

## Mix Meister \*\* M-5.11a, 740m

### Goat Slabs in the Bow Valley of Alberta

*F.F.A. Andy Genereux & Urs Kallen of entire route, July 2007*

*Pitches 1 through 14 established by Andy Genereux & Jeff Marshall, June 2006*

*Pitches 15 through 23 established by Andy Genereux rope solo July 2007*

This is a very good alpine rock route. That takes more or less a direct line from the lowest to the highest points up through roughly the center of the Goat Slabs face. East facing, this massive generally lower angled monolith keeps the sun from early morning till about five pm during the summer. Overall the rock quality is good to excellent with a few loose sections. The climbing is somewhat easier and less sustained on the lower pitches. Overall the climbing has consistent offerings around the 5.9 and mid-5.10 grade. That said this is an massive alpine rock climb in the Canadian Rockies and the route has not been manicured to achieve modern sport standards. Expect to encounter some loose rock. There are a couple of scree covered ledges to negotiate, thus wearing a helmets is strongly advised. Although rated mostly 5.10 with two short bits of harder 5.11a do not take this route lightly as there is a lot of climbing at the stated upper 5.10 grade. The upper half of the route has significantly more sustained climbing at the grades given. The leader must be competent and comfortable placing traditional protection at this standard. Several pitches require substantial clean gear placements while other are mostly bolt protected. Keep in back of your mind that the upper third of the route involves very steady climbing. This rig is big, I mean really BIG! Make sure to save some gas in the tank to finish this excellent longer adventure.

**Climbing:** Competent parties will require 8-12 hrs to ascend the route. Double rope techniques are very useful to avoid drag on the longer pitches. This route was established ground up in the Modern Mixed Traditional Style. All bolts drilled on lead, no hooks or aid were used. This modern mixed protection style employs both bolts and clean gear as the rock dictates. Climbers will require a substantial standard rack of gear to 4" (recommend double set of cams from 0.5"- 3" include singles 3.5" and 4", 2 sets of micro cams, a set of wires along with 16-23 draws of which several should be shoulder length). Double ropes techniques are very useful to avoid drag. This technique allows for some pitches to be combined. **Note: Having two-ropes will prove invaluable if retreat is required!** A single rope will suffice for leading only if the route is being pitched out as shorter pitches as described below but expect the crux pitch (22) to give you fits if having only one rope because of rope drag, in this case plan to break it in the middle. Having only one rope will make retreat very difficult, expensive, and time consuming! Plan accordingly bring a headlamp, water, extra layers and some food on the route. This adventure is a huge day out!

**Descent:** There are four options. Using the recommended option perfect conditions allow a minimum of 1.5 hours to get off using undulating scree ledges heading southward, eventually descending down the **Coire Dubh Gully** if your bring everything up the route. Keep your harness on and plan on having to deal with a short rappel as the gully squeezes in above water worn slabs on this decent option. Unless you know the way, down climbing this slick section is not recommended and is significantly harder than 5.4 stated grade depicted in the Bow Valley Rock guide. On a recent repeat of *Mix Meister*, our descent down the Coire Dubh Gully we encountered it running with water and it was dark. This required that we make three 60m rappels in order to safely reach the trail on the skiers right of the drainage. These extra rappels added another 40 minutes to our descent time.

The **Loder Peak** descent option is straight forward heading south down the long undulating ridge with several 4th class down scrambling sections. The ridge crest is located about 40m above the finish of this climb. Allow at least 2.5 hrs for this lengthy option. Allow more time if no one gives you a ride back to the parking lot which is still 3.5 Km's to the east (skiers Left) once you arrive back at the 1A Highway.

The third descent option is down the **Goat Buttress Gully**, found to the north of this climb. This option is ugly and not recommended. It potentially involves nasty bush-whacking and several rappels off trees.

**The fourth descent option:** The route can be rappelled from the top of pitch 22. However, this rappel option **requires two 60m ropes** in order to connect the ring-bolt rappel stations. Several of the rappels are nearly a full 60m make sure to have knots at the end of your ropes. All rappel points on the route are off ring-bolt stations. An average time to rappel this climb for a party of two from the top is 3.5 - 4 hours to complete the fourteen long rappels. If all goes well! This rappel option is not recommended as a standard course of action unless you need to bail before reaching the top.

**Approach:** Allow roughly about 1.5 hours for the approach from parking. Older approach and descent details are available in the now out of print **Bow Valley Rock** guidebook on **pages 68 & 69** this climb starts just left of **climb H** on the photo on page 69 in that guide.

