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# Squamish Climbing Strategy Report

Toward Environmental, Social, and Economic Sustainability.



**Kevin McLane**

for the Squamish Access Society

November 2008

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Commissioned by the Ministry of Environment, the District of Squamish, and the Sea to Sky Highway Improvement Project.

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## Scope and Purpose of the Report

The Ministry of Environment (BC Parks), the District of Squamish, and the Sea to Sky Highway Improvement Project (MOT) commissioned the Squamish Access Society to produce this comprehensive analysis report on the present state of climbing at Squamish, British Columbia.

### **Scope**

The study area is rock climbing and bouldering at Squamish, as understood within its branding as the Outdoor Recreational Capital of Canada, and principally addresses Stawamus Chief Provincial Park, Shannon Falls Provincial Park, Murrin Provincial Park, and Smoke Bluffs Municipal Park, with commentary on the wider region from south of Britannia Beach to the Cheakamus Canyon.

### **Purpose**

Based on the sustained historic growth rate of 5%–7% annually, the projected number of rock climbers visiting this region is estimated to double within 8 to 12 years. With this in mind, the report seeks to present a comprehensive portrait and analysis of the infrastructure of Squamish climbing as it is today, and recommend actions to absorb growth and establish a sustainable recreation asset management program based on the three Smartgrowth pillars of environmental, social, and economic planning.

Authored by Kevin McLane

for the Squamish Access Society.

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## Executive Summary

The Sea to Sky Highway is the thread that runs through some of the finest recreation opportunities in North America, and rock climbing is the adventure flagship. Squamish, centred on the iconic Stawamus Chief, is one of the most highly regarded rock climbing centres in the world. It has been a mecca across five decades, but the evolution of the climbs, the people, and the culture has taken place largely out of the public eye until the last decade. Rock climbing is now a popular mainstream sport attracting people from a wide range of backgrounds and ages, and is Squamish's largest economic generator of all recreational activity. Climbers are better educated and have higher incomes than average, and travel widely. Climbing's character of adventure, physical and mental discipline, self-reliance, and confidence-inspiring challenge, played out in spectacular natural settings has developed a popular and enduring attraction.

This report, commissioned by BC Parks, the District of Squamish, and the Sea to Sky Highway Improvement Project (MOT) is a forward-looking strategic analysis of rock climbing in the Squamish region. The geographic areas under study are where rock climbing principally takes place: the areas around Stawamus Chief Provincial Park, Shannon Falls Provincial Park, Murrin Provincial Park, and Squamish's Smoke Bluff Municipal Park. The report describes the many inter-related situations between the four parks that exist today, how they have evolved, and offers recommendations to achieve maximum benefit across the spectrum of environmental, social, and economic planning.

The District of Squamish has developed a highly successful brand as the Outdoor Recreation Capital of Canada (ORCC). This branding is vital to the economy of the region, economically, culturally and socially. It draws visitors by the tens of thousands to rock climb, mountainbike, hike in the alpine, hike the Chief, windsurf, backcountry ski, climb mountains, and play in the rivers. The land on which it all happens is seen as 'Squamish', regardless of jurisdiction or borders. A March 2004 District of Squamish report on the economic impacts of the new Sea to Sky Highway stated that rock climbing was worth at least 20 million dollars annually in direct impact to the Squamish economy, a figure that would be closer to 25 million today.

This success has contributed to rising pressures on all resources, not least climbing and park hiking opportunities. These pressures must be addressed to continue to benefit in a post-2010 world. Capital investment for the long term in recreational climbing infrastructure, wisely implemented and followed by sound stewardship, would carry a sustained return over many years.



The Outdoor Recreation Centre of Canada brand, which encompasses the three Provincial Parks, can be said to rest on six pillars, of which infrastructure needs more strategic planning and more investment to uphold the gains of the last decade and the opportunities of the next.

- ◆ the extraordinary natural assets of the region: the mountains, the rivers, the west coast forests, the rolling valley terrain, the glaciers, estuarine environments, the Chief, the granite crags, and the Pacific Ocean.
- ◆ the rockclimbs, and all other developed recreation infrastructure.
- ◆ the convergence of the wide array of recreation opportunity in one place.
- ◆ the compact, urban character of the region.
- ◆ proximity to a major city.
- ◆ a solid financial underpinning that invests in strategic planning and recreational infrastructure.

The report sets out the recreational climbing infrastructure upon which it rests, its character, attributes, subtleties, where it struggles, and where it thrives. and what it can be in the future. It presents a comprehensive set of recommendations, which if adopted would catalyze a new era of attraction and economic growth for one of British Columbia’s international tourism showcases. The alternative would be a slow decline in the value of the resource.

Ten recommendations are specific to BC Parks (pages 34-36), and a further thirteen address the District of Squamish, BC Parks, and the Squamish Access Society. Together, they outline a program of action and investment to upgrade the recreation infrastructure, its management, and correspondingly, vibrancy in the climbing life. The result would be that the Chief and its three satellite parks — known as the the Granite Monoliths of Squamish — would be well positioned to absorb high growth over the next decade and continue to draw climbers and hikers by the tens of thousands.

Strategic investment in the Provincial Parks: Stawamus, Shannon and Murrin, and Smoke Bluff Park, is integral to success. Catalysts for economic growth are many: they include the new Sea to Sky Highway, the 2010 Winter Olympics, the ever-rising desire of the world to visit, the geographic convergence of four outstanding parks, the iconic status of the Chief as the premier frontcountry park of British Columbia, and not least, the long-established fact that the climbing and hiking industry fares well in times of economic downturn. In the realm of tourism growth and healthy lifestyles in natural outdoor environments, this is a rare convergence of opportunity for the Province and Squamish, a signature provincial showcase.

The mantras “Supernatural British Columbia” and “The Best Place On Earth” could never be more true.





# Introduction to Squamish Climbing

The major reason why Squamish rock climbing is so highly regarded is the rock on which it happens: granite. Classic granite is monolithic, of immense strength and inspiring architectural features. Its geological nature causes it to crack rather than erode, and where it splits, therein lies opportunity to climb. Outside of the climbing world, it is little-known how highly regarded Squamish granite is, taking its place beside some of the most iconic and legendary climbing brands on the planet: Chamonix-Mont Blanc in France, Patagonia in Argentina, the Mount Waddington Range in BC's Coast Range, the Bugaboos in BC's Purcell mountains, the Pakistan Karakoram, and Yosemite National Park in the Sierra Nevada of California. All of the above are mountain regions except Yosemite and Squamish, which shine as the world's favourite granite rock climbing centres.

