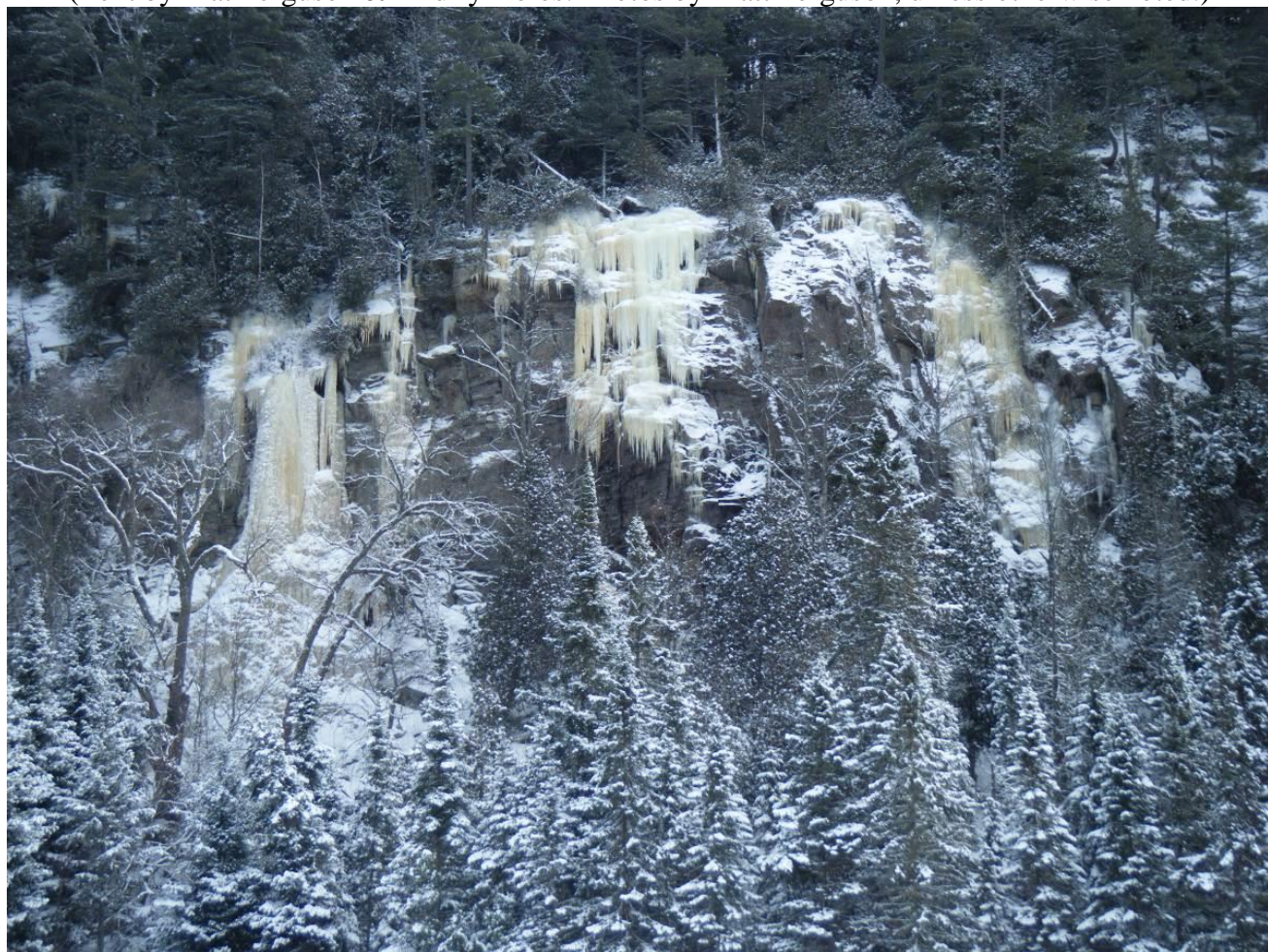


# TIMBER TRAIL Crag

(Text by Mat Ferguson & Andriy Kolos. Photos by Matt Ferguson, unless otherwise noted.)



