Eases off after 100' but you can keep climbing.

Screws.

□f. Papa Bearwaller Ice WI2 **

100 ft. RELATIVELY RARE. Middle of the cliff. Nice and thin. May be able to clip a bolt on one of the rock routes or even plug gear.

Screws. Anchors at 100 feet may be iced over.

□ g. Far Left Ice WI1/2*

100 ft. RELATIVELY RELIABLE. This low angled band of ice on the far left of the cliff is a nice calf burning warm up.

Screws. Anchors at 80 feet may be iced over, use tree if so.





Heath Alexander on Papa Bearwaller Ice (left) and Grotto Pillar (right)

Photos: Mike Reardon

Left Walls (ice)

These walls take a sage's patience in rhodo limbo; only the masochistic need apply. Be ready for a 'schwack and leave no trace but footsteps. From the base of Little Bearwallow Falls, walk up and left, past the base of the Baby Bearwaller Wall, in 10 minutes of crawling through thickets without gaining or losing too much elevation, a 40' wet slab will emerge. There may or may not be worthwhile ice on it. Continue another few minutes to a positive angled 70' tall slab with several potential ice routes. This cliff band brings you to the Grotto Pillar. Routes listed right to left.

□ h. Far Left Slabby Ice WI1/2?

100 ft. RELATIVELY RELIABLE. Easy looking tiered slab, unknown if climbed. *Screws.*

□i. Grotto Pillar WI3/4***

50 ft. RELATIVELY RARE. Far left end of cliff. Short but sweet, and don't sweat about cutting feet. This mini line is the most vertical stretch of ice at Little Bearwallow Falls.

Screws.

Baby Bearwaller Wall (rock)

This area is found 5 minutes up and left of the main Little Bearwallow Falls cliff. The whole cliff is a positive angled slab with water sculpted features, good for beginning leaders. It needs a few days of dry weather before drying completely. Best season is summer/ fall. Spring is too wet. Forms ice climbs in the winter.

Routes listed right to left, as approached.

□ 1. Bearly Lichen 5.5R

220 ft. Start on the flake, then head straight up past some lichen and bad gear. Continue past the anchor for Baby Bearwaller, then to a tree anchor.

FA: Pat Thompson Standard Rack, tree anchor.

□ 2. Ursa Traversa 5.3

110 ft. This is a gear-protected, left trending traverse of most of the cliff band. The climbing is easy and fun. 70 meter rope is recommended, or the leader should belay from the top anchors. Start on the left facing flakes on the far right end of the cliff. Climb to the top of the obvious flake, clip Baby Bearwaller's third bolt, then keep trending left with gear in horizontals and a crack. Finish on lan's Route's anchors.

FA: Anne Riddle, Pat Thompson Standard Rack, anchors.

□ 3. **Baby Bearwaller** 5.3 ******100 ft. This is the first obvious line of bolts you will come to at this mini cliff. The route follows fantastic water sculpted features over well protected terrain. This is a good route for new leaders. Watch ends of your rope when rapping or lowering.

FA: Pat Thompson, Anne Riddle Sport, 7 bolts, anchors.

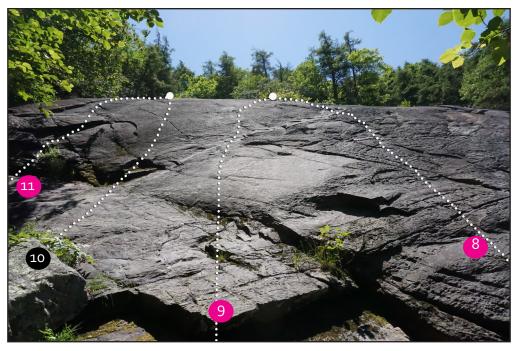
□ 4. **Run Goldilocks Run** 5.5*****100 ft. Climb the positive angled slab past 6 bolts, then climb the wide crack. At the top, step right to the anchors on Baby Bearwaller. Watch ends of your rope when rapping or lowering. FA: Anne Riddle, Pat Thompson Sport, 6 bolts, anchors.

□ 5. Mama Bearwaller 5.5 * 80 ft. Stick clip is wise. Climb the blank slab past 4 bolts, then continue up and right passing horizontals and small gear placements.

