

## Fall Update 2024

### Moose Mountain Crags

During the **summer of 2023**: The Ing Mine Parking lot used for access to the Moose Mountain Crags saw major improvements. It was expanded to double its former size and paved. This construction work temporarily closed access to parking lot for four months. Last September parking was fully re-opened. This new deluxe expanded parking lot was still barely able to handle weekend traffic volumes from bikers, climbers, and hikers. Make sure to have your K-Country permit for parking. Be aware that this yearly fee along with writing tickets for those who have not paid is how the government plans to pay for these new parking upgrades.

**History:** This is the closest major rock climbing area to the City of Calgary. The lands here have been explored extensively for oil and gas for nearly a hundred years. The access road that resulted from this resource development and access to the ice caves was unfortunately closed to the public for vehicle access about 19 years ago. This closure has resulted in climbers now having to either ride a bike or walk in along the gravel access road to reach the various climbing sectors. The oil industry still actively uses this access road for work vehicles and they are supposed to maintain 30 km speed limit, be aware this is often not the case. Alberta Environment stated that this road closure was for public safety reasons. In reality it was to try and reduce public access and the associated problems of alcohol plagued party's and under equipped and inexperienced caver's and day tripper's into the very popular ice caves. The reality is that this closure improved matters for resource extraction but it's arguable, whether it improved public safety to any degree. Maybe the opposite was achieved. To this end the old parking lot formally located below the ice caves was moved several kilometers eastward to its present location (Ing Mine Parking). The old parking area, now houses a large compressor station to help push oil and gas products along the pipelines buried beside the road. **Note:** This oil and gas production field is very sour and can contain high concentrations of H<sub>2</sub>S (hydrogen sulfide) which is very poisonous. This product also causes accelerated corrosion of the pipelines and valving. This fact should be kept in mind if during the walk or bike ride into the area you smell an odor of rotten eggs. If this occurs immediately try to get up wind and uphill of potential leaks if possible.

Over the past fifty years the ice caves have been a huge attraction for recreational enthusiasts. Recent years have witnessed an explosion of mountain biking trails in the area. This bike activity has added considerably to parking issues. Rock climbing at these expansive venues has sputtered on and off since the mid-seventies. There was an traditional multi-pitch route put up on the east facing wall to the right of the main ice cave in the late seventies. This route is virtually never climbed today. As well there are also a few ice climbs that form in the area. In the late seventies early eighties there was sporadic development with a few obscure traditional rock climbs established. Also the area being used for mountain rescue practice, mainly off the "Rescue Ledge" found at the right hand end of the Moose Patch Right sector.

Although the **Moose Mountain Crags** are the closest climbing to Calgary, amazingly they still offer an abundance of unexplored rock. Today these extensive cliffs now have well over 400 established climbs across 20 sub-sectors. However, there remains several Km's of cliff line with no climbing development..! The modern technical rock climbing (sport climbing or bolt protected climbing) available in the area today has resulted from a combination of re-development of old shunting (top-rope) routes left behind by the late Larry Ostrander. As well as significant new terrain being established for lead climbing. Over the past three decades over 360 new independent routes outside this original scope by Larry Ostrander have been established. To date about 70 of Ostrander's old top rope problems have been resurrected into lead climbs. After forty years of on and off again activity Moose Mountain is finally coming to the attention of local climbing enthusiasts for its massive potential and being a very worthwhile climbing destination in its own right..!

Back in the late eighties. Climber Larry Ostrander an early pioneer of this area. Back then he personally felt the rock quality at these somewhat shattered venues would never clean up enough for it to be safe for lead climbing. Thus he purposely built most of his early projects to employ top rope "shunting" techniques (no protection bolts). Over several years the area sort of became his personal outdoor climbing gym. Two venues in particular were amongst his favorite locations to apply this craft. The Dust Bowl and Larry's Gym. Many of his original anchor bolts used two-chain-link segments with washers below and above, any mid-pitch and base bolt anchors used a double chain-link with this washer system for hangers. This style of hangers were only used to hold the rope into the steep terrain and were never intended for lead protection. Nearly all of Larry's early bolts were 4" carbon steel, either wedge-bolts or in a few cases shorter hand drilled self-drive style bolts. All of his original bolts required replacement or repositioning for lead climbing protection during redevelopment of his early routes. Thirty plus years of corrosion and mixed metals added into the mix to see this older fixed hardware replaced. Larry's shunting system required use of both top and at times base anchors to tension his rope for his shunting methodology to work over the steepest terrain. Larry used sections of steel cable or fixed static rope connecting together many of the top anchors where his projects were concentrated at areas like the Dust Bowl or Larry's Gym. This allowed him to rappel into a top anchor fixing his rope to the wall as he descended the intended climb. Then climb back up completing a pitch on shunt protected top-rope (self belayed) then he simply move

sideways along the fixed cable or rope to the next top anchor. Then repeating the process for his next lap in his workout. Unfortunately, Larry died in the spring of 1993 at the Dust Bowl. There is a plaque memorializing his tragic passing on the small buttress separating Larry's Gym from The Painted Wall called the **Memorial Wall**. Larry's death was a huge loss to the local climbing community. He had been one of the leading developers of the local cragging scene during the mid-eighties until his death. Barrier Bluffs in the Kananaskis was a cliff largely developed by Larry and his main climbing partner back then David Dancer. The Moose Mountain Crag played a significant role in placing Larry at the leading edge of technical difficulty in local sport climbing revolution back in the day. Starting around 1987 Larry would drive his Westphalia van up the Canyon Creek access road and camp for several days at a time building and climbing his top-rope shunting projects. He predominately worked and climbed at Larry's Gym and the Dust Bowl, along with several other obscure lines spread around the valley. Many of the first 5.12's in the Rockies were pioneered at the Dust Bowl but nobody knew of their existence. Back then the place virtually belonged to Larry and a huge debt is owed for his early development efforts and vision for this area.

