

## **Cory's Groove \*\* 5.10a, 455 m, standard rack to 4" (several long slings)**

*Andy Genereux and Gord Rinke, June 2002*

This is a very good moderate "Modern Mixed Traditional" styled climb (bolt's mixed with lengthy sections of natural gear placements). It allows climber's to expand their repertoire to try a bigger route with generally good gear for protection. This line was an attempt by Andy Genereux to equip a moderate well-protected climb that would introduce mid-grade climbers to the bigger alpine rock climbs of the Rockies without the need to experience the steep learning curve found on many of the classic more traditional (bolder and run-out) routes. Having said that, this is "not a sport climb." There are several longer sections requiring extensive gear placements. Several 5.11 climbers have been critical of the gear rack recommendations as to, what they feel is overprotected bolting on the lower pitches. Simply stated this climb is not designed for these individuals. If this is your ability level you may need to skip some bolts or bring less gear to get your adrenaline fix. Overall the climbing is generally moderate with short crux sections are at the stated grades. The upper four pitches are significantly more sustained at the 5.8 and 5.9 grades and require the most natural gear be placed. The line follows a prominent left leaning gully on the Southwest face of Mt. Cory ascending a diagonal left-leaning line directly to the summit ridge. The climb is located on the right side of the South face in behind the main south-facing buttress. This prominent feature holds the obvious wide corner/crack climb *Cory Crack*. The climb starts directly below a prominent black streak on the upper wall and follows the edge of a bedding plane on the right side of the gully to the summit ridge.

Although this is a moderate alpine rock climb, its quite big to approach and climb don't take it too lightly. The upper pitches are sustained at the grade with many being a full 60 m in length. Thus requiring an extensive rack for the not so confident leader to adequately protect. The climb is given the 5.10a rating instead of 5.9 to error on the side of caution due to several mixed reviews on the actual difficulty of the climbing. A recommended rack for the introductory 5.9 climber wanting to push the envelope would be a complete set of cam's to 4", with doubles from 2"-3", set of micro cam's, and a single set of wires. Include 16 draws of which 4-5 should be shoulder length slings. Double ropes X 60 m are recommended to reduce rope drag on the climbing but are not required if using the third descent option. However should you need to retreat having two ropes will be essential.

**Caution:** Climbers should not attempt this route if a party is already on it! Due to the fact, that any rocks that get knocked off travel down the bottom 5 pitches of the groove/gully like a pinball machine. The rock overall is quite solid. However, that being said this is still the Canadian Rockies and one must always be mindful of loose fractured rock. Helmets are recommended. The second should attempt to clean off any loose material as they climb making sure no one is below. Also be aware the route becomes a watercourse on which the entire upper face drains into. If there is any significant rainfall you will be climbing in a stream!

**Approach:** To reach the climb, take the 1A highway west from Banff, after 5 km the road divides around a large tree island, from this point it is 1.1 km to a pullout on the South (left) side of the road to park. Head north across the road for approximately 200 m to power-line travel east (right) for 200 m then left, to head up grassy slopes. After a short time you will come to small v-shaped creek drainage. Keep this on your left or right and climb open treed slopes for approximately 50 minutes. When a series of broken cliff bands blocks the way, traverse into the creek drainage and scramble up the drainage directly to the base of the wall to start the climb. The approach time from the highway is 1.5 hours for an average party.

**P1: 5.5, 55 m.** From the top of the creek drainage climb a series of short shallow corners connecting ledges that generally head up and leftward past three spacious bolts to a larger ledge with a big spruce tree. Find the ring-bolt station on the right wall just past the spruce tree.

**P2: 5.7, 60 m.** Climb the edge of the bedding plane on the right side of the groove past 8 bolts. Enjoy moderate slab, with an occasional crux move over water polished rock, to a small stance with a ring-bolt belay.

**P3: 5.7, 60 m.** More of the same only slightly more sustained past 10 bolts to a stance on the edge of the bedding plane with ring-bolts.

**P4: 5.7, 60 m.** Start out protecting in a water runnel then up past a bolt to a ledge. The corner forks here follow the main groove the left option (the corner heading out right goes to the base of the feature known as the *Hover Dam*). Continue up the groove passing another 8 bolts to a ledge with another pair of ring-bolts to belay.

**P5: 5.10a, 55 m.** Continue up the moderate groove past 3 bolts to reach a small ledge. Above, make several hard steep stemming moves past three bolts to enter a shallow corner. Sustained 5.9 climbing follows the corner past several gear placements and 4 bolts. The semi-hanging ring-bolt belay is located on a small fin of grey rock on the left.

**P6: 5.7, 40 m.** Start up to the left of the belay. Traversing rightward on footholds directly above the belay to gain a small crack. Climb the fin up good grey rock past 5 bolts until it forms a narrow ledge traverse the ledge to reach a bigger scree-covered ledge with a tree. The bolted belay is found on the right wall directly across from this tree.

**P7: 5.9, 60 m.** Follow the corner up to two small trees at the base of a steep bit. Several, hard-moves overcoming this section to reach a bolt. Generally follow the corner with sustained traditional climbing mostly off natural protection to a ring-bolt belay with an awkward stance.

**P8: 5.8, 55 m.** Continue up the corner past 6 bolts and several gear placements. The climbing is sustained (some suspect rock). As the corner ends locate the ringbolt station at the lip directly above the last bolt below a large ledge with a big tree several meters to the right.

**P9: 5.10a, 50 m.** Climb easy 4<sup>th</sup> class ground past several blocky sections to an obvious right facing stem corner. Sustained 5.9 ascends the corner to a bolt, more difficult climbing follows the corner to where it eases past 3 more bolts to a good ledge with ring-bolt's.

**Note:** You may want to arrange an intermediate gear belay at the base of this final corner instead of using the belay station at the top of lower corner to reduce rope stretch, in case of a leader fall.

**Descent:** Allow 9 hrs to ascend this climb and approximately 3 hrs to descend from the top to back to the highway. There are three options to descend: **Option 1;** Rappel the route from ring-bolt stations (9 rappels) and requires that you have two X 60 m ropes. **Option 2;** Walk off north and scramble descend the gully towards the southeasterly direction with a couple of rappels two X 60 m ropes required. This option allows the possibility of returning to the base of the route to retrieve a pack. **Option 3;** Scramble up the ridge until it is possible to head down, off in a southwesterly direction doing a longer circumspect traverse that requires you carry all your stuff up the route as using this option you will not easily get back to the base of the climb to retrieve your gear. All three options for descending, take roughly one half hour less in time as you descend the order from options 1-3.

# Cory's Groove \*\*

5.10a, 455 m

standard rack to 4" (doubles 2"-3.5"),

draws 16 (5 long)