FA: Pat Thompson, Anne Riddle Light rack of cams, 4 bolts, anchors.

Little Bearwaller Wall, Little Bearwallow Falls





□ 6. Papa Bearwaller 5.6 *

80 ft. Stick clip is wise. Blank, positive angled slab past three bolts, then over a bulge leading past two more bolts. Ride the crack up and left, protected by gear to anchors.

FA: Pat Thompson Light rack of cams, 5 bolts, anchors.

□7. Don't Slap The RouteDude 5.6 *

80 ft. "Don't slap the route dude if you are shaken at the grade"- a quote from Steve Petro in Masters of Stone. This one climbs in the middle of the cliff, and gives way to some natural protection to supplement the pro. Begin under a left slanting feature.

FA: Pat Thompson Light rack of cams, 5 bolts, anchors.

□ 8. lan's Route 5.4 ***

70 ft. Beginning leaders line up, this one is a nice route for a first time leader but anyone would enjoy these features. The rock is highly water sculpted, if only the angle were a bit steeper! That said, it is a fun romp even for the more seasoned clipper.

FA: Pat Thompson, Anne Riddle Sport. 6 bolts, anchors.

□ 9. **Ursa Minor** 5.7 **

70 ft. Solid features and worthwhile if it is dry. Most of the climbing is 5.5 and under but there is one thoughtful slab crux.

FA: Jared Hancock Sport. 5 bolts, anchors.

🛮 10. **Bear Minimum** 5.8+ 🐅

50 ft. Starts uphill on the far left end of the cliff, second to last line at the cliff. Note the bolt line right of flakes on the blank looking slab. Clean and thin slabbing heads past 4 bolts and 3 pieces of gear to a shared anchor with Bear Necessities.

FA: PatThompson, Anne Riddle Light rack of cams, 4 bolts, anchors.

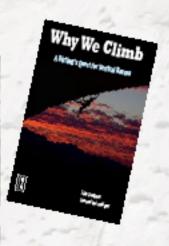
🛮 11. Bear Necessities 5.6 🏶

50 ft. Starts uphill on the far left end of the cliff. Note the bolt line right of flakes. Easy slabbing heads up to an anchor.

FA: Jared Hancock Sport. 5 bolts, anchors.