In 1994 about a year after Larry passed, Andy Genereux came into the valley and established his first new route at the Moose Mountain Crag that spring. In a completely new sector he called **The Moose Patch**. His first effort was an on-sight ground-up affair with a power drill that resulted in three lead falls due to rock failure while establishing the route. The resulting *The Moose Is Loose* \*\* S-5.11b became one of the very few climbs to be pushed ground-up at these fragmented cliffs. From this first experience Genereux learned the hard way, what the "Moose" had on offer regarding rock quality. Over the next 10 years he went on to redevelop **Larry's Gym** into a lead climbing venue paying homage to his friend while adding several independent lines of his own into the mix. Then in 1995 he started working on trying to transform the **Dust Bowl** shunt projects into a venue for lead climbing. The first re-developed route of Ostrander's, Andy called it *Larry's Groove* 5.12a. Through that spring he reworked three of Larry's old routes at the Dust Bowl and added three completely independent new lines of his own. He also built the access trail, and encouraged other climbers to join the party (for several years not many took up the challenge). Along with the re-development of Larry's shunt problems at the **Dust Bowl** and **Larry's Gym**, Genereux kept on methodically building routes in the area over the next nearly 30 years. Almost single handedly developing several new sectors. They include: **Morning Side Crag, The Painted Wall, Spider Brook, The Moose Patch** and most recently adding **Beach Front Buttress, Road Side Attraction Crag, The Bench, Creekside, The Goat Cafe and The Northern Shield**.

Through his tenacity over the years, Genereux has been consistently been one of the biggest contributors to the Moose Mountain cragging scene and it's development. Having established well over 270 independent pitches along with extensive redeveloped of many of Larry Ostrander's old top rope shunt problems into modern day lead climbs. For him and other contributors an average pitch to develop requires somewhere between 7-14 hours to clean the scrappy rock and place the needed fixed hardware for safe lead climbing. These building efforts hopefully renders the remaining rock to be reasonably solid along with adequate and safe bolt protection. Hopefully, the end result ends with an excellent safer rock climbing experience at these cliffs. Despite the nature of the fractured stone and the extensive prep work required, the climbing at the Moose Mountain Crag has constantly proven too be a much better climbing experience than things first appear when gazing up from below the crags.

With continued prodding from Genereux, in 2000 **The Dust Bowl** finally saw some other climbers start to pick up Larry's torch bringing in the new millennium. Daren Tremaine, Roger Chayer and Marcus Norman started cleaning and re-bolting several of Larry's original shunt problems into lead climbs. Several years later Nigel Slater, an Ex-pat Brit, had one of the biggest impacts turning over twenty of these earlier shunt climbs originally developed by Larry Ostrander into demanding 5.12 leads making this venue into one of the premier harder winter crags for Calgary-based rock climbers. All of this development would not have been possible without Ostrander's original vision and his belief that the Moose Mountain Crag had the potential to some day become a major rock climbing destination.

The Dust Bowl sector still maintains one of the biggest concentrations of harder climbs (5.12 and up) at the Moose Mountain Crag. The venue holds roughly two-thirds of Larry's original outdoor gym/shunt problems. Some feel that Larry's contributions should be ignored because his routes were not originally built as lead climbs. The author strongly disagrees with this viewpoint..!

The Dust Bowl has the same south facing aspect as the much shorter venue found at the White Buddha Crag in the Elbow River Valley a few kilometers to the south. However, the Dust Bowl has much quicker and easier access with significantly longer routes. With more numerous lines and some pretty fun challenging climbing. What's not to like about that? During the late eighties these shunting problems of Larry's were visionary and provided some of the hardest technical rock climbs in the Canadian Rockies at the time. Both Larry Ostrander and his pivotal early climbs deserve a place in our local climbing history. We must try to never forget his huge contribution to our sport in the Canadian Rockies!

In recent years there has been an increased interest in pushing the upper end of the grade spectrum at Moose Mountain. Several climbers have stepped into the fray. Foremost among them is Ross Suchy having some of the biggest impact by adding several difficult routes to many of the sectors. Of particular note is that Ross has almost single handedly developed the newest winter cragging sector called **Black Flag**. The summer of 2020 saw him prominent in the development of the new **Vortex Cave** on the Ostraland cliff line on the shady side of the valley. Here Ross also made a massive contribution adding several new hard 5.12's and possibly the most challenging route to date at Moose Mountain Crags that he called *Cobra Thunder* \*\*\* S-5.13d. Maybe it's 5.14? It's still awaiting a second ascent...!

The explosive spring and summers of 2020 and 2021 during the Covid 19 pandemic, resulted in the development of several new sectors and significant expansion of other areas by a few keen developers. The first new sector developed was the new **Roadside Attraction Crag** in early spring of 2020. This short south facing cliff sits literally beside the road and now has 19 routes mostly in the 5.10 and low 5.11 grades which resulted in immediate popularity. By mid summer of 2020 there was extensive activity at several new venues on the shady side of the valley. The new Northern Shield, Vortex Cave, The Cove and The Prow Sectors seeing the most development of this amazing new route bonanza. This lengthy cliff line on the shaded side of the valley is now called **Ostraland** as a memorial to the late Larry Ostrander, here as well there were some forgotten "shunting" routes by Larry's that have been rediscovered. These exciting developments have opened a treasure box of possibilities for the massive potential in the past couple of years.

In 2022 the heat was turned up with the exploration and development at three new sectors by Andy Genereux. **The Bench** is a compact sector with 14 moderate routes located just right of Moose Patch Right sector that is sure to be very popular. The **Goat Cafe** sits between the Roadside Attraction Crag and The Bench and houses several of Larry's old shunting lines. Andy Genereux started development on the left side in 2022. So far adding 6 finished lines and a few more projects are under way. The final new crag is the scrappy but fun **Creekside** a little satellite crag in the Canyon Creek drainage on the way into the main cliffs. At this little venue there is potential for 10-14 routes. The rock quality requires a lot of energy to build routes here. So far only four lines are completed and another five are in progress.