If there is a single predominant hallmark that defines Squamish climbing it is the hundreds of magnificent splitter cracks that rake the walls of the Chief, the Smoke Bluff crags, Shannon Falls and Murrin. Such character, available in under 15 minutes from a major Highway is rare anywhere in the world. Between the cracks, granite faces tend to be monolithic and where they are steep offer little opportunity to establish climbs. Here and there however, lines of holds can appear and some magnificent face climbs have resulted. When the angle of the rock relents back into less steepness, such as at the Apron, wide open slabs of holdless rock can be climbed simply through frictional contact, a hope and a prayer. Many Apron climbs offer difficulty grades at popular skill levels. It is the single most popular centre on the Chief.

Rock climbing in the Squamish region, and the world's attraction for it, is centred on the Chief. Fifty or so world-class climbs, supported by thousands of shorter climbs characterized by the mantra "short approaches and splitter cracks", and thousands of boulder problems to climb, have created a paradigm that offers something extraordinary for everyone, time and again.

The Sea to Sky Highway Improvement Project has brought dramatic physical change to how we engage in the climbing environment. The Improvement Project will leave us a striking symbol of change, an arching footbridge across Highway 99 joining the Chief to the Malamute. It will be a testimony to the far-sightedness of the Highway Project's executive staff that they were able to foresee the public good that will arise. The general public, tourists, and Highway travellers will be the greatest beneficiaries. It will be a galvanizing attraction.



It is not possible to go very far into Squamish climbing without encountering the legendary trail up to the top of the Chief. Whether as a hike, a run, or a mighty personal challenge to gain the summit, the Backside Trail as it is known, has become part of the culture of Squamish climbing and the Sea to Sky tourism industry. Visitors who think they may be able to attain the summit hold it as an ambition. The Backside Trail is integral to the climbing environment, and no summary of Squamish is complete without it. The hike to the summit of the Chief is a fine example of the public's demand for high-quality outdoor experiences in the best frontcountry environments.

The Squamish Nation identified the Stawamus Chief area as having significant historical and cultural value to its people, wants to participate in the management of the park, and to protect its cultural heritage, and sites used for cultural activities. To further this goal, in July 2007 the Province and the Squamish Nation signed an agreement for collaborative management of protected areas within Squamish Nation traditional territory. This agreement will provide a framework to enable the participation of Squamish Nation in the planning and management of the protected areas with the aim of maintaining the natural, cultural and recreational values of the protected areas, while enabling sustainable and appropriate economic opportunities, for Squamish Nation and all British Columbians.

On a matter of longstanding significance to Squamish Nation, the name of the Chief's eastern satellite summit, known for many decades as 'the Squaw', has been changed to Slhanay, which means 'Woman'.

Stewardship of climbing terrain across the entire spectrum of climbs, trails, descents and crag bases does not offer a single target for a management objective. It is work that addresses a myriad of small things on 4,000 pitches, 30-odd access trails at an average of about 10 minutes walking, and ever-expanding growth of rock climbs and boulder problems. Therein lies its great attraction, a kaleidoscope of variety across an extraordinary array of experiences on some of the world's best granite. It draws people from the other side of the globe, and has turned Squamish itself into the largest residential climbing town in North America.

Managing climbing resources can be organized around the different types of terrain. Ground Terrain addresses the trails that access the climbs, Vertical Terrain is where rock climbing takes place and Bouldering Terrain is the forest floor surrounding the boulders. The present single greatest concern is the condition of access trails: investment is needed. These trails are essential passages to get to the rock, and upgrade and maintenance cost is modest as compared, for example, with mountainbike trails. A little investment will go a long way as a prelude to a low-cost annual maintenance program.



## A Review of Park Management Plans Pertaining to Climbing

### **Stawamus Chief Provincial Park (1997)**

#### **Balancing Conservation and Recreation Values (page 9).**

At the time of the Chief Park's creation in 1995, a balance was established between conservation values and recreation values in accord with policy of the day. Since that time the growth of popular demand for rockclimbing recreation and hiking the steep trail to the Chief's three summits has increased dramatically. The tangible impacts of such growth on the Park, especially in the frontcountry adjacent to Highway 99, on the steep Backside Trail, the climbers' access trails, and in the summit areas, has been very considerable. A consequence has been a defacto tilting of the historic balance toward recreational values.

The number of climbers active in the region is now in the order of three or more times greater than 1995 and continues to grow at a rate of approximately 5%-7% annually, with a similar figure (or greater) for hikers. There is a clear need to develop policy for both conservation and recreation for the decade ahead. Indicators of future growth strongly suggest that visitor usage will continue to rise in line with the ever-increasing attraction of British Columbia and the Sea to Sky Corridor: more tourists, more residents, more organized groups, more internationals, and many more Highway 99 travellers. When considering the world-wide exposure that will result from the 2010 Winter Olympics, and completion of Highway 99 improvements, general tourism growth up to 10% annually over the next few years can plausibly be anticipated. There are very considerable benefits and opportunities – health, environmental, social and economic – to be gained by re-investing in a new era of stewardship for both conservation and recreation in the park.

#### **Zones: Intensive Recreation (page 11).**

The zone of Intensive Recreation as noted in the master plan has grown to include the entire frontcountry of the Chief, from the Campground to the Apron to the base of the Grand Wall. The north flank of the Chief, along the Mamquam Forest Road sees considerably more activity than former times, especially in the summer months.

#### **Cultural and Historic Values (page 19).**

Historic values have not traditionally been given notable priority for recognition and protection, but it is worth stepping up such efforts, perhaps as an inventory of 'special places' on the Chief and Slhanay that merit care and attention by visitors.

#### **Access Strategy (page 27).**

The access points into the Park should recognize the trailhead 1½km up the Mamquam Forest Road that gives access to the Slhanay climbing area. From there, a trail joining with the Chief Backside has already taken form through the passage of adventurous feet. A Chief Loop Trail is in the making.



**Highest Priority Actions (page 32).**

Of the 17 points listed requiring action, 11 appear have been completed in some degree or entirely. The remaining 6 are:

- ◆ Continuing to pursue land acquisition as recommended by the 1994 Protected areas Study Team (page 23, 4.2 Recommendations). Note that the Slhanay buttress may lie outside (south of) the Park Boundary.
- ◆ Expanding the existing trail network to accommodate growth.
- ◆ Upgrade existing trails (1997) to Park Standards (Note: there are no standards for climbers trails.)
- ◆ Designing an interpretive strategy to enhance public awareness of the natural values in the park.
- ◆ Establish an on-going advisory committee to provide advice on park-related issues. The absence of such a body was felt when the Gondola proposition came forward in 2004, and Parks has no group or other advisory body provide formal advice.
- ◆ A vegetation management plan

**Task or Project-Oriented Actions (page 34).**

Of the 11 points listed, many or all have been completed in some degree except development of a vegetation management plan. This is needed as a priority due to considerable vegetation encroachment onto trails and climbs. Recreational values are being steadily eroded.

