

## HARRIS BAY, BARK LAKE

By Danylo Darewych

Harris Bay is the long, southern arm of Bark Lake. It is about 4 km long and has 6-7 cliffs of various shapes and sizes located on both sides of the bay. Some of these cliffs have ice.

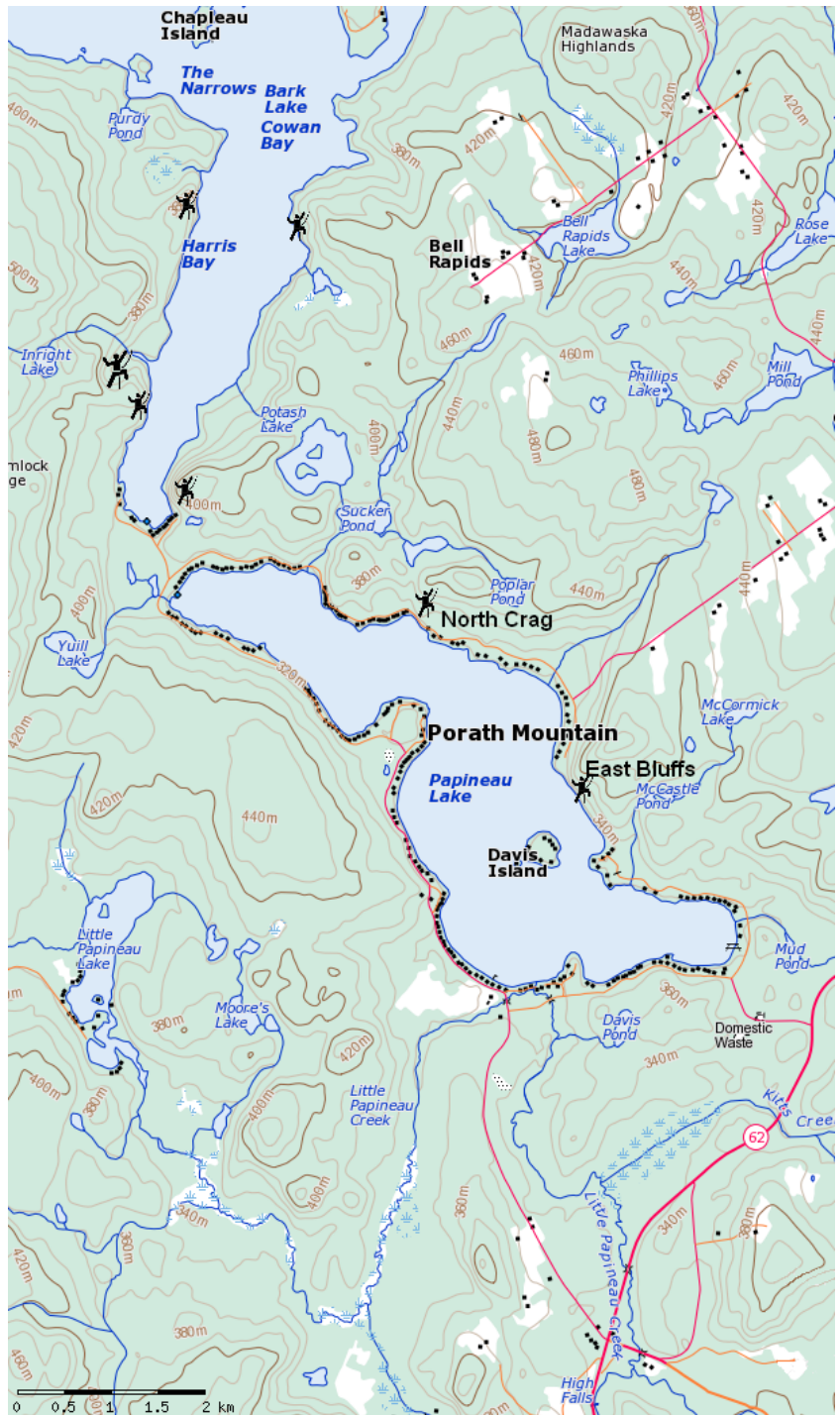
### Directions:

From Bancroft head north for 23 km on Highway 62 to Maynooth. From Maynooth continue east on Highway 62 for 12 km to Papineau Lake Rd (past the town of Maple Leaf). Turn north on Papineau Lake Rd. which goes up the west side of Papineau Lake, then around the northern end of Papineau Lake. Go along Papineau Lake Rd for 11 km to the far northern end of Papineau Lake, where you turn left (north) onto Bark Lake Rd. Go north on Bark Lake Rd. for 500m and park in the big parking lot on the left at the end of the road. The first cliff on the big hill/mountain at the south end of Bark Lake will be plainly visible from the parking lot. The next cliff down, about 1 km on the west side is partially visible (the good ice on it is not visible).

