

## Old Man Rules \*\*\* S-5.10c, or 5.11a, 335m

**Gear:** (70m rope mandatory, 15 draws, include 3 shoulder length slings)

*Andy Genereux, August 2018, ground up on-sight rope solo (pitches 1-5)*

*Andy Genereux & Andrew Brash, September 2018 (pitches 6-8)*

*Andy Genereux, September 2018 rope solo (pitches 9-10)*

This moderate multi-pitch sport climb is found on the east facing rock face located on the right-hand side of the big bowl at the upper left of McGillivray Slabs. All hardware was installed on lead no hooks or aid were employed. In the summer season the route stays in the sun for most of the day. By September only getting early morning sun until about noon. Plan your clothing for the weather extremes as it can be decidedly cool in the shade and the route is reasonably big. The line follows a rather direct path up a clean looking rock found roughly 50m left of the route **Pixie** detailed on photo on **page 280** of the now extinct **Bow Valley Rock** guidebook. The route has only had rudimentary cleaning while lead bolting during the first ascent but overall houses quite clean solid rock by Rockies standards. The two harder pitches on pitches 6 & 9 have mid-5.10 or 5.11- options in both cases the left hand option hosts the easier technical grade giving the route a consistent 5.10 grading overall. The harder options on these two pitches are both excellent so possibly parties will want to try both options if time permits. The route rappels well from ring-bolt stations, **Caution: Climbers be aware** that on several the **rappels are a full 35m** and having knots in the rope ends would be very prudent if using a single 70m rope during descent.

**Approach:** From the lower gravel parking area at the *Lac Des Arcs* (Heart Creek) overpass on the south side of the *Trans Canada Highway*. Head west on a good trail/road which more or less a parallel path to the highway until arriving under the power lines just before a redirect in the power lines (large support cables on two huge poles with orange bases on the support cables) which comes roughly ten minutes out from parking. Thirty metres before this redirect in the power lines take a left on a faint trail up hill (south). Take this pathway angling in a southeasterly direction, after a few hundred metres the trail generally follows and traverses the steep slope on the west bank of the creek drainage. At times it can be a bit of a scramble and bit hard to find the best path but at all costs do not descend into the creek drainage itself until you are about 100m out from entering the base of the big bowl like amphitheater. Here the trail takes a steep down path to enter the creek drainage. The creek bed flattens out here, taking approximately 40 minutes from parking to this point. Now go roughly 70m up the creek drainage until a small scree slope/drainage gully on the right/west side is reached. Scramble uphill in this drainage gully for approximately 30m, to reach the base of the main rock face. Arriving at a narrow staging area at the base of the wall with **single belay bolt** above.

You now get to climb what I feel is a rather fine slabby outing with very fun bolt protected multi-pitch climbing with short lived crux sections. It's an excellent multi-pitch for those climbers wanting a less serious adventure with good climbing and generally good rock overall.

**P1: 5.10a, 35m.** Climb directly up the wall past a small vegetated ledge staying on good rock skirt the left facing corner and continue up ribs of solid rock to a ringbolt belay.

**P2: 5.10a, 32m.** Move into the shallow groove directly above the belay. Continue up the groove/corner to an overlap below a large roof to ringbolts to belay.

**P3: 5.10b, 35m.** Step up on to the overlap and make a rising traverse left to a corner leading up the left edge of the roof. Climb steeply to reach the second of two closely spaced bolts then make an awkward sequence left before moving up onto a small ledge. Now angle slightly rightward on excellent slab climbing past four bolts to reach the belay (rappel is 30m).

**P4: 5.10b, 35m.** Directly above the belay connecting several challenging slab sections past a shallow leaning corner to a ringbolt anchor in a small sentry box.

**P5: 5.10a, 32m.** Above the left side of the belay move over a bit of broken ground to enter a shallow right leaning corner. Above the corner climb the face directly to a small ledge and the belay.

**P6: 5.10b/c or 5.10d/11a, 35m.** Move up to a steep overlap 10m directly above the belay. Climb through the steep section with awkward layback moves up a short corner past two closely spaced bolts. Move left to gain the slab above and move up onto a sloping platform. From here there are two options; **Option 1:** The left version, **(5.10b)** climbs the wide flaring corner/crack for three bolts then angles up and rightward across slabs to the belay. **Option 2:** The right hand version goes at **(5.10d/11a)** climbs directly up the slabby face. Make a couple hard moves on friction just past a tricky undercling opposition section. Afterwards the difficulty eases, moving right to the belay.

**P7: 5.9, 35m.** Climb above the belay connecting patches of good slabby climbing broken by a few small ledges to reach a belay, (semi-hanging).

**P8: 5.10a, 35m.** Climb off the left side of the belay up a short corner. Connect together several sections of good slabs up to a right leaning corner, Work up the corner with delicate footwork on the slab past three bolts to gain a grassy ledge with small spruce trees and ringbolts to belay.

**P9: 5.10b or 5.11a, 35m.** The money pitches on this route. Both offer exceptional climbing value at the grade. Both options start up the rounded arête above the belay for 15m past three bolts over compact slabby face. **Option 1, 5.10b:** After the first three bolts traverses left towards the obvious right facing leaning corner. Climb the corner stemming between the slab and the wall of the corner, 7m from the top angling up right to the last bolt on the right hand bolt line just below the anchor. **Option 2, 5.11a:** Continuously challenging slabby face climbing weaves a path up the right hand bolt line using thin water runnels to overcome the steep wave of bulletproof limestone then continues up on steady thin friction for 20m to a ringbolt belay. From this top anchor either rappel the route or climb P10 to utilize the walk-off.

**P10: 5.4, 25m.** If choosing the **walk-off option** it is recommend leaving the rope on. From the belay at the top of pitch 9, precariously continue up the loose scree slope for 2m moving left and working up the loose slope for 25m until you arrived above the next band of rock to belay off a tree. The walk-off then skirts climbers right and generally downhill from there.

**Descent Options:** Either take the recommended **Rappel Option: from top of pitch 9, 70m Rope** is required. (takes approximately 1.25 hours for a party of two to complete the 9 rappels, then allow another 40 minute walk back to parking) or if you have no gear at the base of the wall, there is a slightly quicker but more complicated **Walk-off Option:** working off to the climbers' right/west along the top of the McGillivray Slabs. There is no defined trail and this option is a bit tricky to work out the best path, Takes in some steeply treed terrain to connect together several small rock ridges until it is possible to descend at the western terminus of McGillivray Slabs (further west than one thinks!) and then works down a faint path to eventually reach the main base trail. Head east (skiers right) on this base trail 20 minutes back to parking area, roughly 1.5 hours required for this somewhat complicated option if the right choices were made.