**Current Approach:** Park in the parking lot located on the south side of the 1A Highway across from the Exshaw landfill access. Approximately 5 kilometers east of the small mountain town of Exshaw. Cross the 1A highway to the north and skirt the landfill site on the east side. From the landfill entrance head north along the outside of the east (right-hand) fence line going to the north end of the site. Here traverse the fence line along the entire site going west. At the northwest corner work south along the fence on the west side for about a 100m to reach a good trail. Take this trail heading west and after several minutes the trail then heads northward roughly parallel the the Goat Slabs feature. After another 10 minutes till you end up in some open meadows below the route. From the meadows locate the big yellow roof feature about 40m above the base of the wall roughly near the center of the face. Head uphill for 25 minutes to arrive just left of this roof feature. There is no trail to the base.

The route starts directly below the obvious right facing corner which meets the left edge of a big yellow roof (**Note: Much of this yellow roof feature fell off a few years ago with massive boulders and rail car sized blocks located 20m right of the start of the route.**). This big yellow roof feature was plainly visible in 2007 (less so now) from the meadows below this section of Goat Slabs. From the lowest point at the base of the cliff locate a shallow right facing corner with bolts visible starting about 5m above.

**P1) 5.10a, 28m.** Climb the right facing shallow corner to a ledge and traverse left for 3m to a bolted belay.

**P2a) 5.8, 23m** Climb directly above the belay on bolt protection angling slightly left to a bulge. A thin move to gain the upper slab which leads to a small ledge to belay from two widely spaced bolts.

**P2b) 5.9, 28m.** The first version for this pitch it moves left past the spruce tree then angle leftward up to a groove with bolt protection on the left wall. Sustained stemming leads up the shallow corner to the belay with two widely spaced bolts above a small ledge.

**P3) 5.10b, 37m.** Make a few hard thin moves past the right bolt on the belay, then traverse left to a bolt, several sustained slab moves upward past two bolts. Work up through bulging ground to enter a gully left of an obvious larger spruce tree. Easy climbing over loose rock in the gully past two bolts to the belay.

**P4) 5.7, 30m.** Climb scrappy rock up a corner and crack directly above the belay, to a belay on the left.

**P5) 5.10b, 30m.** Climb the wall just left of an obvious hand crack, move right into the crack at two thirds height as the crack ends angle up and right across a slab past bolts to an overlap. At a bolt on the overlap, here climb directly up to reach a ring bolt belay.

**P6) 5.10b, 27m.** Climb left of the belay to reach two bolts then make a delicate traverse back right to a third bolt and then move up to a right facing corner. Steep moves climb the face just right of the corner to reach easier climbing in the corner above. Move right 3m on a small ramp to a two bolt belay with a small

ledge. **Note:** If combining this pitch with the next pitch it's somewhat better to stay in the corner system which protects well on gear to join up with the original pitch 7 about 20m higher this option reduces drag.

**P7) 5.10a, 27m.** Climb up the stepped slab above the belay moving left into a shallow right facing corner. An awkward move over a bulge gains easier ground with some suspect rock. Climb up and then left to a short corner. Step up and around left again to a small ledge to belay off hidden ring bolts.

**P8) 5.10a, 37m.** Mount the belay block and make an awkward move onto the wall above moving left past a bolt. Steady face climbing leads to a pod. Interesting crack moves are required to gain the broad corner above. Stem the corner to easier climbing. The belay is located on the left at a small rock step.

**P9) 5.10b, 28m.** Climb up to a higher ledge to clip a bolt, make thin moves up and past a second bolt to the left. Move up to a overhanging wave of rock. Make a rising rightward traverse below this feature to a blob of rock and surmount the wave past a hidden bolt (long slings required) to enter a corner groove above. Climb this groove moving left at the top to a bolt then directly up to a big ledge to belay.

**P10) 5.10c, 45m.** Climb the face above the belay on superb rock. Move past 5 bolts moving rightward past a fin of rock to a good cam placement. Work up an back leftward to gain the base of steep shallow right facing corner. Sustained climbing up the corner and hand crack to the belay.

**P11) 5.10c, 25m.** Climb up to a short corner left of the belay, make thin moves up onto a step. Move left and upward into a shallow right facing corner. Climb the corner until reaching two closely spaced bolts. Belay from the higher bolt along with gear in the crack or keep going to combine it with pitch 12.