**Warning:** Be very careful when crossing the ice on Bark Lake. I believe the water levels are dam controlled and they drop them at some point during the fall/winter. I've no clue when or how you go about finding out when. You do not want to be walking on a shell of ice suspended 6-7 metres above the water. Telltale signs that the water levels have already been dropped and the ice is safe to walk on are big broken slabs of ice all along the shoreline and an obvious high-water mark 6-7 metres up on the lakeside rock faces, sometimes with ice platforms still stuck to them. I think the ice is usually OK by January (but don't take my word for it). If you're not sure, you can reach the nearest cliffs by alternative overland approaches. Walking across the ice on Harris Bay when there is no snow cover is spooky – the ice moans, groans, snaps and pops in a most unnerving manner.

By the way, you'll need to put on crampons to cross the broken ice slabs at the shoreline – they're tilted at all sorts of crazy angles and often teeter precariously on boulders (a bona fide WI1 approach J).

**Nature Trivia:** You will notice that there is a very great number of toppled trees around the shoreline of Bark Lake. According to the Hydro crew we spoke to, these were knocked down by severe micro-bursts of wind (mini-tornadoes) that struck the general area in 2006 (on July 17 according to Environment Canada). Incredibly none of the houses at the south end of the lake were destroyed and no-one was hurt. An F2 class tornado (with winds between 189-240 km/h) that struck on Aug 2, 2006 is responsible for all the toppled trees you see on the south end of Lake Kamanisseg as you drive along to Diamond Lake. That tornado caused a lot of damage in Combermere. Bark Lake was also hit by a tornado on June 28, 2008, according to Environment Canada, but I don't know exactly where. Now, wasn't that interesting?



## BIG HILL CLIFF (or WOUNDED RAVEN CLIFF)

The Big Hill Cliff is the tallest of the Bark Lake cliffs. It is found at the base of the big hill that rises prominently at the south-east corner of Harris Bay. The Big Hill Cliff is clearly visible from the boat launch at the south end of Harris Bay and can be reached by a quick 300 m walk across the bay.



**The Ramble, WI3-, 25 m** of ice, plus walking between sections of ice (FA Danylo Darewych, Antonio Murillo Segura, January 28, 2011).

The route is found on the left end of the cliff face, about 15 m left of the foot/toe of the main cliff. Head up a little gully for about 10 m on thin ice that spills over two short rock steps (turf stick top out). Walk up 10 metres, then over another rampy, snowy/rock/turf step in the corner to the base of a second 15 m section of ice. The ice is easy angled at first, then steepens. You can exit to the right on another 7-8 metre ice step, but that puts you on a ledge with no trees or ice, so we finished off by walking up to a big tree on the left that's good for rappelling. We did the climb in two pitches, but I think you can stretch it out in one long pitch.

Bonus: If the snow's not deep, ramble another 200 metres uphill to the top of the big hill/mountain to enjoy the view. I'd like to say that the view was beautiful, but truth be told, we got there just as it was getting dark, so we didn't see much of anything. Now I have an excuse to go back.

Consistency: This route rarely forms. I've stopped to check this spot out many times over the years and never seen much ice here. Too bad, because it's a big cliff face.

**Jimmy & the Kid, M6, WI5, 2 pitches.** (FA Sam Eastman, Jim Elzinga, March 30, 2013).

A trad mixed climb. This climb is located on the northern side of the Big Hill. You can't see it from the parking area. Walk onto lake from parking area, past the Big Hill Cliff (Wounded Raven Cliff), around a prominent point to the northern side of the Big Hill. When you go around the point you will see a series of low angled smears and bulges leading to a dagger high up on the hill side. This is *Jimmy and the Kid*. Or you likely won't see it – this is another route that only forms once in a blue moon. If the lake ice is unsafe, you can reach the climb by following the right shoreline and working your way through a small cliff band to the other side of the point mentioned above. Posthole through the trees to the base of the ice smear/bulges.