**Shannon Falls Provincial Park (1985)**

The master plan makes no reference to rockclimbing, despite the Falls Wall, the Papoose, and Gobsmacking Wall all being highly regarded climbing centres. It is recommended that the master plan be revised to address the rock climbing values in the park. Although Shannon and the Chief are separate Parks, visitor growth, the hiking trail that joins the two, and the Land Conservancy's acquisition of private land between the two parks have all contributed to the Chief and Shannon parks becoming effectively a single park centre in the public mind.

**Murrin Provincial Park (1981)**

Rockclimbing is mentioned as an activity in the park, but no more. As with Shannon, it is recommended that the master plan be revised to address the hundreds of climbs and considerable spectrum of rock-climbing values inside – and outside – the park, that are accessed from the same parking area.

**Smoke Bluffs Municipal Park (2005)**

Smoke Bluffs Park Development Plan is currently the guiding document that is steering policy and activity since the park was created in December 2006. A Management Plan is intended to be completed in due course.

## A Review of the 1999 BC Parks Rock Climbing Strategy

The 1999 Rock Climbing Strategy is a guiding policy document that was created by park staff and climbers to prescribe how the climbing public should engage with the rock in respect of managing vertical terrain and other aspects of climbing activity such as habitat protection. This short review of “the RCS”, which covers Stawamus, Shannon, and Murrin Provincial Parks, is based on the 11 topics defined for management.

The RCS is now a decade old, but still remains the highest-level provincial policy that defines how rock climbing is to be managed in provincial parks. Despite climbing activity in the Squamish area having about tripled since the Park was created, most of the RCS’ general principles still hold true, but some change is needed. The current shortcomings of the Strategy are more to do with the need to reassess policy in light of the consequences of external changes, such as rapidly increasing levels of vegetation encroachment, trail strategy, increasing management needs of the climbs, the impacts of vastly increased numbers of climbers, and the increasing presence of the general public in climbing terrain.

### **Trails** (page 3)

Each of the three parks has one signature hiking trail of great interest to the general public, all carrying very high importance. The Backside Trail to the Chief summit is the most popular summit hike in Canada, (believed around 200,000 person-days/year) the short trail to the Shannon Falls viewpoint carries several hundred thousand people each year, and the perimeter trail around Browning Lake at Murrin Park, an intensely popular destination for fishers, highway travellers and picnickers sees over 250,000 visitors annually. The Browning and Shannon Trails are in excellent maintained condition, but the Backside trail up the Chief has been unable to sustain the heavy traffic and is in need of a major upgrade. The vast majority of trails in the parks however, are narrow access routes to reach the crags and climbing walls, traversing their bases, descending from high ground, or networks of bouldering trails. Most are in rough or very rough condition, including several arterial trails. All suffer perennially from vegetation encroachment, ground erosion and an absence of effective stewardship. In view of the world-renown of the Chief, the trail system is badly in need of renewed investment.

### **Signs** (page 4)

The signage policy of the RCS was to “*passively discourage non-climbers from unintentionally entering climbing areas*”. The policy is breaking down slowly across the parks as the public, in rapidly increasing numbers and more empowered with knowledge and interest, explores the network of climbing access trails. The situation is most acute in the Chief Frontcountry, where the terrain poses significant hazard for the non-climbing public, allied with the certainty of increasing public interest in a post-2010 world.

**Cleaning** (page 5)

At the time of RCS development, the primary concern was to assure ‘minimal removal’ of vegetation and crack in-fill. That principle still holds true today, although ‘minimal’ can be an awkwardly subjective term when relating to the recreational value of the emerging climb. The principle has come under stress for two reasons: acceleration of vegetation encroachment that has degraded many pre-existing and potential climbs, and continued demand for new route establishment: long climbs in particular. A vegetation management plan reflecting current realities is needed.

**Fixed Protection** (page 6)

Historically, first ascensionists have determined the balance between artificial and natural protection according to their personal choice. Where natural protection is sparse, permanent expansion bolts can be drilled into the rock to better suit the first ascensionist’s preference. Please refer to pages 24 and 25 for more commentary on this subject.

**Bivouacs – Falcons – Sensitive Areas and Inventories** (pages 6, 7, 8)

The provisions in the RCS remain generally good today.

**Safety**

It is assumed the RCS refers to safety while climbing. Subjective risk is the responsibility of individuals, but nonetheless, objective hazards exist, such as danger trees and stonefall.

**Commercial Use** (page 9)

The provisions in the RCS remain generally good today with the exception of occasional strong contention over movie-shoots.

**Historical Values** (page 9)

Of the two features listed in the RCS, the Baldwin-Cooper bolt ladder has gone, but the stone carving is doing fine, a highly regarded piece of art in the Grand Wall Forest. It may be worth considering formalizing other features as ‘historic’, such as particular trees, ledges, and places. Legendary climbs such as Diedre, Angels Crest, the Grand Wall, and others may be worth considering as ‘listed historic’.

**Role of the Climbing Community** (page 10)

The role of the climbing community, as outlined in the RCS remains much the same. What has changed is the overwhelm on volunteers to address stewardship, and the gradual splintering of the climbing community into specialized activity interests. That has resulted in a diluted common view of ‘climbing’.



# A Historical View of Climbing Development

Rockclimbing as we understand it today began at Squamish in 1958 when the first climbs were established. For over fifty years prior to that a thriving mountaineering community in Vancouver had been active, climbing Mount Garibaldi, Sky Pilot, Tantalus and many other peaks. There is anecdotal evidence that in the 1940s, members of the Alpine Club of Canada and the BC Mountaineering Club engaged in forays to the crags around Murrin Park, driving along the rough road from the ferry dock in Squamish to Britannia.

The seminal climb was Les McDonald and Jim Baldwin's bold first ascent of Peasant's Route, climbed as an early attempt on the Grand Wall. The following year saw the first major route to the top of the Chief, the Squamish Buttress, by the legendary Fred Beckey with Hank Mather and Don Claunch. And in June 1961 came the epic first ascent of the Grand Wall by the intrepid pair whose names are now indelibly stamped on Squamish: Jim Baldwin and Ed Cooper.

As the 1960s progressed, a steadily increasing trickle of climbers came to spend more time exploring the Apron, Murrin and the great walls. Two distinct groups emerged, climbers based loosely out of the University of British Columbia, and from Seattle headed by Fred Beckey. More major aid walls fell in this era: Tantalus Wall, University Wall, Northwest Passage, Western Dihedral, and Zodiac Wall.

By the late 1960s, another step forward in difficulty evolved through a group of young Vancouver climbers, principally Gordie Smaill, Hugh Burton and Steve Sutton. Their ground-breaking climbs of this era included the difficult Grim Reaper on the Apron, and Uncle Ben's. That era drew to a close in 1974 when Robin Barley began a new epoch, rappelling down the Apron, producing the first top-down cleaned route: St Vitus' Dance.