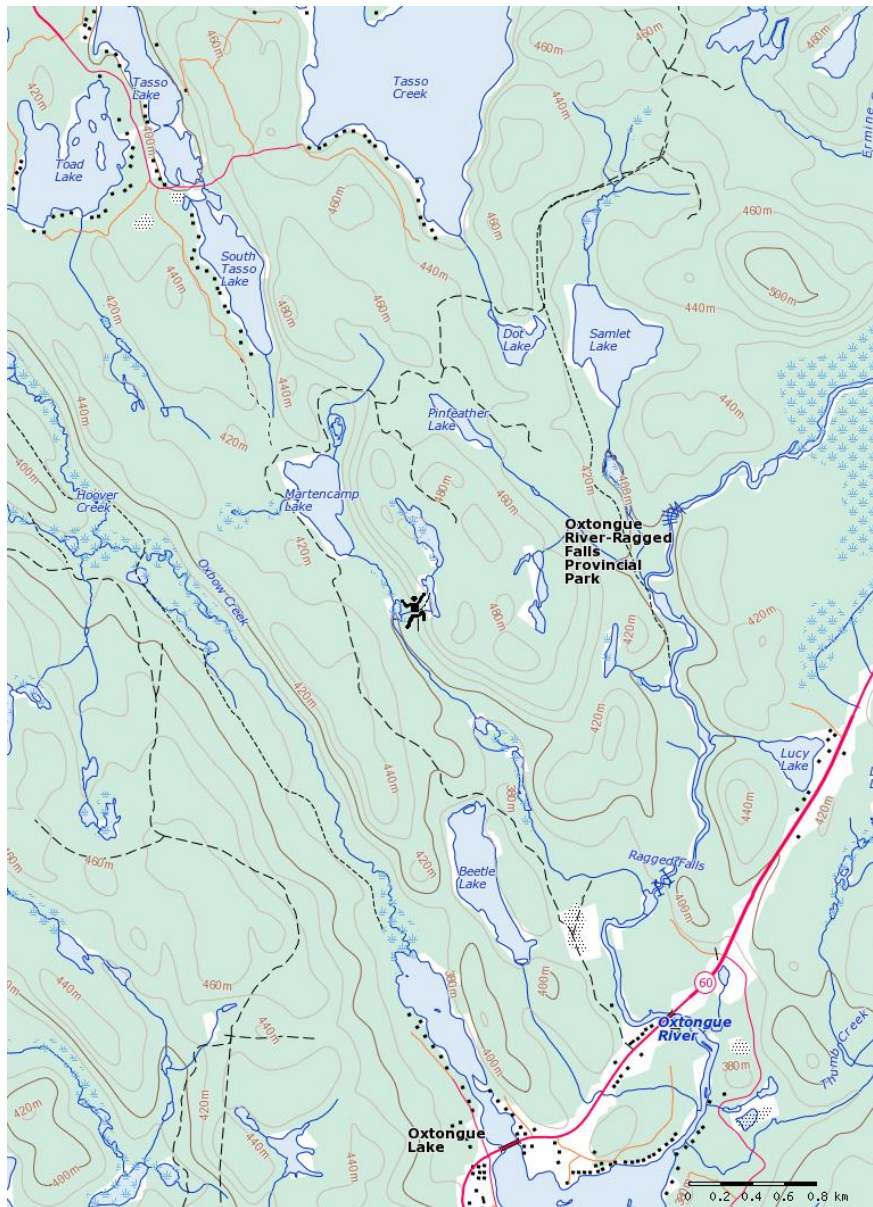
## History

The Timber Trail Crag was “first discovered” in the Winter of 2007. Matt Ferguson heard rumors of “iced up cliffs” in an area his brother was working as a forest harvester. Further reconnaissance with his ice climbing partner revealed potential and plenty of excitement. Crag development was a labor of love over the years, and was shared with an ever-growing community of climbers, for everyone to enjoy. The crag’s name reflects the flow of prime timber that was once harvested in this area and directed downstream. Timber trail is also the name of an abandoned business (log home resort) located at the start of the trail.

The mighty Oxtonque River flows nearby with Algonquin and Ragged Falls Provincial Parks just over the hills. Further to the North is the “South Tasso Lake Crag”. The route names are inspired by Neil Young’s work, especially his album “Broken Arrow”. The names suit the routes amazingly enough! These routes are all average height and topping out is usually through the thick stuff, but there is something about this crag that makes it a worthy adventure. It’s main sector features an amazing amount of high quality climbing in a compact area. And as you can see from the pic, there are still a few more lines to be had!

Location (Map: NRCan Topo – 31 E/7 )





The crag is located on a cliff 400 m south of Martencamp Lake.

**Directions/Approach** (Note: All distances and route length are estimates, they are not accurate. Also grades change yearly with weather conditions.)