- Pitch 1, WI2, 50 m. Climb a series of smears and ice bulges, until you reach the base of the dagger.
- Pitch 2 – M6, WI5. Dry tool a thin crack in the roof behind the dagger scraping your way along until you can reach a small ice bulge. At the top of the crack, you will find a fixed nut, (don't take it you gear pirates, placing gear can be tricky at this spot!). At the ice bulge make a very large step out to the dagger, swing onto it, fight your way around to the outside and punch it to the top! (The dagger is about 15 m long) Bring cams from 0.5 to 0.1. All placements are great. *SE-Z*



Left: The dagger of *Jimmy and the Kid*. Right: Sam Eastman punching for the top. March 30, 2013. Photos by Jim Elzinga.

### **MI 3 - Meaningless Ice 3** (FA Sam Eastman, Jim Elzinga, March 30, 2013)

From the cave with the dagger, go right for 10 m until you find a 5 m curtain, climb it. The best way to get to the top of the cliff. Name says it all. *SE-Z*

## **THE GREY WALL and BLOOD WALL**

The next set of cliffs is located on the west side of Harris Bay, about 1 km down the bay. These are the Grey Wall and the Blood Wall. The Blood Wall rises directly from the lake and is clearly visible from the boat launch. The Grey Wall is located immediately left of the Blood Wall, but it is not visible from the boat launch as it is set back a short distance from the shoreline and is hidden from view by a stand of trees.

### **Approach to Grey Wall/Blood Wall.**

The approach is straightforward when the lake ice solidly frozen - simply head across the ice to the cliffs. However, there is also an overland trail flagged into the Blood Wall for when the lake ice is unsafe early (or late) in the season. The trail was reconnoitered and flagged by Jim Elzinga with assistance from Justin Bryant, David Broadhead and Sam Eastman-Zaleski. It takes about 45 min. to get to the top of the cliff. Here is a detailed description of the trail/approach by Jim Elzinga:

“As you approach Harris Bay take the first side road to the cottages on the left (west) side of the Bay. Follow it a short way till you can't drive any further – the road becomes an ATV trail. Follow it for about 5 min. till you come to a large tree that recently has fallen across the trail. On the other side of the fallen tree, cut into the trees and follow the orange survey tape/flagging that heads back towards the lake. The flagging ends at a large swath of fallen trees that have toppled over at the beginning of an old logging road or ski-doo trail. The fallen trees camouflage the start of the road/trail. The flagging goes around the right side of the fallen trees, then back left to the trail. Follow the trail/old road for about 10-15 min (need to time it). On the right, the trail forks (marked with flagging tape) - follow it down to a stream. You don't want to miss where the trail forks or you end up going for a nice walk! If the stream is not frozen it can be crossed upstream a short way over a log. Follow the flagging on the other side of the stream up a short hill where you go right (flagged). Continue following a well-cut ski-doo trail to where it eventually starts to drop down - you can see the lake and someone's old camp. Please note there is deadfall on the trail. Do not go to the camp. There is a glazed log, waist height on the left. It's at this point you can see the camp, cut into the forest, pick up the flagging that hugs the left-hand side of a hill. The flagging will eventually turn up the hill to a bench that cuts across to the top of the cliff. Do not go to the top of the hill. The bench is well flagged and we have cut out/removed a lot

of the deadfall. Note: stay on the bench as it has small cliff above it as you get near the top of the Blood Wall. Look for and follow the flagging!”

The first two climbs are actually not located on the Grey Wall/ Blood Wall proper, but on a shorter outlier 150 m to their south. These routes are not visible from the lake, as the section of cliff they are on is set back in the woods behind a wooded knoll. The easiest way to find them is to use *Join the Revolution?* and *Meet the New Boss* as a reference/starting point. From there head about 150 m south of *Meet the New Boss* along a broken cliff line to its end.

**Troglodytes on Ice, WI3, 15 m**, (FA Danylo Darewych, David Britnell, January 12, 2014).

A pleasant ice flow located in a bit of a corner of the cliff.

**Wandering Herbivores Amongst the Frozen Tundra, WI2+, 5.0, 24 m** (FA David Britnell, Danylo Darewych, January 12, 2014).