**P12) 5.10a, 30m.** Continue up the corner until it peters out at a steep bulge move left past a micro cam placement and continue more or less straight above past a couple more bolts to reach a short corner. At the top of this corner move right past a bolt then cross a scree ledge 3m right to reach the belay.

**P13) 5.10b, 45m.** Delicately face climb past two bolts moving up and right to a third. Here make a thin move into a small groove with some suspect rock. Move up and left to the left edge of a roof. Turn the roof and work up and right onto a easy scree ramp past trees to a corner. Climb the corner moving right onto a slab, zig zag past two more bolts to reach a good ledge to belay.

**P14) 5.10c, 28m.** Traverse right 3m along the ledge to a bolt. Make a committing step right across a broad groove. Burly movement up and right to a second bolt. Then work up and left back into the corner. Climb this feature until it disappears. At a third bolt make an weird devious move right and then climb up and left past a bolt to a ledge moving left again, then work up to a hidden ringbolt belay above a ledge.

**P15) 5.10b, 45m.** Move up and right behind a large block to a bolt. Enter a shallow groove/corner system and climb this intermittent system more or less straight up on mostly clean gear with a couple of bolts showing the way. Eventually you reach an airy suspended perch, a large block wedged between the main wall and a pinnacle with a three bolt belay. This pitch can be a complicated read to find the best way.

**P16) 5.10d, 35m.** Move up and right from the belay to enter a left facing corner system. Steady upper 5.10 climbing follows the stepped corner up and leftward to a bulge. Off micro cam's pull a burly lie-back sequence to reach a bolt. Climb to the top of the corner and then take a steep burly flake (hand crack) on the left through a bulge up to the ring bolt belay.

**P17) 5.10d, 25m.** Work out some thin moves directly above the belay to reach a good bucket to clip the bolt. More sustained climbing past a short crack to reach a second bolt. Easy third class climbing crosses a sloping scree ledge moving a bit left to a bolt belay at the base of a V-shaped dihedral located on the white band of rock above. **Note:** There is a good cam placement 2m right of the belay that should be used to provide a directional for the second and helps avoid the rope pulling rocks off the scree ledge.

**P18) 5.10d, 35m.** Move up past a bolt to enter the left leaning corner. Awkward sustained movement to ascend the V-shaped corner (good gear to 3") to a bolt on a steep slab section above. Climb intermittent seams past a bolt and gear placements to reach a ring bolt belay.

**P19) 3rd, 25m.** Scramble up stepped scree ledges to locate a two-bolt belay on the next band of rock above and about 10m right of a large spruce tree.

**P20) 5.10d/11a, 50m.** Climb up and left to a bolt. Very sustained face climbing up and trending left while passing five more bolts overcoming three overlapping slabs to enter a shallow groove. Climb the groove moving right into a obvious corner and crack system. Climb the corner for 25m then move 2m left to a small hidden ledge to belay off ring bolts. **Caution:** Do not continue up the corner to the next bolt (8m above) which becomes visible from where you need to move left to the hidden belay.