The following update/mini guide was prepared to help enhance the information for one of southern Alberta's most accessible early/late season climbing venues. Now with a lot more shady climbs developed to beat the summer heat! Finally included in the latest version of Bow Valley Sport Climbs, the Moose Mountain Crags seem to have all of a sudden become somewhat of a premier cragging destination. Hopefully this latest information helps improve its stock for consideration as part of the local cragging circuit. It's not a Bataan or Echo Canyon, but these extensive cliffs definitely provide for a very worthwhile outing especially during the fringe months. These extensive crags offers a much quicker access alternative to most of the much further away Bow Valley sport crags for Calgary-based climbers.

## Winter Rock Climbing

**The Dust Bowl**, **Black Flag**, the **Moose Patch** sectors with a more compressed window along with the latest small crags called **Beach Front Buttress** and **Road Side Attraction Crag** all make for good options for cold weather cragging keeping three main requirements in mind: first off you need air temperatures to be just above freezing, secondly calm winds and the third and most significant ingredient in the equation is sunshine. Don't show up before 11am in the winter months. The Dust Bowl and Black Flag are situated a little higher on the south facing rising cliff line on the north side of the access road and these two venues offers slightly longer sessions due to notch in the ridge across the valley not blocking the low arc of the winter sun. Climbing in a T-shirt in winter on a sunny day can be normal and quite comfortable at the Dust Bowl and Black Flag (*except from end of November to mid January as the sun is too low on the horizon during this period to clear the blocking ridge across the valley*). **Black Flag** lies roughly halfway between the **Dust Bowl** and **The Moose Patch** sectors on the main south facing cliff line on the north side of the access road. The Black Flag sector was developed by Ross Suchy over the past three years. It hosts steep mostly harder climbing on south facing rock. The **Beach Front Buttress** and **Road Side Attraction Crag** are the two smaller late winter cliffs recently developed. Both were built out in the late winter/spring of 2019 and 2020, they are shorter venues hosting mostly moderate routes. Both these cliffs comes into the sun about an hour earlier than the Moose Patch, Black Flag, and Dust Bowl sectors and are the first cliffs encountered along the north side (south facing) of the access road. These smaller venues only see the sun by February due to the depth of the valley. **Beach Front Buttress** sits in behind a tree covered shoulder which helps to keep it out of the wind and is an ideal first crag to start your day.

**The Moose Patch** and **Roadside Attraction Crag** have a shorter winter season because of the lower aspect from the same ridge blocking the sun from the end of October to the end of January. Climbing at the three main sectors found on the long south facing cliff line are predominantly 5.11, 5.12, and 5.13 climbs. **The Dust Bowl** and **Black Flag** get sun from late morning into late afternoon. The Moose Patch is similarly situated but gets roughly an hour less direct sun due to its lower position and elevation blocking the sun by the ridge across the valley. Most of these venues should be avoided on a calm hot summer days but can be perfect on cooler overcast days during summer. All the other sectors at Moose Mountain have a much less desirable sun aspects for winter climbing.

## The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly at Moose Mountain

### The Good

Despite the scrappy look of these rather expansive cliff lines, nearly all the routes found to date at these venues offer quality climbing at the stated grades. There are now 20 sectors with route development. One of the newer venues is a small south facing cliff called **Beach Front Buttress** and it is one of the first climbable cliffs encountered along the approach road. It hosts mostly moderate climbs to help climbers warm up for the harder fare found further up valley. The style of climbing at the Dust Bowl, Black Flag, The Painted Wall, The dark Side, Road Side Attraction Crag, the Vortex Cave, The Prow and Larry's Gym tends towards steeper more gymnastic movement, which makes for good fun. Larry's Gym also has a quick approach. Due to its north facing aspect, it's a good bet when wanting to avoid the heat of summer. Moose Cove, The Dust Bowl, Black Flag, and The Moose Patch sectors come with a south or southwest exposures making good options for winter rock climbing forays and the fringe months to extend the outdoor possibilities. Other sectors like **Morning Side Crag**, **The Moose Patch**, and **The Northern Shield** offer more technical face climbing challenges. The Moose Patch also faces south and most of the year stays in the shade until late morning due to a sun blocking ridge across the valley. The **Painted Wall** has a mostly west facing aspect on it's left side. Then the cliff bends to have a more north facing aspect over the second half. It is located immediately around the corner from **Larry's Gym** with significant new development in the moderate and harder grades in recent years that has made this venue a very popular stop amongst climbers.

**Morning Side Crag** and **Anti Moose** sectors have the longest approaches and both venues face due east providing great location's for early morning sun or late afternoon shade. These venues allow climbers to follow or avoid the sun on any given day. **Spider Brook** is a smaller nearby venue to Morning Side Crag that is also north facing but holds some of the easiest technical routes in the area. At most venues found at Moose Mountain there is enough variety between grades and style to keep climbers engaged and coming back for more. Offering possibilities for an expanded outdoor climbing season. The bolting overall, due to the fractured nature of the rock in the area, is usually generous. Building new routes here becomes a labor of love with the average pitch taking many hours to clean the fractured rock and adequately bolt protect the climbing. New routing involves some ugly cleaning work but fortunately there still remains several kilometers of cliff line to be explored and exploited. All route builders are welcome to come and expand the scope of this massive venue. Lastly, the short 1-15 minute approaches from the access road, after the 15-25 minutes bike ride, makes access a delight. Especially enjoy the bike ride on the way out, which is down hill nearly the whole way...!

### The Bad

The rock at the Moose Mountain Crags can be loose, it's **always recommended for climber's to wear your helmet!** The more frequented climbs tend not suffer this issue quite as much. Like much of the Canadian Rockies these cliffs are not immune from holds loosening up over time from freeze thaw cycles. Heavily chalked holds have broken off suddenly in very dramatic fashion but maybe a little more often at these venues. Climbers may find themselves making the "moose is loose" puns way more often than they would like. In fact the first new route established by Andy Genereux in the area has this moniker attached. Andy taking three significant lead falls due to rock failure while establishing this pitch ground-up. He returned top-down re-cleaning for several more hours and then a few years later reworked the route again with some retro-bolting, which included a better direct start greatly improved the line. The climb is now better protected but still maintained the same grade with substantially more solid rock and a few more bolts than it originally had! Overall it became a very good climb. It only took 11 years to achieve the desired result (kidding). There are several sectors of better quality rock to be exploited by route developers but be prepared to work and get dirty.