Starts 10 m right of *Troglodytes*. Climb up thin ice/frozen turf for 7-8 m, step right through a notch, then continue up over snow and another ice bulge.



*Troglodytes on Ice*, on left (right above Dave) and *Wandering Herbivores* on right.

### Grey Wall Routes

The two Grey Wall ice routes are found right next to each other, separated by a rock buttress. Both routes end under overhangs and were originally climbed by traversing off under the overhangs (on rock pro) and then heading up to exit. There are now anchors under both overhangs.

**Join the Revolution?, WI3, 5.4, 25 m** (FA Danylo Darewych, Janet Trost, Dave Brown, February 5, 2012).

This is the right-hand flow of ice. Head up the sheet of ice to where it ends in a corner under a roof (about 15 m). There are anchors here. Or continue by traversing right on rock around the corner of the roof for 6-7 m onto a ledge, then along the ledge to the right and up; or head straight up the final 3-4 m vertical corner. Rock gear needed (cams), if you do the rock traverse.



*Join the Revolution?*, left photo by Janet Trost, right photo and below – Dave Brown, February 5, 2012).

I had a bit of a misadventure when climbing the route. The initial sheet of ice was relatively straightforward – it was a bit on the thin side at first, but it wasn't too steep and fattened up considerably as it got higher. Unfortunately, the final thick blob of ice emanating from under the roof in the corner proved to be dry – it was coming apart in huge blocks when I swung my tools into it. I wasn't convinced I could fashion a secure v-thread in it.

The traverse right on rock around the roof didn't look too difficult and looked like it would have decent protection, so I headed off that way. While looking around for good handholds and brushing lichen from the rock, I unclipped my right tool from its leash (yes, I still climb with leashes) and stuck it into a patch of moss. When I removed my tool from the moss, I didn't clip it back onto my leash, thinking I might soon simply need to put the tool aside and use my hands. A move higher up I needed to do exactly that, so I released my tool to let it hang from its leash, ... and watched my tool sail to the bottom of the crag. I had forgotten that I hadn't attached my tool back to its leash. What – me join the leashless, mixed climbing revolution? Might be a little premature. : )

Oh well, there wasn't any ice to speak of above me and it wasn't far to the edge of the roof, so I figured I'd just continue on, minus one tool. Things were going well until I reached around the edge of the roof and one of the big blocks on the far side of the corner shifted when I grabbed hold of it – I scared myself almost witless. Teetering precariously, I managed to steady myself by grabbing the spindly twigs of a nearby shrub, which miraculously didn't break off in my hands, and then made a desperate lunge onto the safety of a wide ledge. Phew!  
DD

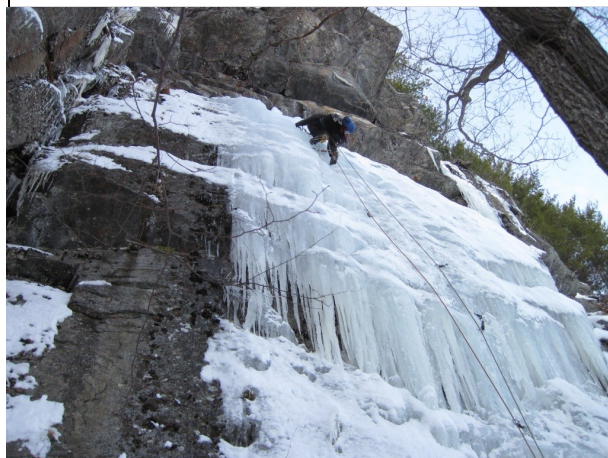
**Meet the New Boss WI3+, 5.3, 30 m** (Danylo Darewych, Dave Britnell, February 10, 2013)

Climb up the left-hand ice flow for 15 m to where the ice ends under a roof. There are anchors here. Or traverse left for 5 m on a snowy rock ledge, step around a rock bulge and head up some small ledges on turf sticks for 4-5 m to a bigger ledge below the final corner. Climb up the final corner (8 m) on thin ice and turf sticks to a somewhat bushy exit to the left. Rock gear (cams) is needed to protect the traverse left. The final corner wasn't too steep, but didn't have any decent pro – the ice was too thin for screws, and the one visible crack was mostly covered in ice. I stuck a Camalot in the wide-open, passive pro position into the iced-up crack behind an ice block and hoped it wouldn't have to hold a fall (it didn't).