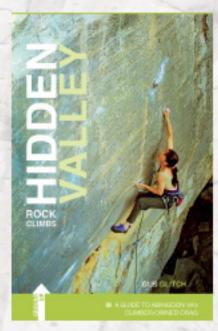


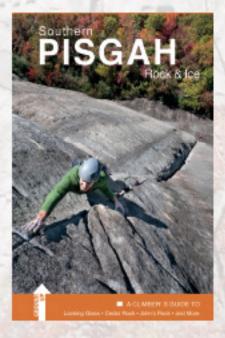


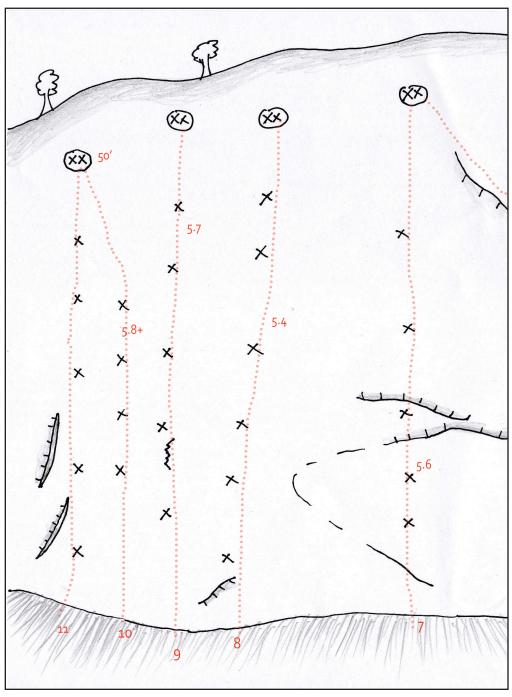


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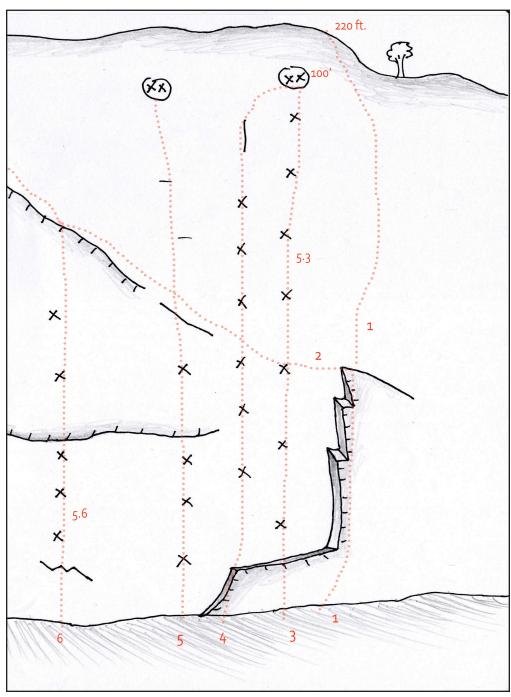
Supporting Access Documenting Climbing History Getting YOU There







- □ 1. **Bearly Lichen** 5.5R
- □ 2. Ursa Traversa 5.3
- 🛮 3. Baby Bearwaller 5.3 🗱
- □ 4. Run Goldilocks Run 5.5*
- □ 5. Mama Bearwaller 5.5 *
- □ 6. Papa Bearwaller 5.6 *



□7. Don't Slap The Route
Dude 5.6 *

■ 8. lan's Route 5.4 ***

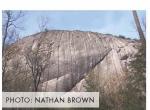
□9. Ursa Minor 5.7 **

□ 10. **Bear Minimum** 5.8+ **

□ 11. **Bear Necessities** 5.6 *











BUCKEYE KNOB: Purchased 55 acres of boulder filled forest once slated for logging.

RUMBLING BALD: Purchased and own 6+ acres of prime boudering. Currently working with CRSP to expand climbing access within the park.

BIG ROCK, SC: Worked with land owners to open up climbing and bouldering. HIDDEN YALLEY, VA: Purchased and reopened over a mile of cliff line. 450 routes and counting.

 ${\bf LAUREL\ KNOB:}$ Purchased, own, and manage the biggest and baddest cliff east of the Mississippi.

EAGLE ROCK: Worked with Conserving Carolina and Chimney Rock to permit public climbing access.

GERTON ICE: Worked with Conserving Carolina to open climbing at the John Myers cliff.

TABLE ROCK, SC: Worked with rangers to expand the climbing season.

SAURATOWN: Gained seasonal access to an area closed for over a decade.

ROCKY FACE: Worked with park officials to reignite climbing to the park.

HANGING ROCK STATE PARK: Worked with rangers on peregrine closures and established parking.

PISGAH RANGER DISTRICT: Worked with PNF Rangers to create trail crew to mitigate trail issues on designated trails.

JOCASSEE GORGES, SC: Worked with park officials to approve "hiking on rocks"

ASHEBORO BOULDERS: Secured a lease with landowners for access to superb bouldering.

BUFFALO CREEK PARK: Worked with the town of Lake Lure in support of bouldering at the park.

SUPPORT THE CCC - JOIN TODAY!

www.CarolinaClimbers.org

Protecting, preserving and enhancing climbing opportunities in the Carolinas and beyond!



The Carolina Climbers Coalition (CCC) is a 501c3 non profit that was formed in 1995 in response to jeopardized climbing access at NC State Parks. Over one hundered climbers came together and voted to form the coalition to advocate for climbing access throughout the Carolinas. The CCC has since banded with local climbers, national climbing advocacy organizations, and local and federal agencies to improve climbing areas, purchase land, and rebolt routes. Now over 400 members strong, the CCC represents your interests. Get involved now - Be a volunteer, financial donor, and climbing access advocate.





Land Acquisition- Bolt Replacement- Trail Building & Maintenance-Collaboration with land owners, park officials, and other wilderness oriented organizations

SUPPORT THE CCC - JOIN TODAY!

www.CarolinaClimbers.org