### The Ugly

The rock at most cliffs has various qualities or bands of rottenness generally below the first bolt. Above the top anchors tends to be the worst. Having a **stick-clipper** is recommended for many climbs to make sure that one reaches the first bolt safely. Also, Larry Ostrander had a number of shunt problems particularly at Larry's Gym, The Goat cafe and The Dust Bowl. Most of these old projects have now been re-bolted and cleaned and turned into lead problems, however there are still a few of these old partially bolted routes around that are **NOT** equipped for lead climbing (many have double chain-link hangers). Be sure you know which route you are on. A good example is at The Dust Bowl left of Larry's Groove. There are still several old shunt problems here that haven't been retro-fixed/bolted into lead climbs.

### Getting There

Take Highway 66 west from south of Bragg Creek until you reach Canyon Creek Road / Ing's Mine parking (about 16.5 km from the junction of Highway 22 and Highway 66). Turn right (north) onto Canyon Creek Road (gravel) travel just over .7 of a km and park in a newly paved parking lot near the closed gate on the right/east side of the road. Expect approximately 35-45 minutes travel time from the Calgary city limit, to reach the parking lot depending on your route from the city using either The Trans Canada, Highway 22 or Highway 8 to reach Bragg Creek then Highway 66 west to reach **Ing Mine Parking**.

## Moose Mountain Crag's: Approach Details

From the Ing's Mine Parking area located .7 km north on the gravel road off Highway 66. From parking, travel north by bicycle or walking past a gate on the gravel access road, passing a compressor station on the right after 3.5 km. Just as the road drops down a hill 300m beyond there is a scrappy yellow colored cliff located on the east bank of Canyon Creek. This is a new venue called **Creekside**. For now it houses four completed routes and has five projects started. The next venue comes after a big bend in the access road and is located on the right (north bank) 70m before the lone bridge over Canyon Creek. This is the **Beach Front Buttress** with 13 routes. Pass over a bridge and roughly 200m beyond this creek crossing, located on the left (south) side of the road across the creek is a small venue called **Larry's Gym** with 24 shorter very pumpy routes. This small cliff is mostly undercut and provides for a physical outing. Normally Canyon Creek is a mostly dry stream bed for much of the year so crossing it to reach Larry's Gym is usually is no problem by summer. Be aware that water levels in Canyon Creek can rise very quickly following intense thunderstorms. I've personally watched the water rise from a totally dry creek-bed to well over a meter of depth in a ten minute period following a severe thunderstorm, which have required escape down the south bank of the creek back to the bridge from Larry's Gym. Flash floods in the past 15 years have destroyed two previous road bridges. The latest version of the bridge and erosion protection by Memorial Wall were replaced after the massive 2013 floods. Now this bridge sits much higher and has a significantly wider span with hardened banks, which should hopefully help things to stay in place.

**Larry's Gym** has a north facing aspect, the crag showcasing short, steep, bouldery, predominately 5.11 climbs. This is an ideal venue for the heat of summer. Located just west of Larry's Gym is a small protruding point with a dedication plaque to Larry Ostrander called the **Memorial Wall**. This small north facing creekside venue houses several fine shorter moderate routes. This small cliff divides the cliff line as it bends sharply to become a more west facing aspect for the next sector called **The Painted Wall** which now houses over 70 longer routes through 5.9 to upper-5.12 in grade. This curving cliff line has both a west and north exposure and is ideal on warmer days. The small **Memorial Wall** and the dedication plaque to Larry Ostrander can be easily be viewed from the road. The south facing small cliff directly opposite this plaque on the north side of the access road is call **Roadside Attraction Crag**. This recent addition to the cragging scene is a very popular. This roadside venue that has 19 routes for now.

Continuing westward on the access road for 80 meters is the south facing **Goat Cafe** which is an old venue of Larry Ostrander's that recently started seeing some new development and redevelopment as of 2023. Travel another 200 meters up the road until roughly 80m before major pipeline valves located on the north/right side about 3.9 km from parking, is the south-facing sector called **The Moose Patch** and the newly developed sector **The Bench** found 60m to the right with 14 moderate more entry level routes. The **Moose Patch Right** is defined by a prominent dark gray shield of rock that defines its left side. **The Moose Patch / Left** is found about 80m left of this dark colored shield of rock. There are many excellent technical 5.11 and 5.12 climbs in this sector. Recently a number of moderate warm up routes have been added to these crags increasing their popularity. To access these venues, locate a small cairn by some aspens on a small bench, 10m above the road. From the bench start up a good trail past a couple switchbacks directly to the heart of the **Moose Patch / Right** sector on this sunny south facing venue. The trail takes less than 5 minutes from the road. It is possible to continue traversing westward along the cliff base using a faint trail that takes roughly 7-10 minutes to reach the newer **Black Flag** sector or 15 minutes or so to reach the steep venue the **Dust Bowl**. However, most climbers choose to use the normal access trail for the Dust Bowl located further west off the access road. The main south facing cliff line continues unbroken for well over a kilometer. Recently the newer **Black Flag Sector** was developed between the **Moose Patch Left** and **The Dust Bowl** sectors and is loaded with mostly harder climbs and a few moderates. It's a great addition to Moose Mountain scene. The recommended access to reach **Black Flag** is to use the access trail as for The Moose Patch sectors then traverse left along the cliff base (westward) for several minutes.

To access the original trail for the **Dust Bowl**, continue west on the access road from the pipeline valves for about .5 km until about 100m before the road steepens noticeably up a large hill. Look for a old blaze on a tree on the right/north side of the road marked by a small cairn. The location of this trail head starts a little west of the Dust Bowl venue on the south facing wall above the road. The trail makes a handful of switchbacks up a steep section, then cuts back eastward on a rightward gently ascending path across a scree gully, then continues on a rising traverse across an open slope to reach the right side of the Dust Bowl below the climbs *Population Bomb* and *Hoof-it*. The classic climb *The Ostrander* is the first set of glue-in bolts to the left up the shallow steep corner on the upper wall. This approach trail takes roughly 10 minutes from the gravel access road to reach the Dust Bowl, 200m west is the new and moderate **Moose Cove** crag.