Above: Danylo Darewych on the FA of *Join the Revolution?* (Feb. 5, 2012, photo by Dave Brown).

Below: And on *Meet the New Boss*, (February 10, 2013, photo by Erik Dobic).



## Blood Wall Routes

The Blood Wall is a gently overhanging cliff that rises straight out of the water and is characterised by beautiful, swirly orange bands in the rock. It is split in half by a gully/ramp. There are several hard dry-tool and mixed climbs on this wall.

**Battle's Just Begun, M7, 35 m** (FA Josh Smith, Sam Eastman-Zaleski, Jim Elzinga, January 2013??).

On the left side of the wall is a partially ice-filled shallow crack system and face problem that leads to a ledge that traverses the cliff at two-thirds height. Decent pods, small edges, A second short easier pitch leads to



Grey Wall and Blood Wall Route Photo (by Sam Eastman-Zaleski, based on a photo by Rob Borotkanics): 1) Meet the New Boss WI3 M3 30 m, 2) Join the Revolution WI3 M3 25 m, 3) Battle's Just Begun M7 35m, 4) Bloody Sunday M8 25 m, 5) Seventeen Stitches M9 20 m, 6) Pinch of Nerves WI3, M4 20 m. The blue line marks the descent gully with the fixed-line. There is also an easy walk-up to the right of the cliff.

the top. Eleven bolts. Sam took a few falls and concussed himself slightly on an early attempt to climb this route. *SE-Z*

**Bloody Sunday, M8, 25 m** (FA Sam Eastman-Zaleski, Jim Elzinga; not led as of April 7, 2014).

Located 7-8 m right of *Battle's Just Begun*. This route heads up a fantastic, overhanging face/corner on small holds. 17 bolts. (*SE-Z*) The route in its current shape doesn't quite reach the top and finishes at a boulder problem. Needs an anchor and a bolted extension.

**Seventeen Stitches, M9, 20 m** (FA Sam Eastman-Zaleski, January 2014).

To the right of the gully, tucked away in a corner lies the crag's gem: an aesthetic, rustic-red granite crack with patches of ice that overhangs by five meters. A low ice curtain leads to a very powerful sequence with a four-foot dyno from a side pull to a small bulge of ice. With your heart racing and your arms barely able to hold onto



Sam Eastman-Zaleski on an early attempt of *Seventeen Stitches*. January 12, 2014. Photo by David Britnell.

your tools as you hammer them into the moss filled crack, you pull into the final overhanging dihedral and fight gravity to the anchors. *SE-Z*

This climb (and the whole Blood Wall) are named for the results of a bloody accident that befell Jim Elzinga. He took a fall while scrambling to the top of the “easy” descent gully and cut open his left bicep on a branch that he struck on the way down. A trip to the hospital resulted in 17 stitches.

**Pinch of Nerves, WI3, M4, 20 m.** (FA Jim Elzinga, Siu Mai, December 28, 2013). Located at the right side of the Blood Wall. It is fun, yet run-out and serious for the grade. Jump on this one early in the season – the lower section of ice is thin and bakes out quickly in the sun.

The climb is named in honour of Sam Eastman-Zaleski, who developed a nasty nerve pinch while bolting *17 Stitches*. This resulted in a day of sitting on the packs, watching Jim and Siu Mai delicately send thin, delaminating ice.



Jim Elzinga leading *Pinch of Nerves*, December 28, 2013. Photo from Jim Elzinga.

## GOLD RUSH AREA

The Gold Rush area is a secluded, hidden area of cliffs located behind the Grey Wall/Blood Wall area. From the Bark Lake parking lot at the south end of Harris Bay to the Gold Rush Area is about 2.5 km walk (45 min). Walk 350 m north past the Blood Wall to a small inlet where a creek flows into Harris Bay. Head up the inlet to its end. At its end turn leftish and continue

by heading west through the forest, up the slope of a small valley, roughly paralleling a creek. Staying directly along the creek is possible, but much more of bushwack. The terrain is more open some 50 m left of the creek. Walk through the forest for about 350 m (heading roughly west). A fat, wide ice wall will become visible on your right side. This is the Gold Rush Wall proper. N45° 23.285' W77° 50.934'

You can also get to the Gold Rush area overland in early season when the lake isn't frozen. Start by following the ATV trail, as described in the overland approach to the Blood Wall. The trail will get you partway there, but at some point you'll have to leave it and simply bushwack straight for the Gold Ruah Wall.