Another evolution in difficulty arrived toward the end of the 1970s. Standards of freeclimbing had been rising steadily as emerging climbers learned their craft on cutting edge Squamish routes and in Yosemite Valley. Chalk, cams and sticky rubber shoes were about to burst onto the scene, and for a few dozen talented and fortunate climbers, there began a ten-year golden era of first ascents of hundreds of climbs that have become classic 5.10 and 5.11 routes of today.

Historically, permanent expansion bolts were drilled by hand while leading, an arduous and demanding task. In the late 1980s, a radical shift arrived when the battery-powered Hilti drill emerged and became the catalyst for what has perhaps been the greatest single change climbing has ever experienced. Stronger bolts could now be placed at ease, and often, and sport climbing was born.

By the mid 1990s, an unprecedented increase in the number of climbers was underway, fuelled by rapidly increasing interest in mountain recreation, the popularity of indoor climbing gyms and the availability of sport climbing in the Cheakamus Canyon. This had tremendous impact on climbing; demand rose for routes that promised lower risk, and sport climbs delivered. The days of learning only by trial and error



were over. The number of women began to rise notably too. Thirty years ago, women numbered perhaps one climber in twenty, today they are close to 40%.

Until about the time of the first climbers at Squamish, climbing equipment itself had not changed much in over a half-century. The rope was nylon instead of hemp, and soft steel European pitons, rope slings and steel karabiners were pretty much it. Beginning in the early 1970s, four innovations in equipment proved revolutionary for advancing standards and spurring increasing interest in rockclimbing.

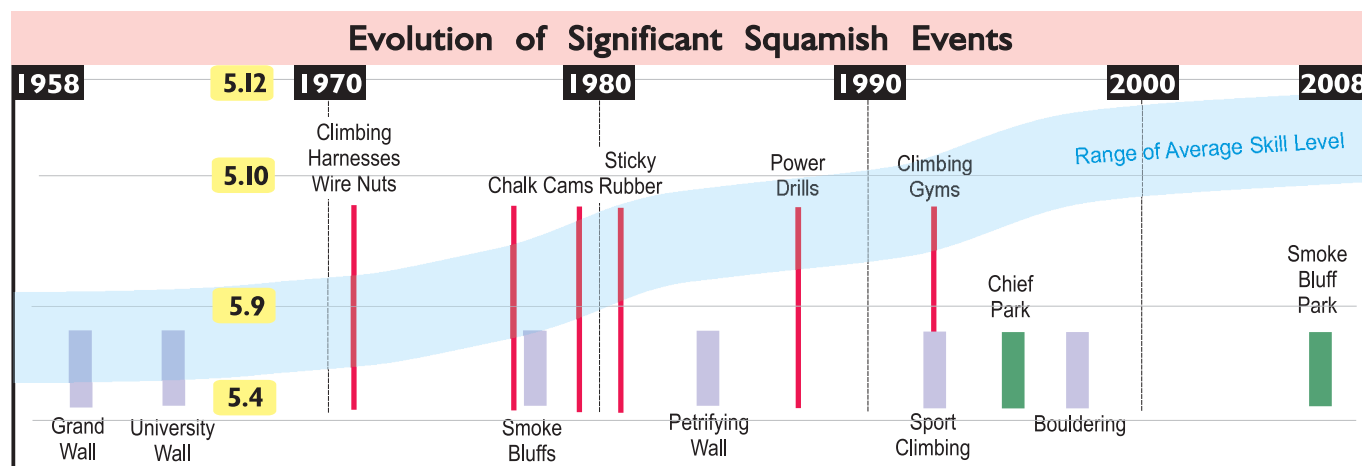
Wire nuts and waist harnesses were introduced into North America from Britain, the cradle of rockcraft, followed in the late 1970s by spring-loaded camming devices, the legendary Wild Country ‘Friends’. Then came a radical revolution from Spain, the advent of what was then amazing sticky rubber rock shoes. Friction and edging was never the same again. Today, the presence of such equipment, now much refined and with many brands competing for excellence, is taken for granted by everyone.

In 1988, the climbing community, led by the Federation of Mountain Clubs purchased three significant parcels of land in the Smoke Bluffs to forestall commercial development, and an energized initiative began to create a municipal park centred on rock climbing, with the climbers’ land to be gifted to the people of Squamish.

Advocacy attention turned to the Chief, beginning a five-year odyssey which led to climbers representatives being invited to meet with Ivan Messmer, the BC Parks Minister of the day to make the case for a provincial park. On October 17th, 1995, at a ceremony in Squamish hosted by the provincial government, the announcement was made and the Chief became a provincial park.

By the late 1990s, bouldering was well entrenched at the Chief, as a new generation explored the hundreds of massive boulders that had tumbled from the great walls. From quiet beginnings it has risen to become a major pillar, culturally and economically, of Squamish climbing.

In 2003, a forward-looking municipal government in Squamish rekindled the 15 year dream of having a climbers park in the Smoke Bluffs. A planning process was initiated, and on December 5th 2006, the Smoke Bluffs became a park.



# Growth Trends and the Changing Demographic

Rock climbing at Squamish has evolved a long way since the middle of the last century, when in the early 1960s a busy day would mean as many as a dozen climbers at Squamish. Now, a capacity day will see well over 1,000 climbers or more in the Cheakamus to Murrin region.

The historic annual growth rate over the last 30 years is estimated at between 5% to 7%, although it is difficult to quantify with precision due the lack of studies. But it holds true based on a wide range of factors, from equipment sales, car counts, observations of long-time climbers, the degree of increased crowding, and industry trends. That rate was particularly rapid when the popularity of urban climbing gyms in the mid-1990s introduced thousands of people to climbing techniques, and then again in the early 2000s when bouldering skyrocketed in popularity. That has resulted in an increase of a ten-fold order of magnitude over the 30-year period since 1978, with no abatement today in that pace of growth.

The hiking interest to the Chief summit has been at least in accord with these estimations, despite the trails' aging condition and under-capacity situation. The number of annual hiker-days is believed to be the order of 200,000 and growing every year. The completed rebuild of Highway 99, the population growth in Sea to Sky of active residents, tourism growth, post-2010 benefits, and the 40-minute commute from Vancouver portend very considerable growth over the next few years.

A March 2004 report by the District of Squamish's Economic Development Officer on the socio-economic impact of rock climbing said... "*the estimated overall value of climbing to the Squamish area alone is over \$20 million dollars annually in direct impacts.*" Growth would put it at \$25 million today, and with indirect impacts of 150% included, it could rise to the range of \$75 million annually of direct and indirect benefits a decade from now. That is a significant piece of the Sea to Sky economy.