**Ostraland:** One of the latest major cliffs to be exploited at the Moose Mountain Crag. This long mostly north facing venue lies above the south bank of Canyon Creek extending west from the west end of the **Painted Wall** it is unbroken for nearly 3 kilometers. This cliff line is predominately north facing. At two thirds it's length find a prominent hanging U-shaped drainage with an overhanging amphitheater below and out to the right is an obvious and amazing looking east facing wall with a prominent overhanging prow feature on its right side. This definitive segment of this long cliff line is located roughly across the valley from the Dust Bowl and Moose Cove sectors on the north side of the road.

**Access for Ostraland** is from either the Painted Wall, then traversing the cliff base westward or using the access trail found across the road from the Dust Bowl access. This second option takes a faint trail down an open slope to crossing over Canyon Creek, then follows a faint trail up the drainage below the hanging U-shaped drainage to reach **The Cove** and **The Prow** sectors. The cliff line west of the obvious prow feature is almost a kilometer in length faces a north-east aspect but as of yet does not have any established climbs.

The final two developed venues for rock climbing on the south side of Canyon Creek are the east facing **Morning Side Crag** which is located directly across the valley south from the Moose Mountain Ice Caves above a side drainage on off Canyon Creek. Also found near this wall is a little shaded box canyon called **Spider Brook**. To reach these venues continue westward on the access road over the big hill to reach a second compressor station about 400m west from the bottom of the hill, roughly 60m past the trail head for the ice caves. Skirt the retaining wall on the left/south side of the compressor station until directly across from a side drainage that enters the main creek-bed for Canyon Creek. Cross over to the south bank (they stream bed is dry much of the year). Take this side drainage on the south bank for roughly 10 minutes until it reaches a polished waterfall/groove at the back of a small box canyon for **Spider Brook**. For getting to Morning Side Crag from the entrance to the Spider Brook bay take a faint trail below the lower wall up hill for 2-3 minutes to reach the main upper wall for **Morning Side Crag**.

One of the newest sectors called **The Anti Moose** is found on the east facing side of the main Moose Mountain Dome up a side valley using a spur road heading north from the bottom of the big hill off the access road. This sector has the longest approach at Moose Mountain but overall hosts some of the best rock which makes it well worth the visit. The road/biking access involves a slightly uphill grind for much of the approach to reach all of these crags, which helps make for a quick exit on your ride out at the end of the day. Make sure to hide your bikes or lock them up to lessen the temptation of an expeditious exit for passing caver's and day hikers who made the long hump into the ice caves on foot.

## Using this update/mini-guide

For this document to the Moose Mountain Crags all cliff photo's and topo drawings are described from climbers left to right. The sectors are detailed in the valley in a clockwise fashion starting with **Larry's Gym**. This first sector is found on the south (left) side of the access road 200m west of the only bridge over the creek. Sectors will be described in sequence working around the valley. Moving next onto the smaller **Memorial Wall** and then to the **The Painted Wall**. Working westward along the south side of the valley through the new **Ostraland Crags** on the shady side of the valley. In sequence these include: **Dark Side**, **Northern Shield**, **The Vortex Cave**, **The Cove** and **The Prow** sectors. Eventually a kilometer west again into **Spider Brook** a small box canyon near the **Morning Side Crag**, before working back eastward on the north side of the valley. With the east facing **Anti Moose** one of the newest venues. Working back eastward on the south facing cliff line above the north side of the access road. Starting with a small sector called **Moose Cove**, then the **Dust Bowl**, then eastward to **Black Flag**, **The Moose Patch Left & Right** sectors along with the new sector called **The Bench**. This cliff line eventually descends until just above the access road for a new sector called the **Goat Cafe** and the newish but very popular **Roadside Attraction Crag** found at road level. Continuing eastward on this north side of the access road is a small satellite cliff called **Beach Front Buttress** and further down stream in Canyon Creek on the east bank a developing sector called **Creekside**. These last two sectors are actually the first venues encountered on the right (east and north) side of the access road on your approach. Enjoy!

## Moose Stars \*\*\*

The completed routes are given a range of 0 through 3 Moose stars, this star grading is reflective of Moose Mountain Crags only and should not be compared with any other venues in the Bow Valley. Some routes do not have a star rating as they may be too new or have inadequate feedback. The higher the stars the better the climb is thought to be. Rock quality is also considered in this rating. Mostly it's about the climbing experience and ascetic of the line.

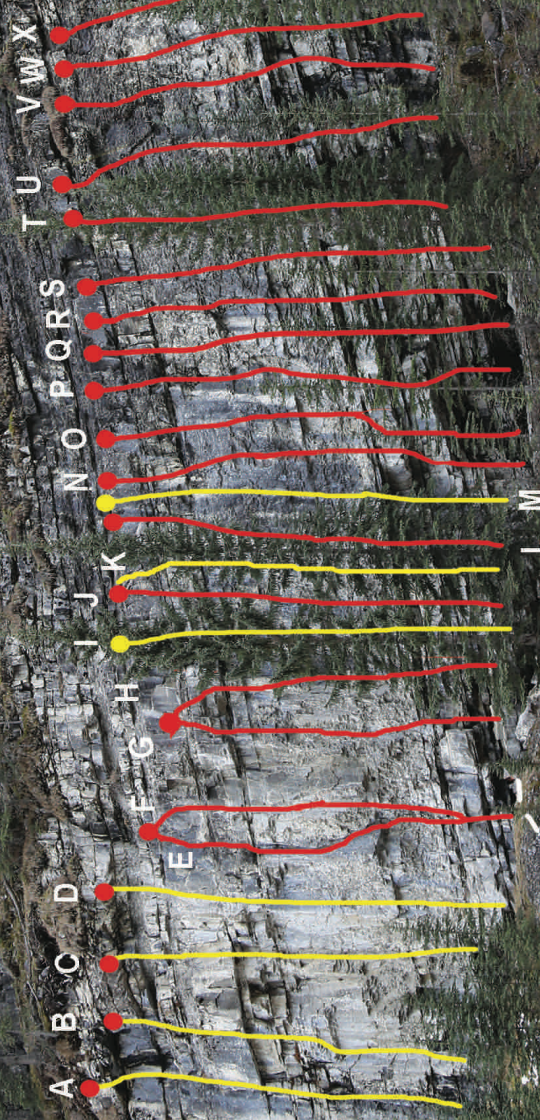
## TABVAR

The Association of Bow Valley Rock Climber's had helped pay for much of the newer development at Moose Mountain. If you enjoy climbing on these well protected and well maintained climbs. Please help support your sport by making a donation towards more route development and crag maintenance in your home areas.