The Gold Rush Wall has fat, rolling bulges on its right side, a steep middle section, an overhanging cliff with daggers and pillars on the left and more short, easy bulges on the far left. The ice should form consistently here every year, since there is a small lake up above the valley.

Three variations/lines have been done on the Gold Rush Wall.

**X-Rays Specs, WI2, 18 m** (Dave Wardlaw, Dave Britnell, Danylo Darewych, Pat Burke, January 14, 2018).

Climb a line of your choosing up over fat, rolling ice bulges and around shrubbery on the right side of the flow.

**Heart of Gold, WI4-, 14 m** (Danylo Darewych, Don Collier, Dave Wardlaw, Dave Britnell, Pat Burke, January 28, 2018).

Head up the left side of the steep middle section of ice, topping out just left of the thickest area of shrubbery/trees.





Left: Dave Britnell on *Heart of Gold*, January 28, 2018. Right: Dave Wardlaw on *X-Ray Specs*, January 14, 2018.

**Lucky Strike, WI3+, 14 m** (Danylo Darewych, Pat Burke, Dave Britnell, January 14, 2018).

Head up the left side of the ice wall before the overhanging cliff section, then step right up over a vertical bulge to top out. Less steep than *Heart of Gold*, but in some ways more tricky and awkward. The front side of this line is a steep, solid WI4 column (but there is an annoying tree branch in the way, that would have to be cleared).

Left of the main Gold Rush iceflow lies an overhanging wall with a collection of hanging daggers, one of which occasionally tenuously touches down. The following two climbs are located on this overhanging wall.

**Argos' Passage, WI5-, 18 m** (Andriy Kolos, Mugur Sandhu, Mike Makischuk, March 13, 2021).

Climbs the dagger/pillar on the overhanging wall. Climb up an ice pedestal to a ledge. Ideally arrange fist-sized rock gear in a loose horizontal behind the pillar. If you don't have it, place smaller gear in behind a detached, but "solid" ear, and extend it way out. Delicately ice climb upwards. Pretty cool. *AK*

**Dry Diggin's, M5+, 18 m** (Mike Makischuk, Mugur Sandhu and Andriy Kolos, March 13, 2021).

Climb the pedestal and step right. Apparently Argos' Passage doesn't typically form, so follow a line of 3



Left: Andriy Kolos leading *Argos' Passage*. Photo by Mike Makischuk. Right: Mike Makischuk leading *Dry Diggin's*, March 13, 2021. Photo by AK.





Left: *24 Karat*, Jan. 14, 2018. Middle: Danylo Darewych on *24 Karat*, Jan. 28, 2018. Right: Dave Britnell on *Fool's Gold*. Jan. 28, 2018. Photos from Dave Britnell.

bolts to the upper lip, and transition to the ice to top out. Note: rock quality limited bolt placement. Although the climbing itself is protected, blowing a clip may result in hitting the ledge. The clipping holds are solid, however. As always, an astute belay is preferred. *AK*

There is a higher cliff band with more ice climbs above the Gold Rush Wall. It's about 250 m away (a 5 minute walk). To get there, it's easiest to walk up just right of the first wall to its top, then weave through some small rock steps to the open forest above. It's a nice, small cirque of cliffs.

**24 Karat, WI4, 22 m** (Danylo Darewych, Don Collier, Dave Britnell, Pat Burke, January 28, 2018).

Located in a notch on the right end of the upper cliff band. Head up a thin, iced-up, right-leaning ramp (stubbies and rock pro on left wall) to a stance, then up a steep, thin (more stubbies), narrow 5 m vertical section capped with a really awkward, overhanging ice bulge to a ledge. Continue up to the right over very easy ice to a final steeper ice step. Belay off trees.

**Fool's Gold, WI2, (5.2), 20 m** (Danylo Darewych, Don Collier, Dave Britnell, Pat Burke, January 28, 2018).

Located at the far left end of the upper cliff band, some 200 m away from the previous flows. To get there from *24 Karat* back-track out through the cirque, drop down the slope (skier's right of the Gold Rush Wall) and traverse (skier's) right along the cliff to its end. Or from the Gold Rush Wall continue up the hidden valley to its end, going left around a talus field, to the far left end of the upper cliff.