Projecting ahead, if the historic growth figures of 5% to 7% annual climber-days are used, the number of climbers would double in the next 8–12 years, and indicators point to demand-pressure for hiking on the Chief and in the Smoke Bluffs of at least that order. That is a prospect of considerable change, bringing with it a need to plan wisely and strategically how to best manage and absorb the growth, and ensure positive gains for the economic, social, health, and environmental pillars of planning.

It is worth taking note that in times of economic difficulty, the climbing and hiking economy does well due to the low cost of equipment and investment required. From the perspective of diversifying the regional economy, rock climbing and all the climbing parks are worthy of investment.

The table opposite estimates the number of climber-days in 2008 to be 131,531. While not an authoritative study, the order of 120,000 to 150,000 is a probable range. It is more challenging to estimate how many climbers climb at Squamish annually, but 5,000–8,000 or more is a fair estimate. One third or more would have travelled from outside of British Columbia.

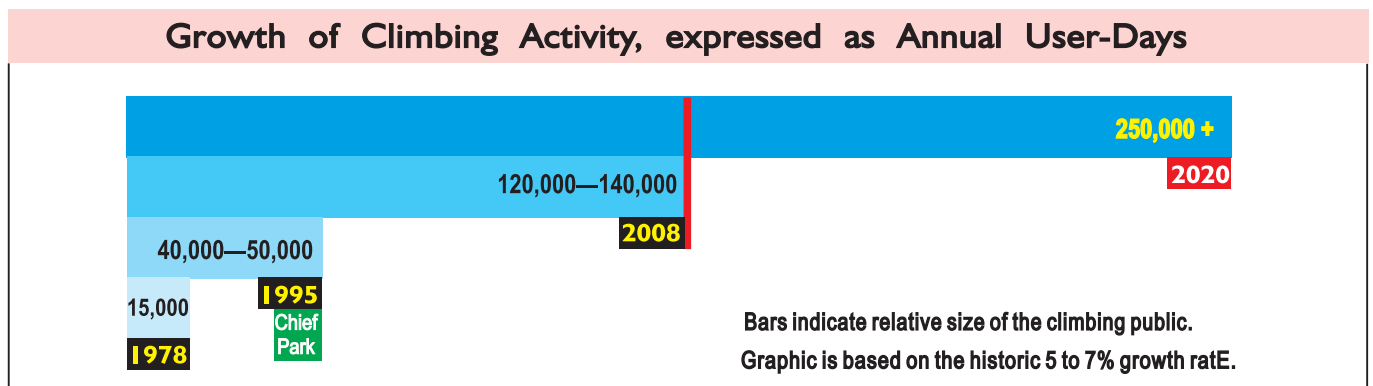
### An Overview of the Demographic Profile of the Climbing Public

In 1970, the small Squamish climbing community had a distinct demographic profile: almost exclusively male, living at the fringe of polite society, hard-driving enterprising personalities, self-taught, and extraordinarily self-reliant in the face of hardship. Protection equipment was rudimentary and improvised. Becoming a climber was a rigorous process of self-selection; social encouragement was less than zero.

Two generations later, this profile is still present, now perhaps a few hundred individuals climbing 100 days or more a year, driving the direction of Squamish development. Many are climbing professionals and guides. But a very broad new public has also evolved, from thousands of dedicated weekend warriors, to those who enjoy time on easy climbs in the sun perhaps 5-10 days a year. When once the profile of the activist climber covered most of the climbing community, now it is dwarfed by climbing’s popular appeal to a large demographic. Climbing and its healthy lifestyle holds strong appeal to fit, active people, young and old, wealthy and not, who enjoy adventurous outdoor activity. They are on average better educated and have higher incomes than the general population average. Rock climbing’s psychological demand of self-reliance, self-responsibility, and the merging of mental and physical discipline in spectacular natural settings resonates very strongly.

Climbers come to Squamish principally from urban areas of southwest of British Columbia, and the resident Sea to Sky community. Seasonal migrations of thousands from western Canada, the United States and eastern Canada, Central America, Europe and the Orient are the largest summer-time demographic.

An Estimate of Climber-Days in 2008					
Climbers' Car Parks — Full Capacity Count		Actual Climbing Days	Average Car Capacity	Total User-Days	
Chief Apron	45	<b>High Season</b> 123 days	90	70%	90,563
Chief H99 (part of the tourist parking)	30	<b>Middle Season</b> 122 days	60	40%	34,500
Chief Campground (based on 30,000 nights)	100	<b>Low Season</b> 120 days	30	15%	6,469
Chief Climbers Parking (new 2008)	50				<b>131,531</b>
Silhanay-Shannon-Papoose	30	◆ High = May-Aug Middle = Mar-Apr / Sep-Oct Low = Nov-Feb			
Smoke Bluffs Park (150 + Adventure Centre)	160	◆ This is not a formal survey, it is an estimate based on close observation of car counts			
Murrin Park (climbers only)	40	◆ On many days in the high summer of 2008, car parks were at or near 100% capacity			
Other Squamish (Comic, Crumpit, Habrich, etc)	20	◆ Chief parking and Smoke Bluffs parking are now unable to meet peak demand			
Cheakamus Canyon	50	◆ This estimate aligns with historic growth since a similar review in 2003			
Walk-ins: car equivalent (residents)	50	◆ Low season estimates could be understated, and do not include Ice Climbing			
<b>Total Car Parking Capacity</b>	<b>575</b>	◆ The given figure of 131,531 suggests a range of 120,000 to 150,000 as most probable.			
<b>x 2.5 people per car (BC stats...)</b>	<b>1,438</b>				



## Ground Terrain — The Trails

Trails used by climbers are of five different types and each serves a different purpose. They exist for two reasons only: to allow people to get to the starts of the climbs and to enable them to return to the parking.

1. **Access Trails** these are the simple threads through the forest that allow ease of travel to the start of the chosen climb or the base of a crag. They begin usually at or near a parking place and are focussed only on attaining the base of the crag. Climbers access trails have arisen over time and not surprisingly they tend to be straight, direct, often steep, rugged underfoot, simple and no-nonsense commutes to where the action begins. Few access trails in the Provincial Parks at Squamish are in good condition, most are in need of improvement, or upgrading, or lost under encroaching vegetation.

2. **Base Trails** these are the trails that travel along the base of the wider and more developed crags allowing travel between the starts of the various climbs. They exist wherever a popular crag is wide enough to warrant moving packs when choosing a different climb.

3. **Arterial Trails** these are few in number but important and heavily-travelled, major trails off which several or many branches lead to crags or boulders.

4. **Descent Trails** these tend to exist wherever climbers may walk down from the top of a climb back to the base of a crag. They have most relevance in the high ground of the Chief, Silhanay, the Papoose and Shannon, where a rough thread leads invariably to an Arterial trail, the Backside, or to the crag Base Trail.

