

Brule Lake Roadside - "Plan B"

- Derek Smalls

Tom Martinek and I found these flows in 2021. We'd just gotten skunked by the notoriously fickle ice on Brule Lake; despite it being mid-February, there was wide open water between us and the crag. Thankfully, Tom happened to catch a glimpse of some ice in the woods while driving past. We quickly ran in and found a wonderful Plan B for the day.

Tom and I took turns leading all the obvious lines in February 2021. Exceptions are noted.

Approach: Same approach as for Brule Lake heading north from Plevna on Mountain Road. About 950m after taking a left at the fork between Brule Lake Road and Mountain Road, keep an eye out for a trailer up the hill on the left. Immediately after, you'll see a narrow hydrocut on the right. Park about 80m past the hydrocut on the right just before the road starts bending slightly left. If you hit the swamp, you've gone too far. Hike straight in on the right (east) side of the road and you should see the cliff and ice flows in a minute or two.

The Left Side

Depending on the snowpack, the left side offers about 4-5 surprisingly tall lines with a range of interesting variations.

No Ice Left Behind – WI2 12m

A short vertical pillar at the left end leads to an easy steep snow slab above. Angle towards which ever tree suits your needs.

Centre Lanes – WI3- 18m

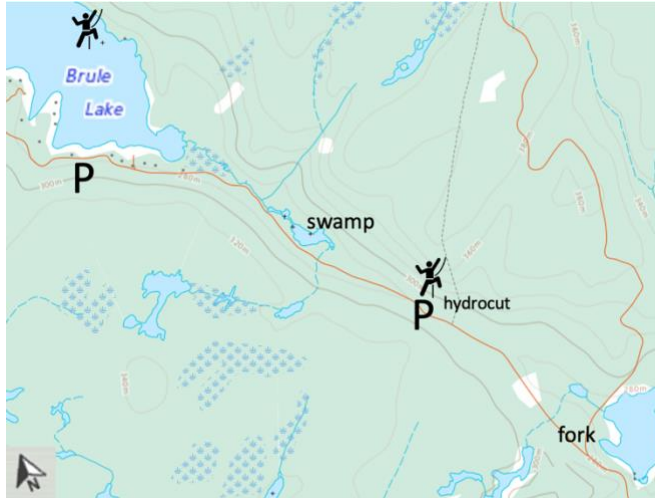
Multiple lines lead through the centre of the ice, each with a couple short vertical steps to an often-scrappy top out above.



Derek Smalls on 'Pinko' - Photo by Alex Atkin



The Left Side in thin shape but growing rapidly.



Her Right – WI3 20m

The distinct right-end of the flow. Choose to head up through the vert or work your way up the awkward bulges hugging the rock. A classic Ontario topout - complete with a little landscaping - guards the easy romp to the large central pine above.

Why Not? – WI2- M2 6m

Fifteen meters to the right is a short (very short) ice step. Eschew the anchor for an even shorter rock step to the dead pine.

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The condition of the Left Side depends greatly on the snowpack. The mild and low-snow conditions of 2021 enabled Tom to spot the ice from the road. In 2022 the flow was barely distinguishable through the trees. The steeper flows on the Right Side seem to be a bit more reliable. Up above, you might find a playground of short steps and pillars to ramble around on. Try not to get lost chasing the “good from afar...” ice sirens up there, though.



Tom Martinek rappelling the Left Side in 2021



Taylor Maavara surveying the conditions in 2022.



Short but enjoyable lines on the Right Side.



Sean Russell and Derek Smalls on the Left Side

The Right Side

What they lack in height, the Right Side routes make up for in vert and pure fun. A series of ice hoses feed 3-4 distinct lines depending on the season. The top-outs are often the hidden crux, but the sting-in-the-tail is short lived before tree climbing offers a bit of solace.

Forbidden Fruit – M4 8m

Toss on your buddy's T picks to torque your way up this fun and safely bolted mixed lined.
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Pinko – WI3- 12m

The leftmost ice offers some unique and fun movement between taps of ice that ooze out mid-cliff.

Left of Centre – WI3- 12m

The most prominent ice flow on the Right Side. Stem up either side or practice your pillar technique up the centre.

Centre Right – WI3 12m

A lone, narrow column of ice. At its top you'll have to pick a side.

Far Right – WI3- 14m

The luring obvious whaleback line which ends up dragging you farther right through rock trolls and lousy, unsupportive 'terf.'

60m farther to the right just before the hydrocut are a couple more lines that might be in if you still haven't scratched the itch.

Peepin' Tom – WI2+ 14m

Rock, paper, scissors for the lead and enjoy a fun rollick up and right to a convenient tree.
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