Climb some easy ice, then over two short awkward ice steps and continue up the broad, thinly iced right-leaning ramp. There are some fatter ice blobs on the left for ice screws and/or placements for rock gear. Top out on turf sticks. Tree belay.

## THE DOMES

The Domes is a fairly extensive system of rounded, slabby domes, short cliff faces and jagged blocks. It is located 3.5 km down the west shore of Harris Bay. You pass two other cliffs (with no ice routes) on the way there.

**Tumbling Dice, WI2, 45 m** (Dave Britnell, Danylo Darewych, Erik Dokic, February 10, 2013).

Located in an easy-angled half-gully above a jumble of big broken talus blocks. Starts with 12 m of very easy-angled ice that you can walk up (WI1), continues with 25-30 m of easy-angled rolling ice, and finishes with a more vertical exit bump on the left. Belay off a solid tree on top. A good climb for beginning leaders on ice.



Part of the Domes cliff system. *Tumbling Dice* is located in the snow-covered gully above the large talus blocks. *A Pleasant Surprise* is on the right side of the photo. February 10, 2013.

**A Pleasant Surprise, WI2, 5.5 14 m** (Danylo Darewych, Dave Britnell, February 10, 2013).

Located 50 m right of *Tumbling Dice* on the lakeside prow of the next rocky knoll. Starts at the lake. Climb 9 m of easy-angled ice with one vertical ice step to a corner crack, and then climb 4 m of rock up the corner to a tree belay on a small ledge on the left. Solid tool placements. Rock gear (cams) required.

**Take a Hike, WI3-, 30+ m** (Danylo Darewych, Robert Borotkanics, Jim Elzinga, March 15, 2013).

Located further right (north), around the corner of the last cliff, up the slope in a gully. Climb very easy angled ice bulges and snow for 15 m, then head up over a rock step in a notch, thrash through some mildly annoying shrubbery, then up a fat 5 m vertical ice pillar and finally exit over a tiny rock roof on turf sticks.



Left: Dave Britnell on *Tumbling Dice*, February 10, 2013. Middle: Danylo Darewych getting pleasantly surprised by the solid tool placements in the mixed corner. February 10, 2013. Photo by Dave Britnell. Right: Top section of *Take a Hike*. March 15, 2013.

## The Far East Cliff

The Far East Cliff is located 3.5 km down the east side of Bark Lake, directly opposite the Domes.



Left: *Roger the Shrubber*, Feb. 20, 2021. Middle and right: Danylo Darewych leading *Love and Hate*, Feb. 5, 2010 Photos by Janet Trost.

**Love and Hate, WI4-, 15 m** (FA Danylo Darewych, Janet Trost, Dave Brown, February 5, 2012).

Located just right of the cliff prow of the Far East Cliff. Climb up 4-5 metres onto a big iced-up ledge, then head 8-9 m straight up the vertical column of ice.

**Roundabout, WI3-, 19 m** (Danylo Darewych, Mark Kit, February 20, 2021).

Avoid all the verticality of *Love and Hate* by heading right after the initial ice step of that route and climbing an easier groove on the right edge of the ice flow. At the groove's end, step awkwardly left onto a ledge and climb a short ice step capped with a nasty, thrashy juniper bush exit (this exit was first climbed by Robert Borotkanics as a variation exit to *Love and Hate* in March 2013).

**Roger the Shrubber, WI4, 17 m** (FA Brent Elliot, Laura Duncan, February 20, 2021).

A narrow pillar located just left of the prow of the Far East Cliff in corner system. Climb up some easier angled ice to a stance left of a cedar. Either take the pillar straight on, or wander left onto the large rock. Screw(s) can be placed high from the rock. Then swing onto the pillar and head up. Thin ice on the FA necessitated a hand sized cam and blue Metolius in horizontals on the left. Squirm through the gap at the top and end at a big poplar. Fun! *BE*

**Canned Pasta, WI2, 12 m** (Johnny Nie, Danylo Darewych, Gwen Nguyen, February 5, 2017).

Located 200 m north of *Love and Hate*, just right of another, smaller, lakeside cliff system. Climb three short steps of ice with snowy ledges between them.



Johnny Nie on *Canned Pasta*, Feb. 5, 2017.