Donations can be made to [www.tabvar.org](http://www.tabvar.org)

# Larry's Gym

- A) Flex\* S-5.9
- B) Shot in the Arm\* S-5.11a/b
- C) Lucky man\*\* S-5.10c/d
- D) Workout\*\* S-5.11a
- E) Larry's Crack\* S-5.9
- F) Dark Carnival\*\* S-5.10d
- G) Playing With Shade\* S-5.10b
- H) Fun House\*\* S-5.10b
- I) Gym Class\* S-5.11b
- J) Dark Secrets\*\*\* S-5.11a
- K) Sweating Shade\*\* S-5.11b
- L) Strandy Delight\*\* S-5.11a
- M) Dark Yoga\*\*\* S-5.11c
- N) Pumping Shade\*\* S-5.11b
- O) Side Show\*\* S-5.11b
- P) Larry's Gym\*\* S-5.11d
- Q) Pushing Iron\* S-5.11c
- R) Larry's Dark Side Delight\*\*\* S-5.11b
- S) Gym Membership\*\* S-5.11c
- T) Larry's Big Picture Show\*\* S-5.11b
- U) Shadow Man\*\* S-5.11c
- V) End of The Game\*\* S-5.11b
- W) Finding Larry\*\* S-5.11c
- X) Be Strong The Rock Isn't\* S-5.10c/d



## Larry's Gym

This is a great little venue located directly across Canyon Creek from the access road. It's the first climbable sector on the south (left) side of the road on approach. Located about 400m after the road bridge over Canyon Creek. This shorter fun north-facing cliff is often seeping, cold and wet in the spring but makes for an ideal stop on hot summer days. One of the first top rope venues by the late Larry Ostrander to be redeveloped starting in the mid nineties. After a significant gap in development there were four new routes added in 2016. Then the early summer of 2021 saw renewed interest by Andy Genereux filling in the remaining blanks adding another seven routes (marked in yellow on the photo) on this compact burly cliff. The selection and workout has only gotten better at this pumpy venue. The routes are compact in nature but almost all pack a punch at the given grades on this very physical, steep short wall. In the late nineties Andy Genereux carried out all the initial rebuilding work at this older venue of Larry's, adding several independent lines of his own to the cliff. He wants to acknowledge that without the previous efforts of Larry Ostrander for developing his original "shunting" (top-roping) routes back in the late 1980's and early nineties a lot of these climbs at Larry's Gym probably wouldn't exist today. All of Larry's early lines at "the Gym" have now been redeveloped into lead problems over the past twenty years. Back when Larry first started to work these climbs he believed that they would never be capable of being safely climbed on lead due to the crumbling rock quality. As a result these early climbs only had top rope anchors and a few directional chain link hangers. These early routes of Larry's only had rudimentary cleaning to provide him with a personal workout venue. Over the years Andy Genereux has spent countless hours vigorously re-cleaning and retro-bolting Larry's old shunt lines. Today they are all fun safe lead climbs at Larry's Gym. That being said, beware the rock at Moose Mountain Crag can sometimes be quite fractured. Once solid and well chocked holds have been known to loosen or fail without warning. It is recommended to always wear a helmet while climbing or belaying at any of the Moose Mountain Crag. Also having a stick clip is useful for several routes here and at other Moose Mountain Crag.

Routes are described left to right:

### Flex \* S-5.9, 4 clips, 13m

*Andy Genereux, June 2021*

Takes a steep V-corner with a crack, working over a small overhang to finish. The left-most route developed on the wall.

### Shot in the Arm \* S-5.11a, 4 clips, 13m

*Andy Genereux, June 2021*

A devious line to reach a bulge with a painful finger lock to gain a ledge and the anchor above.

### Lucky Man \*\* S-5.10c/d, 5 clips, 14m

*Andy Genereux, June 2021*

This line takes a steep shallow slightly left leaning corner/crack. Your arms are sure to be burning by the top. There was a major trundle on this climb. The very big block now sitting on the ground used to live in the V-slot at two-thirds height..!

### Workout \*\* S-5.10d/11a, 5 clips 14m

*Andy Genereux, June 2021*

Takes the steep face just left of *Larry's Crack*. There is a short stiffer sequence at mid height but overall this slightly overhanging line has fun juggy movement and houses lower mid 5.10 climbing most of the way.

### Larry's Crack \* S-5.9, 4 clips, 12m

*Andy Genereux, August 1998*

Takes the left facing lay-back crack up the shallow corner to a good ledge. This climb is very physical for the grade.

### Dark Carnival \*\* S-5.10d/11a, 4 clips, 12m

*Andy Genereux, August 1998*

Starts as for *Larry's Crack* but heads straight up with some thin, steady, harder pulls to share the same anchor.

### Playing With Shade \*\* S-5.10c/d, 4 clips, 12m

*Andy Genereux, July 1996*

Sustained and pumpy, the grade has increased to allow for missing holds and the now a much harder start. Due to some collapsing blocks at the bottom. Stick-clip the second bolt is now recommended. The line takes a shallow groove arcing to the right at the top to join the shared anchor with the route *Fun House* on the right. Start slightly right of the first bolt.

### Fun House \*\* S-5.10c/d, 4 clips, 12m

*Andy Genereux, June 1998*

Step up over some large collapsed blocks at the base of the wall. It takes a shallow slightly left leaning groove up to a small roof, above moving left to reach the shared anchor with the route *Playing With Shade*.