5. **Networks** these are areas of closely interconnected trails, shaped by the lay of the land around the crags or boulders. The Smoke Bluffs trails are sufficiently complex that as a whole they can be considered a Network. Several other smaller ones exist in the Provincial Parks.

**Being free from ground debris, free of encroaching vegetation, and clearly delineated** are the three basic trail requirements. Steepness is less of a concern except where erosion results. When trails receive very high use, grading and surface quality begin to matter. Some such examples are the Apron access trails; the Grand Wall Base trail, the Grand Wall trail, the Grand Wall Forest arterial trail, and the Petrifying Wall trail, all of which are in need of some degree of upgrading. Climbers' trails are simple and inexpensive to upgrade and maintain, but most need upgrade re-investment as a matter of priority.



Delineation. Where goes the trail?



Ground Debris creates braiding.



Vegetation Encroachment creates avoidance



## Ground Terrain — Access Trails Development

A matrix on page 61 sets out a detailed listing of the 30-odd trails that give access to Squamish rock climbs. Few were constructed in deliberation, they evolved as climbers chose the most pragmatic line over the ground to reach the climbs.

As this system of trails has expanded over the last 20 years, upkeep and maintenance has gone far beyond what volunteer effort can sustain. Some trails, particularly in shady areas have overgrown back into the forest floor, so the tendency of climbers to go to the most-available best places has accelerated that process. Until around 15 years ago, most Squamish climbers knew virtually all the trails very well, but today, among the thousands of people who have taken to rock climbing, that depth of knowledge has slipped away. If people cannot find a trailhead, or they lose a sketchy trail, or have no interest in exploration, they revert to returning time and again to the most well-known popular areas.

Given the situation, annual maintenance, formally organized after a comprehensive, priority-based investment in the system would pay a considerable dividend. Maintenance bills that are unpaid eventually result in either a sharp capital cost or erosion of the asset's value. A promising start to an upgrade has already begun with supportive funding from the Sea to Sky Highway Improvement Project.

Assessing priorities for how funds should be disbursed could start with an appraisal of intentions:

**Heavy and Popular Use:** invariably associated with high quality climbing or close proximity to parking. Examples are the Grand Wall Base Trail, the Apron Trails, the Smoke Bluffs Loop Trail. They matter because they are the focus of so much attention.

**Low Use but Important:** trails that lead to destination climbs like Angel's Crest and the Solarium. They matter because destination climbs are a Squamish hallmark.

**Seeding Growth:** trails that lead to new areas. This matters because more climbs will absorb growth and help draw climbers away from congested areas.

**Dispersal:** new and improved trails to draw climbers into less-travelled areas. This matters because it would reduce traffic at the busiest crags.

**Safety:** this matters in the event of constructions such as stairs on heavily-used trails. Where stairs are impractical, or in less-travelled areas, a simple fixed rope with knotted handholds suffices well.

**Crag Bases:** A good tactic to reduce vegetation encroachment on the first pitches of climbs is to clear out brush from the base, and tree branches overhanging the lower part of the climbs. This deters vegetation growth, opens a buffer to the rock and allows more sun and wind exposure, increasing the number of days of effective use. An excellent pilot program is ongoing in the Smoke Bluffs.

# Climbers' Terrain — An Overview

The term 'terrain' is used to try and capture as best as possible the essence of the highly varied and rugged nature of Squamish climbing areas. Management of these resources must range across the high vertical walls of the Chief, small crags at Murrin Park, hundreds of climbs scattered along the bases of the big cliffs, intense public use of neighbourhood areas, and fields of huge boulders (as large as houses in some cases) that lie scattered in the forest below the walls of the Chief. If there is a single common thread, it is that Squamish climbing is conducted on land that is often unforgiving in its steepness, or under-foot ruggedness, or riddled with rock crevasses. And that is before actually reaching the climbs.

This terrain can be divided into 3 types, each has its particular needs of stewardship and management.

### **1. Ground Terrain** ... *the access trails that lead to the rock climbs and bouldering areas.*

As a golfing analogy, the current predicament of climbers access trails can be likened to having several equally fine courses to play, but their access roads have become riddled by weather and time with pot-holes, overhanging trees, and obstacles. So courses with the worst of the axle-breaking roads become deserted, and their once-smart greens sprout alder trees. The courses with the best of the roads become congested with line-ups, and nobody gets to enjoy a quiet round of golf.

### **2. Vertical Terrain** ... *rock climbs where equipment and expertise are needed.*

The most well-known, the popular, and the easy-access climbs receive heavy traffic and are generally in good condition as a result. Many climbs that require longer access times, generally more than 20 minutes, are less travelled than those close to Highway 99 regardless of their quality. A predicament lies in that the absence of climbers eventually can result in those climbs becoming vegetated beyond popular appeal, particularly in the shadier and less sunny aspects.

The paradigm through which government sees and understands individual rock climbs, even the world-famous ones, has brought no formal recognition of their inherent cultural or economic value. Within Sea to Sky Country the 2,500 or so rock climbs are critical components of the regional and provincial recreation infrastructure, and in principle they can be seen as no different to a trail for feet or mountainbikes. The latter two travel horizontally along slender threads, rock climbs travel vertically up slender threads, and the best of them should be afforded the same degree of recognition as is given to the most outstanding trails.

### **3. Bouldering Terrain** ... *the forest floor area surrounding boulder problems.*

The predicament, particularly in the Grand Wall Forest, lies in the desire to maintain a natural West Coast forest environment despite heavy public use compacting the forest floor only a few minutes off Highway 99. The current situation is not sustainable, and a long-term vision should be developed.

## Highest Value Squamish Climbs

The list of Highest Value climbs on page 60 is not proposed as definitive, the subject does not lend itself easily in that direction. These climbs are presented as closely representative of ‘the best’, and they sit at the top of a long continuum of good and great climbs. When climbers have crossed the globe to Squamish, this is their big tick list, and succeeding on as many as possible in each trip is the holy grail.

Squamish climbs are not particularly easy, the entry level to most of the best is in the upper-5.10 range. Therein lies a reason why climbers thrive at Squamish, the personal challenge the climbs present unfolds for many years. And climbers who travel the world tend to be good climbers with high ambition. Squamish fulfills. The Smoke Bluffs and its delightful ambience occupies a unique place, as the entry-level there is at the more modest level of 5.7 to 5.8. The Bluffs attract climbers looking for easier challenge, who are seeking to learn, but they also draw the better climbers too, as everyone likes an easy day.

It is an obvious truth when looking at the list that the best climbs are found at the best crags, and they are often clustered together. When you’re good, you’re good. A striking truth is that 85% of the climbs on the list were first climbed more than 20 years ago. A small number of great climbs continue to be opened up, but as time passes, further additions are increasingly hard climbs. There are still plenty of thin lines to be climbed on the untapped steeps, but as the unclimbed rock of quality at Squamish slowly diminishes, this list represents the treasure-house collection of amazing natural-protection climbs in Canada. Squamish is not going to get many more of that calibre at grades the average climber can get up.