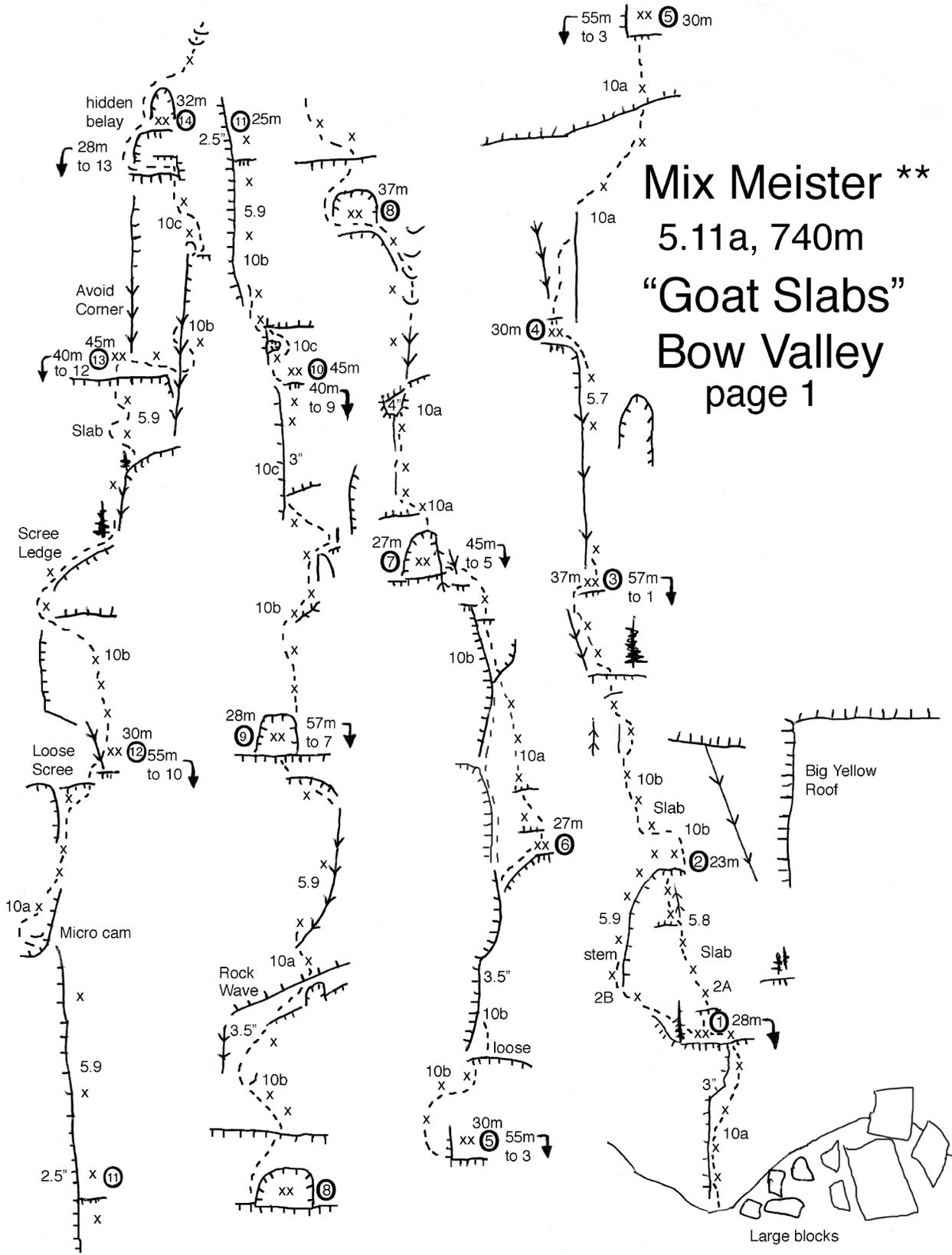
**P21) 5.10b, 20m.** Work right and continue up the corner to the bolt, then angle up and leftward past a second bolt to a awkward small leaning roof. A critical smaller cam placement protects this committing sequence to reach a hidden bolt above the small roof. Move up to a another bolt then move right on a sloping grass covered ledge to a semi hanging bolted belay.

**P22) 5.11a, 45m.** Move up and left to tackle an overhanging hand crack. Climb this to a V-shaped corner. Awkward at first, sustained movement past two bolts to an easier ramp leading to a small pillar. (**Note:** Potential here to form a mid-pitch belay using the lower bolt and gear in the corner to the left to avoid rope drag). Climb the face direct using steep thin moves past two bolts or use the shallow corner to the left to reach the upper bolt to then enter a left facing corner above a small roof. Climb the leaning stepped corner moving left on an overlap to a second shallow corner over sustained upper 5.10 movement to the top and a ring bolt belay. **Note:** The final technical pitch on this climb, be aware it is very sustained and the crux of the climb. Double rope techniques really help with drag on this long complicated pitch.

**P23) 4th, 35m.** A final easy romp heading 20m out right on a sloping scree ledge then up through a rock band past some trees onto an open shoulder has you off.