**Gym Class \* S-5.11b, 5 clips, 14m***Andy Genereux, June 2021*

This was the last route built in the 2021 onslaught of new development at Larry's Gym. It climbs a black streak and provides a short technical thin harder boulder problem at mid-height with easier climbing above and below.

**Dark Secrets \*\*\* S-5.11a, 5 clips, 14m***Andy Genereux, September 1996*

The first route of Larry's at the gym to be redeveloped. This climb involves some devious thin pulls over slightly overhanging sustained terrain.

**Sweating Shade \*\* S-5.11b/c 5 clips, 14m***Andy Genereux, June 2021*

A very fun bit of steep climbing that shoots the gap between *Dark Secrets* and *Shaddy Delight*. Start up by using the first bolt on *Shaddy Delight* then climbs the bolt line slightly to the left. Bouldery climbing through a bulge. A bit squeezed at the start but otherwise a worthwhile independent addition to the workout at Larry's Gym. Of note, an old stud was found at the top marking this probably the last of Larry's old shunt problems to be redeveloped at this venue.

**Shaddy Delight \*\* S-5.11a, 5 clips, 14m***Andy Genereux, July 1998*

Sustained technical face climbing over some bulging terrain, using a slightly right leaning bolt line. Shares the top anchor with the route *Dark Yoga* to the right.

**Dark Yoga \*\*\* S-5.11c/d, 6 clips, 14m***Andy Genereux, June 2021*

Starts slightly left of the first bolt, climb steeply up to a small roof making a few physical moves to gain the small ledge. Then work through a sustained bulge (crux). Near the top a thin secondary bulge with devious but easier movement needs to be negotiated before moving left to the shared anchor with *Shaddy Delight*.

**Pumping Shade \*\* S-5.11b, 5 clips, 14m***Andy Genereux, August 1998*

Climbs steeply to a bulge making hard moves to gain technical sustained face climbing above.

**Side Show \*\* S-5.11b, 5 clips, 14m***Andy Genereux, August 1998*

Starts as for the route *Pumping Shade* clipping the bolts to the right below the bulge make a balancy traverse right for 2m, then takes the bolt line initially working through some intense physical moves above the small foot rail.

**Larry's Gym \*\* S-5.11d, 5 clips, 14m***Andy Genereux, July 1996*

The hardest of Larry's old shunt routes at the gym it provides a difficult bouldery sequence to get past the first two bolts to gain a shallow left facing corner to finish. Using a stick clip is recommended.

**Pushing Iron \* S-5.11b, 5 clips, 14m***Andy Genereux, August 2016*

Has a very steep pumpy start before negotiating a devious transitional crux to gain the less physical but more technically challenging upper section.

**Larry's Dark Side Delight \*\*\* S-5.11b, 5 clips, 14m***Andy Genereux, August 1998*

One of the better early routes by Larry Ostrander on the gym wall. It was completely retro-bolted and re-cleaned in 2016 due to the failure of some key holds. After eighteen years the grade remained much the same, however through the process the climbing experience improved significantly on this steep, very fun jug fest.

**Gym Membership \*\* S-5.11c, 5 clips, 14m***Andy Genereux, August 2016*

One of Larry's original shunting lines. This is a sustained technical affair for almost it's entire length, however working through a short V-groove at mid-height seems to hold the definitive crux.

## Larry's Big Picture Show \*\* S-5.11c, 5 clips, 14m

Andy Genereux, July 1998

This old shunt problem of Larry's was bolted for lead climbing and provides for a physical pumpy challenge with some powerful big throws if you are shorter in stature.

## Shadow Man \*\* S-5.11c, 5 clips, 14m

Andy Genereux, July 1999

This is a very devious bulging line, is a hard on-sight while the clock is ticking down over steeply bulging ground.

## End of The Game \*\* S-5.11b, 5 clips, 14m

Andy Genereux, July 1998

This old shunting route of Larry's was completely re-bolted in 2016 and now has 5 clips verses the previous 4 and the grade upped to 5.11b from 5.11a. This is a very fun but physical route. Its improved star value should help it to see more traffic after this latest bolt reconfiguration and re-cleaning.