**A:** The most direct way is from the south. Take Highway 11 South to Huntsville. Go East on Hwy 60 just past the community of Oxtonque Lake you will see the abandoned “Timber Trail” (log homes). Park here. Follow the “Timbertrail” for roughly 3.2 km until the ice becomes visible to the right. Continue down the hill (on the road) to a log landing (right hand side) where you can follow a switchback skid trail down into the valley. Cross the beaver pond, and climb up the creek flow to the main area. Watch for open water.

**B:** An alternative, with a slightly shorter approach hike, but more involved drive along back roads. From Huntsville take Hwy 60 to Limberlost Road (# 8 ). Follow to South Tasso Lake Rd. Take this road to the Camp Lake park spot. Follow South Tasso Lake cottage access Rd. to the end where it will turn into a snowmobile trail. Follow the trail to an intersection. Go right, following the trail through semi-vegetated forests and clearings, up the hill to the landing. Follow the skid track trail down into the valley, with the crag just visible through the trees. (3.0 km)

**Main Area** (Left to Right)

**Down By the River** WI3, 22m (Matt Ferguson, Byron Cochrane, Feb.6, 2013)

Located further left from *Baby...* hidden in the trees. Start up the left facing curtain to a ledge. Take the hollow pillar to the right to a small Hemlock for belay.

**Baby, What You Want Me to Do** WI 3+, 30m (Matt Ferguson, Byron Cochrane, Feb.6, 2013)

Located left of *Big Time* in the trees. Start up over a few narrow bulges and then into a steep tight awkward chimney (corner), Avoid the chandeliered pillar that goes nowhere and top out to the left over easier rolling ice. Belay from a leaning cedar. Many branches were removed up top to avoid a vertical bushwack.



*Down by the River* (2013)



*Baby, What You Want Me to Do* (2013)

**Big Time** WI3+, 30m (Byron Cochrane, Matt Ferguson, Jan 27, 2007)

The main yellow flow, the fattest climb at the crag, visible from afar and a magnet to all who come to the crag. This was the first line climbed, a real gem. Some years it is less than vertical (WI 3) and quite hollow. It flows in even the coldest weather.



*Big Time* (2007)



*Slip Away* (2011)



