

Bankhead Buttress

The Lost 500 (AKA Thanks Ray) 5.10c sport, 185m

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FFA alternative Pitch 2: Christine Mireault & Jenna Nodding

The route was put up over three days in 2011 and 2012. The first attempt was in early summer 2011, but the first ascent party had to give up already after the second bolt of the first pitch due to heavy rainfall. They returned in October and pushed all the way up to the end of the third pitch where once again they were forced to retreat, this time due to the cold temperatures. The remainder of the route was completed on a June evening one year later. The route was bolted on lead and recalls the logistics fiasco that ensued after a shipment of 500 bolt hangers was lost in the mail.

Approach: The easiest access for all climbs on *Bankhead Buttress* is via the drainage at its west end and a good trail that runs right along the base of the cliff. From the Lake Minnewanka road, continue past *Mothers Day Buttress* and the turn-off to *Two Jack Lake* on the right hand side. Find a prominent drainage and a gravel parking area just past it, on the north (left) side of the road. Distance from the Texas gate at the Trans Canada Highway is 1.1 km. Hike up the drainage, following a good trail on its east side. Continue through an open area to reach the base of the cliffs just to the right of the deep gully that separates it from *Mothers Day Buttress*. Follow the trail diagonally up and right below the cliffs to where it crosses a small scree gully and climbs the right-hand bank. The diagonal corner system of the climb, *Valley View*, comes into view at this point and a short distance higher up the trail begins to level off below the cliff. Scramble up a shallow, low-angled bay leading up to ledges as for *Valley View* and traverse over for about 30m to the left. Here you can easily spot the bolt line going up on the slab. **Time:** 35min from the car.

Gear: Bring 9 quick draws including two long runners for pitch two and four and a 60m single rope is recommended (Caution if using a 50m rope as some of the raps are a full 25m). Some parties may want to bring two additional 0.5 and 0.75 cams to protect the last few moves on pitch three (5.6/7).

Pitch 1: 5.9, 50m – Start on the ledge about 30m left of *Valley View*. This first pitch provides sustained slab climbing following the bolt line initially, first tending slightly left, then right, up to a ledge with a bolted station (9 bolts).

Pitch 2: 5.10b, 40m – Continue right of the station, underneath a roof. Then climb up the left leaning slab passing three bolts (10.b). Go left of the roof and climb easier ground passing three more bolts to a bolted belay station in a groove. (6 bolts)

Alternative Pitch 2: 5.10b, 40m – Start as above, trending right at the roof and traverse directly under it, passing two more bolts (5.10b). At the end of the roof, go up and around its right corner. Head left, passing two bolts and finishing at the bolted station in the groove. (7 bolts)

Pitch 3: 5.8, 50m – Traverse left on a small ramp into another groove (bolt) and make your way up the gully passing a short step (bolt) to reach the bottom of another steeper section (bolt). Climb up slightly left of the bolt (5.8) and follow the easiest way up underneath a bulge. Traverse left to the next bolted station. Gear may be used to protect the traverse (5.6/7). (6 bolts)

Pitch 4: 5.10c 40m – Climb up directly above the station, passing four bolts underneath a big roof. Traverse left making awkward moves onto a left leaning slab (bolt). Continue up left, passing two more bolts. Exit this section by turning right onto the slope above the roof. The last belay station is a few meters up and behind a big dead tree. (6bolts)

Descent: Rap is from the top of the route *Valley View*. Scramble up 4th and easy 5th class terrain on the ridge -following cairns and some old slings in trees- and traverse climbers right to the treed ledge. Immediately after the 5th class terrain keep an eye out for the last cairn. The rap station is not visible and a large tree can be used for lowering to locate the rap station for *Valley View*. Use caution if you use only a 50m rope as some of the raps are close to 25m --- tie a knot into both ends. Six 25m raps will get you to the first belay station of *Valley View*. Continue down to the base of *Valley View* rappelling ones more, or downclimb a few meters to the first station of *Lost 500* to rap down from here to the belay ledge where you started climbing (50m double ropes are required for this variation).