## Finding Larry \*\* S-5.11c, 5 clips, 14m

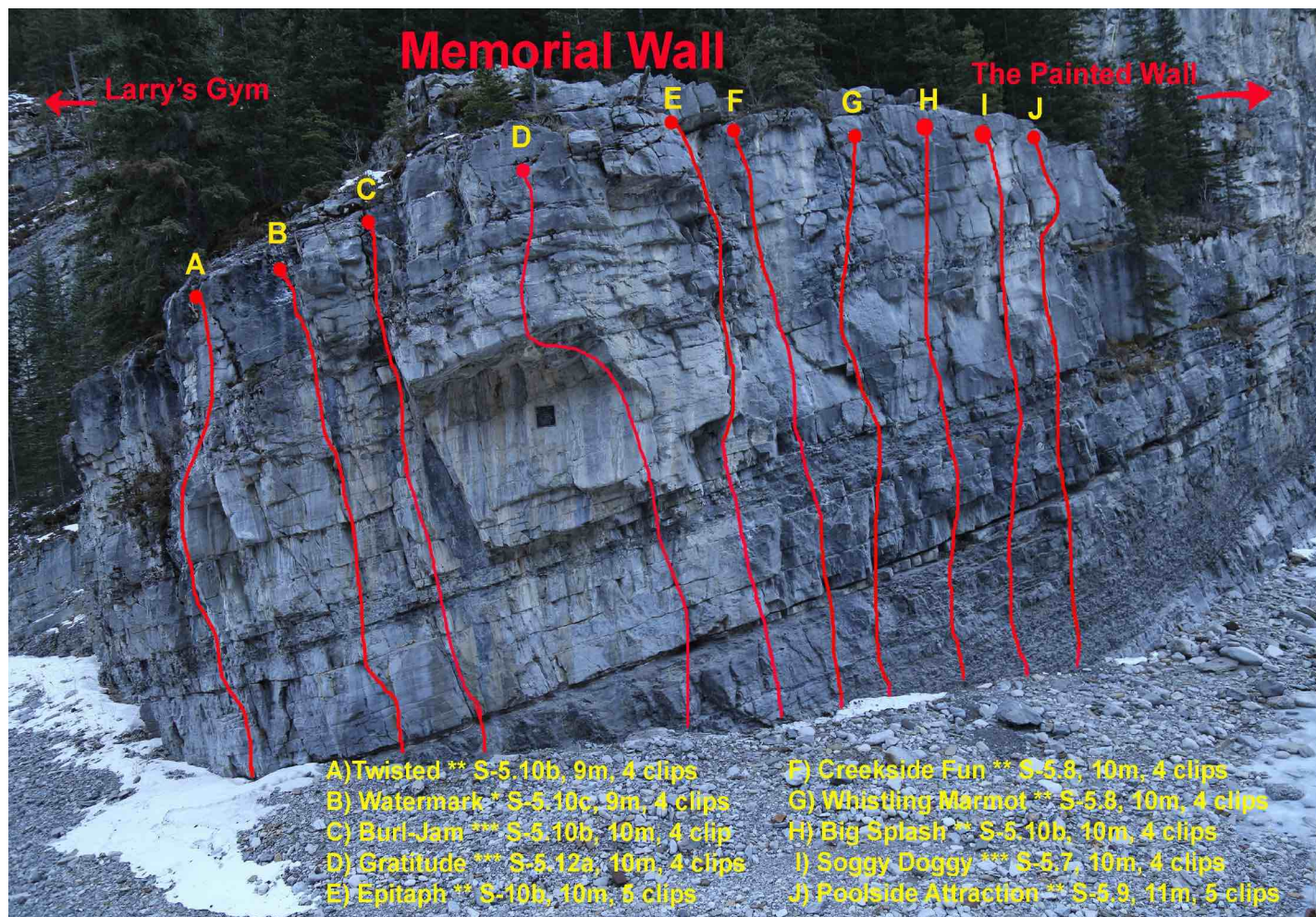
Andy Genereux, August 2016

An old anchor of Larry's marked this forgotten route. The technical crux is getting up-to, then past the first bolt (recommend a stick-clip to the first bolt). Above enjoy easier but steady movement to reach the anchor.

## Be Strong The Rock Isn't \* S-5.10c/d, 5 clips, 14m

Andy Genereux, August 2017

This is the right most line found at Larry's Gym. It was extensively cleaned and bolted on rappel. The first half of the route is pumpy with more mediocre climbing to finish. Be aware that rock quality is still somewhat of an issue on this climb despite the massive cleaning effort. That said its still a worthwhile visit.



## Memorial Wall

This is a very enjoyable small venue found on the north and west facing protrusion of the cliff line on the south side of Canyon Creek that separates **Larry's Gym** from **The Painted Wall**. There is a memorial plaque under the obvious roof dedicated to the late Lawrence Ostrander for his early pioneering efforts in the area. This plaque is easily viewed from the access road. The development at this little venue is quite recent even though this little cliff sits only 20m off the road. The Memorial Wall mostly offers some shorter fun moderates over quite good rock which has proven to be very popular. Ross Suchy built the first two routes in 2020 and they were red-pointed by his kids called *Whistling Marmot* and *Soggy Doggy* (referred to by many as the kids routes). In December 2020 during some very mild winter weather Andy Genereux added three more routes and established anchors on another three projects on the left side of the crag. These projects and one other were all completed in the late spring of 2021. The final climb located roughly at the center of the wall was marked by an old self-drive bolt 3m out right of the plaque at mid-height. Ross bolted this little rig in late summer and completed it in early October of 2021 closing out the remaining potential at this fantastic fun compact venue.

### Twisted \*\* S-5.10b, 9m, 4 clips

*Andy Genereux, May 2021*

Offers a few hard moves up a twisted shallow corner. The left most bolted line and the shortest at this compact venue.

### Watermark \* S-5.10c, 10m, 4 clips

*Andy Genereux, May 2021*

Takes slightly overhanging solid water polished rock just left of the *Burl-Jam* corner. Overcome a few thin hard moves to puzzle out the bouldery crux to gain a small ledge with the anchor above.

### Burl-Jam \*\*\* S-5.10b, 10m, 4 clips

*Andy Genereux, May 2021*

Takes the steep slightly left-leaning corner at the left side of the big roof. There are a few burly jams to finish this short stout but very fun problem.

### Gratitude \*\*\* S-5.12a, 10m, 4 clips

*Ross Suchy, October 2021*

Climbs the steep thin face at the right edge of the big roof then shifts left to tackle the roof. A hard bouldery sequence is required over excellent water polished rock. There was a lone "old" self-drive bolt marking this line originally.

### Epitaph \*\* S-5.10a, 10m, 5 clips

*Andy Genereux, December 2020*

A short strenuous climb that ascends an intermittent crack up the face immediately right of the roof over the plaque.

### Creekside \*\* S-5.8, 10m, 4 clips

*Andy Genereux, December 2020*

Work through bulging rock to start up and then gain a shallow corner groove. Entering the groove is the crux.

### Whistling Marmot \*\* S-5.8, 10m, 4 clips

*Sasha Suchy, August 2020*

Located about 5m right of the dedication plaque to Larry. Good rock and fun moderate climbing to ring bolts. Climbs from the creek bed, an awesome setting for kids, adults, and dogs to hang out.

### Big Splash \*\* S-5.10b, 10m, 4 clips

*Andy Genereux, June 2021*

Takes advantage of some great moderate rock, with a bit of a stiff finish to reach the anchor.

### Soggy Doggy \*\*\* S-5.7, 10m, 4 clips

*Sage Suchy, August 2020*

Located 8m right of the dedication plaque. Very fun juggy climbing on excellent rock up this short wall to ring bolts.

### Poolside Attraction \*\* S-5.9+, 11m, 5 clips

*Andy Genereux, December 2020*

The right most route at this small venue. Generally a moderate climb with a little sting (look right) to reach the anchor.