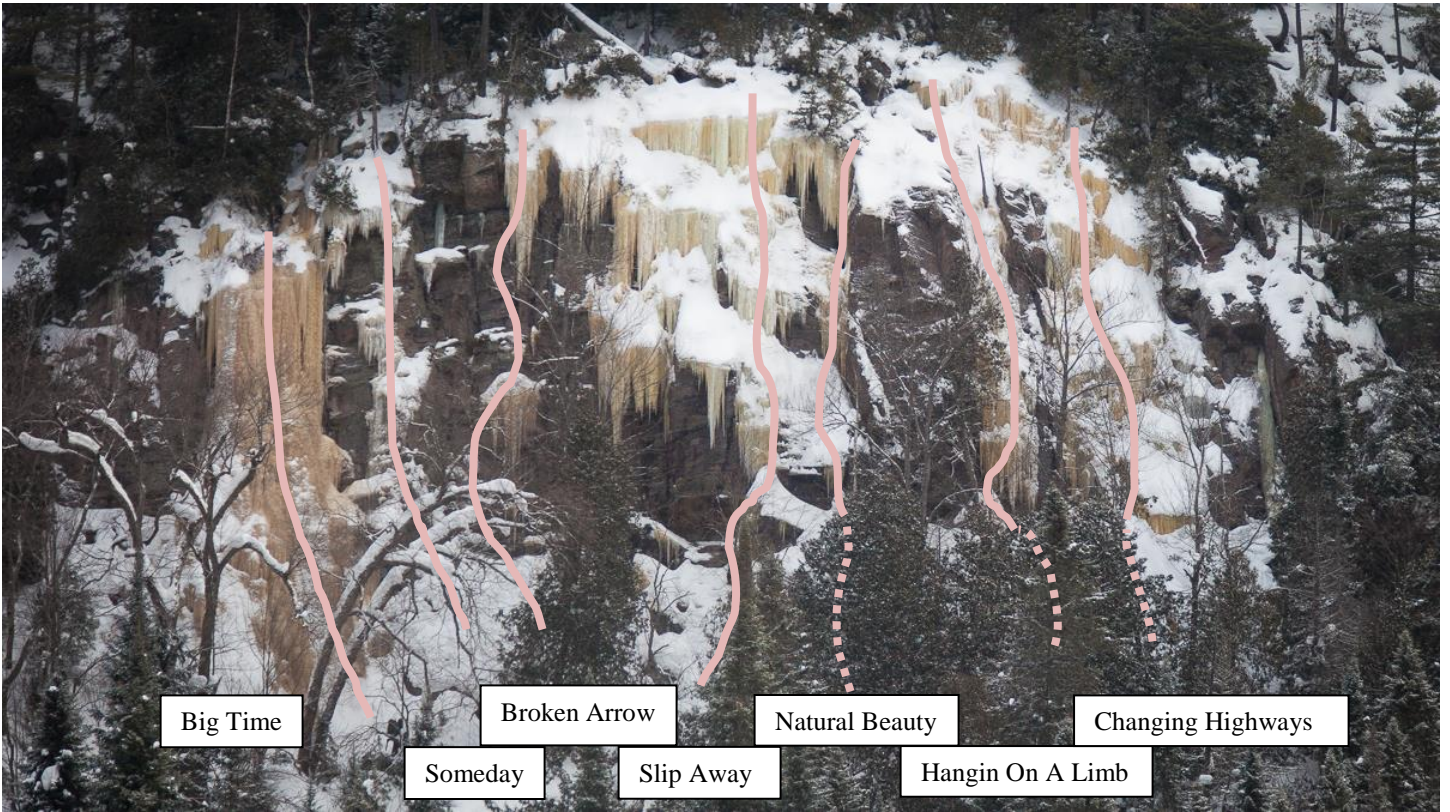


Photo by Peter Hoang.



Photo by Peter Hoang.



Photo by Andriy Kolos.

**Someday WI4, 25m**

Just right of Big Time, a set of thin pillar occasionally flows down the steep walls. Engaging.



**Broken Arrow M6+, WI5** (Daniel Martian, Peter Hoang, Matt Ferguson and Andriy Kolos, Feb. 21, 2015)

The route can be climbed in a wide variety of conditions from nearly dry and a free-hanger up top, to plenty of blobs that lead to a fat column at the top. 9 bolts protect the climbing.

**Slip Away WI 3, 25m** (Matt Ferguson, Justin Franklin, March 12, 2011)

Another classic of the crag. It's found to the right of a large steep blocky overhanging. The climb changes character though-out the season. Make a couple of awkward moves up a thin left facing ramp to get to the thicker ice. Rock gear may help here in thin conditions. Follow steep rolling ice to the top.

**Natural Beauty WI4+, 25m** (Daniel Martian, Joe Palma, Feb. 21, 2015)

Found to the right of *Slip Away* climb the left-facing corner through a thin, steep section exiting right through the gap. Bring rock gear. Arguably the hardest route in the area. Yup: there's more to it than just a number.



Changing Highways (2011)



Scattered (2012)

**Hangin on a Limb WI4, 25m** (Peter Hoang, Astrid Palantzas, Feb. 21, 2015)

Climb the corner and face around the buttress of the right of *Natural Beauty* and to the left of *Changing Highways*. Small to medium rock gear may help, prior to jumping on the curtain. Sweet climbing. Also known as *Shingle Me Timbers* in reference to the season's sole case of shingles!

**Changing Highways WI 3, 25m** (Byron Cochrane, Matt Ferguson, Jan 27, 2007)

Start up thin ice to gain the ice bulges. Follow the bulges (thin in places) either left or right to the top out. A large tree at the top makes for a great anchor.

**South End** – (300 m South of the main area)

**Scattered** (WI 3+, 18 m, Matt Ferguson, Jeff Heer, Feb.7, 2012) Climb up the gully over steep ice and over a bulge. Continue up easy ice to a belay tree. Way more of a pump than it looks.



*This Town* (2012)



*Music Arcade* (2012)

**This Town** (WI 3+, 18 m , Byron Cochrane, Matt Ferguson, Feb. 17, 2007)

Climb up a delicate curtain to easier rolling ice and top out to the left (avoiding the temptation to go right onto Music Arcade).

**Music Arcade** (WI 3, 18 m, Matt Ferguson, Jeff Heer, Feb.7, 2012)

Climb the thin hollow ramp (that sounds like a drum) up to more solid ice. Stubbies and rock gear was used on FA. This route is much more committing in thin conditions.

Daniel\_Martian memorizing his foot placements on *Natural Beauty* (2015).



Photo by Andriy Kolos.