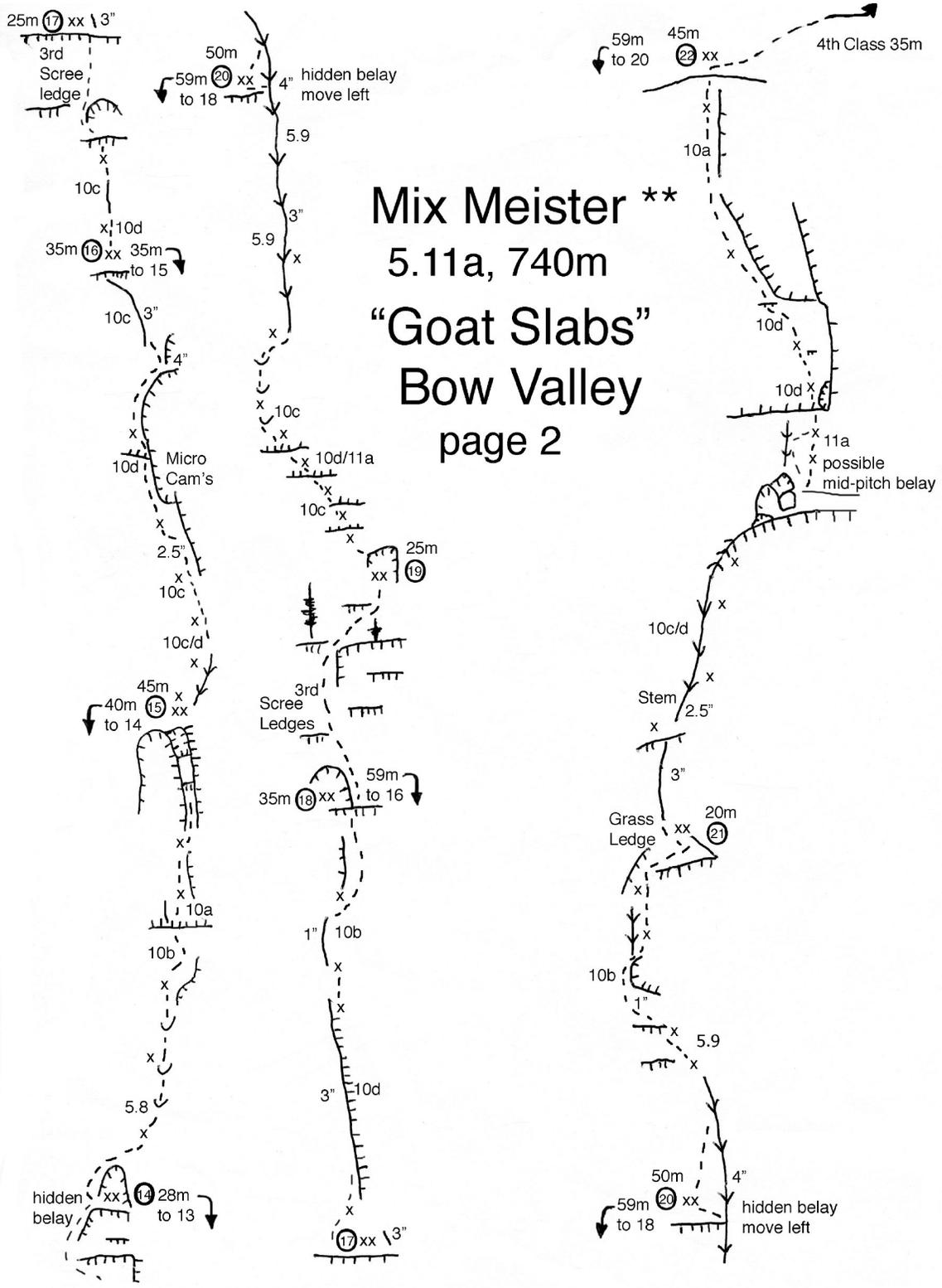
If you are looking at combining some of the pitches. **I would recommend linking: P2 & P3, P4 & P5, P6 & P7, P11 & P12, P16 & P17, P18 & P19.** These will all be close to 60m pitches if linked and will require competent double rope techniques and several long slings be used. **Do not attempt to combine any pitches other than those stated above. You will either not have enough rope or you will be dealing with horrendous rope drag!**

**Descent:** The recommended descent is down the **Coire Dubh Gully** option. From the top of the route on the open shoulder roughly 40m below the ridge top. From here head south (climbers left) on a leftward traversing descent along major steep scree ledges (no trail). Generally stay close to the base of the upper wall for the first half. Trending mostly downward but over somewhat undulating slopes picking the easiest path. This mostly descending traverse covers about 1.5 kilometers heading south in order to reach the Coire Dubh drainage. Once at the Coire Dubh gully, scramble down 4th class for about 80m and locate a ring bolt rappel anchor on the skiers left in the gully. Rappel for up to 60m and then overcome more 4th class down scrambling to locate a trail on the skiers right of the lower drainage below the stepped rock section. Take this trail back to the landfill site and follow the west side perimeter fence back to parking. Allow 1.5 - 2 hours. **Caution:** More rappels may be required if the gully/drainage is running with water.



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Large blocks



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