**So what makes a truly great climb?** There is no formula, and personal taste will influence every climber, but whether sport, face, crack or chimney there are a few common characteristics, and the best climbs will always have a few of them. An inspiring, “Oh-my-God!” line of weakness up the rock. Clean rock of impeccable quality. A tantalizing line of holds or a single splitter crack that offers no escape to easier ground. A sustained effort through the entire pitch. Clever, inobvious moves and sequences. A climb which is easier than a daunting appearance declares. A high crux after a long battle. And who does not appreciate the finest ambience, wind in your hair and exposure under your feet.

The listed climbs do not include a couple dozen or more that would be there on merit were they not overgrown with vegetation: White Cliff routes, Wall of Attrition, Upper Zodiac Wall and others.



## Vertical Terrain — The Climbs

The rockclimbs of the Squamish region vary considerably in their character, length, style, and charm. It is the magnificent long routes of the Chief and its scores of splitter cracks that attract the world, but when it arrives, there is a great variety of complementary climbs and things to do in the West Coast environment. These twin pillars; 50 or so world-class climbs and a large further collection of 4000 granite pitches carries magnetic appeal, and has made Squamish and British Columbia into a renowned destination.

A paradigm in which to consider this is through what could be termed as ‘Highest Value Squamish climbs’ (see page 60). They represent the body of excellence that draws the world, but 85% of them were established over 20 years ago, and the average access time is less than 15 minutes. This arises from the simple fact that the best and most available great lines were the first to be climbed. Beyond the North Walls of the Chief and Slhanay, there is now only a limited amount of unclimbed rock that could yield comparably high-quality climbs at a difficulty that is within the reach of the average good climber, and within the 15 minute-or-so limit of popular-preference time.

A direct consequence is that the most popular of the close-by high-value areas, such as the Apron, Base of the Grand, the Smoke Bluffs and parts of Murrin, see very heavy use and that ensures the climbs remain relatively free of vegetation. But there is a catch-22 effect at work in that the increasing pace of vegetation encroachment renders less-travelled climbs unappealing and their access trails grow over, thus creating a diminished interest in risking time elsewhere only to find routes are too overgrown to be pleasant experiences, or their access trails are bushwhacks.

It is a fact that if all climbing activity stopped, within 10 years only the steepest and most exposed walls would not have experienced significant vegetation regeneration in their crack systems, more than enough to curtail the value of climbing.

**The era from the late 1950s to the late 1970s was the period of exploration** on the naturally cleaner walls at the Chief and Murrin. Since then most new route development has usually requiring cleaning of the rock from surface vegetation and crack infill. To an extent, the emerging supply of new climbs has exceeded demand for much of the last 20 years, but ironically that past excess now has a heightened relevance to meet ever-growing demand pressure at popular levels of climbing difficulty, especially on





low-to-mid-difficulty climbs (5.9 to low-5.11). There are actions that will help alleviate the pressures on the ‘50 best’, not only for today’s demand but in respect of growth pressure: all indicators are for a doubling of climbers in the next 8-12 years.

**Sport Climbs and Natural-Protection Climbs.** Climbs that are principally protected with natural gear devices (place and remove) are the most common in the four parks. Many crack pitches can be protected entirely by natural means, but many other pitches have one or more fixed expansion bolts. They are both known as ‘Gear’ climbs or ‘Traditional’ climbs.

Bolts are indispensable as a selective tool to enable granite climbing as natural protection opportunities alone would fall far short of providing adequate popular security on all climbs. A climb entirely protected by bolts is known as a ‘Sport Climb’. Sport climbing arose when power drills became ubiquitous in the early 1990s, and it has proven to be hugely popular. Most of those in this region are north of Squamish in the Cheakamus Canyon area, where the much older granite has a less fractured character. In the immediate Squamish area, Petrifying Wall at Murrin Park has a strong collection of outstanding sport climbs (the granite is different to the other parks). Sport and Gear climbs complement each other well, and most climbers engage in both regularly.

The nature of sport climbs, equipped with bolts every few metres, inherently assures a high degree of personal security, which is one of their attractions, whereas naturally-protected climbs can demand effort and skill to assert self-security. Which is one of their attractions. Sport climbs typically require strong physical effort, natural-protection climbs often require considerable mental effort. Between the two there is an aesthetic continuum between natural and artificial that has established the character of the spectrum of Squamish climbs. This spectrum is what has evolved from the historic model of individual route developers acting in accord with their personal preference.

It is worthy of special note that beyond Squamish, the vast majority of readily-accessible rock climbs in southern British Columbia are short sport climbs. Squamish is Canada’s treasure-house of long, world-attracting natural gear climbs on granite, and as such is a national heritage.

There are no more Squamish’s out there.



## Vertical Terrain — Vegetation Encroachment

The subject of vegetation encroachment on the climbs is one of the greatest challenges facing Squamish climbing. Many photos comparing past tree and vegetation growth on the Chief show dramatic changes. This is recognized in the 1999 Rock Climbing Strategy, which had this to say: *“Due to the climate, vegetation growth can be relatively vigorous on the cliffs in the Squamish area. In order to develop new climbs and maintain existing climbs, vegetation and loose rock often is cleaned or removed by climbers. The amount of cliff area impacted by cleaning is difficult to measure but is relatively low, restricted to little more than the width of the climb itself.”* And it went on to say *“At this time due to limited information it is difficult to develop final guidelines for cleaning of routes.”*

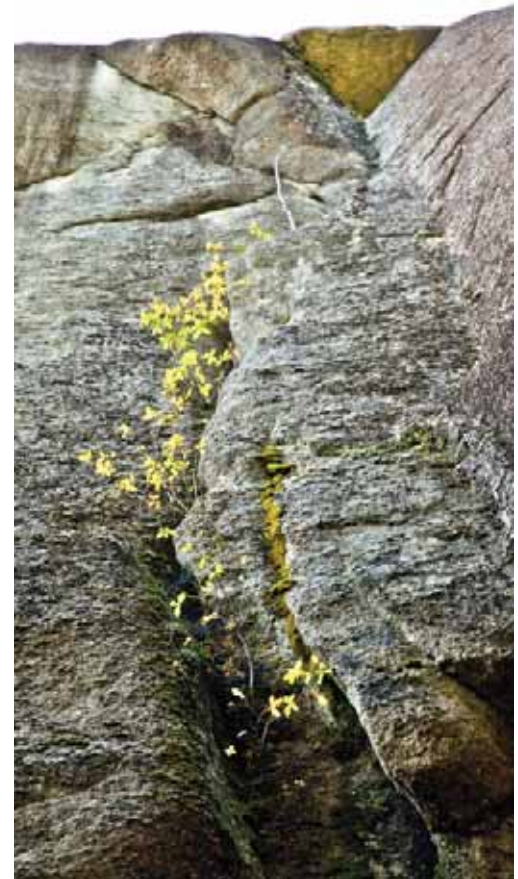
The photos of the Chief and Malamute opposite demonstrate a startling increase in tree and vegetation growth since the early part of the last century. In the case of the Malamute, the photos record the change in only 27 years. In the 1920 photo of the Chief, note how few trees and little vegetation cover exists on the Squamish Buttress above the Apron, Echelon Wall, and above the Opal Wall. Other archival photos from that era indicate a similar sparse tree cover on the rock. The reasons for the heavier tree coverage of today would seem most likely related to the natural cycle of catastrophic forest fire every 100–200 years. Today’s public policy environment of fire-suppression will cause the granite cliffs of Squamish to be increasingly forested.

The Smoke Bluffs, unlike the Chief and the Malamute, are a much-altered environment. They were logged heavily early in the last century and in 1970 a severe human-caused fire torched everything except the tallest trees. This and other activity meant that in the mid-1980s the Smoke Bluffs ambience was considerably more open than today, with more climbing days per year due to the wind and sun drying the crags more quickly. What was once a dominant view of Smoke Bluff ‘rock-ness’ from downtown is steadily disappearing under a canopy of green.

In a situation where public recreation is a major attraction of this region, important aspects of the climbing experience are slowly devaluing in the absence of regional policy and management.

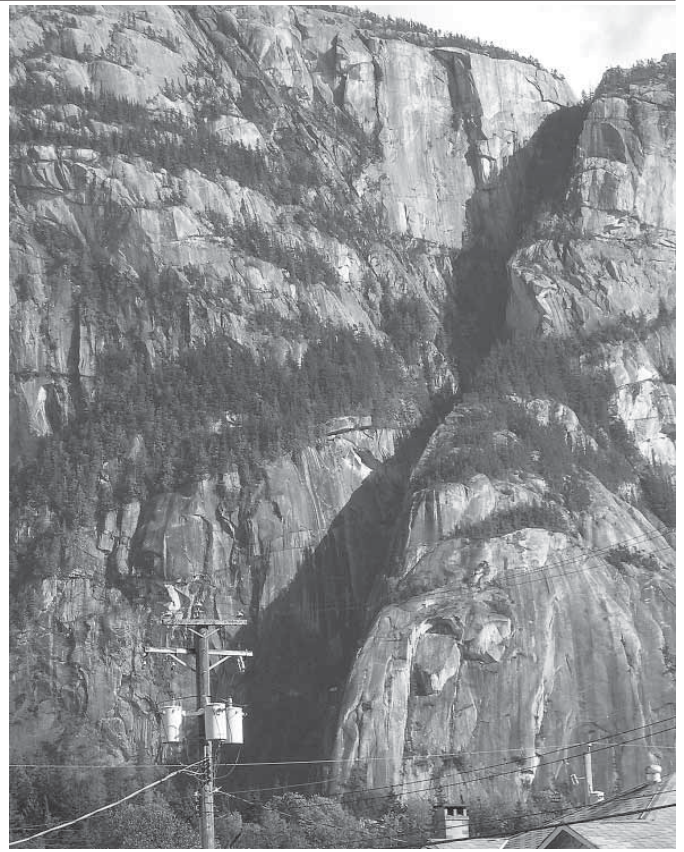
How much vegetation is acceptable on the climbs?

How can climbers and government agencies react to this?



An overgrown climb at the White Cliff





Photos of the Chief from 1920 and 2005 offer a startling portrayal of how much, and how rapidly, vegetation change is occurring on the Chief.



These comparative photos of the Malamute from 1978 and 2005 show the extent of change at tree cover growth.



These comparative photos of the Smoke Bluffs from 1990 and 2008 show the extent of change at tree cover growth.



## Vertical Terrain – Fixed Protection Management

Fixed protection refers to permanent anchors – invariably 10mm construction-grade expansion bolts – placed on climbs for any of several reasons. Principally, this happens (or does not happen) at the discretion and judgement of the climbers during first ascents where natural protection is not possible (ie., devices placed by a leader in cracks, and removed by the second climber). Frequently, well-meaning individuals may remove old corroded bolts (or pitons from early days), or other fixed gear and replace them. This is applaudable work, but often not without contention over the principle of retaining the original character of a climb. Although this type of ‘retrofit’ work tends to be seen as simply swapping out like for like, in fact it has a foot in both Fixed Gear Management and Climbing Route Development.

There can be reason to alter a climb’s original character in retrofit situations. Examples being where available natural gear on a climb is limited, but a frequency of ascents is needed to keep a climb clean, especially in shady areas. And that it is not always necessary to apply ‘one bolt for one pin’ given the much greater strength of bolts. A set of principles on how to balance such situations would be a useful tool.

The subject of Fixed Protection on rock climbs was addressed in the 1999 Rock Climbing Strategy, *“The use of fixed protection, rappel stations, and fixed belay stations will continue to be primarily determined by the rock climbing community. BC Parks will monitor trends or changes in the use of fixed protection.”*

The number of climbs in some need of ‘retrofitting’ has grown in line with ever-increasing numbers of rusting bolts and pins, and ever-increasing numbers of climbs and pitches. The cost to individual volunteers is difficult to estimate, but the order of \$2,000 or more annually in the Squamish region is plausible. Although climbers engaging in this work tend to be competent to it, there is no accepted standard of hardware or belay anchor configurations, or whether belay stations are to be bolted or by natural gear. However, typical configurations and condition of fixed belay stations and bolts at Squamish is good when compared to many other major climbing areas. Many visiting climbers comment on this.

With over 4,000 pitches in the region to consider, and a further 50 or so added every year, the scale of upkeep on fixed protection management has slipped beyond volunteer capacity. A wide-ranging review of the Rock Climbing Strategy should consider the benefits if government were willing to share the cost of this essential stewardship and to encourage a more commonly-applied standard.



Bolt components, with drill bit



Twin Rappel Bolts, or Belay Station.



Bolt in place, with Quickdraw attached



## Vertical Terrain – Climbing Route Development

There are at present, over 2,000 rock climbs with 4,000 pitches and approximately 2,500 boulder problems in the Squamish Region. This vast, 50-year effort of individual time and skill has created the entire climbing infrastructure that we know today. An estimate of the investment of fixed hardware in place ranges from \$100,000 to \$150,000, all paid by climbers establishing first ascents.

Establishing a new climb is simple enough in concept: find some rock that has never been climbed before, climb it, and claim a first ascent. That bestows the right to give it a name, and to have history record the effort in a guidebook. Until the early to mid-1990s it was a relatively easy task to produce a climb of some worth near Squamish at any grade of difficulty. Not today. A review of highest-value climbs shows that 85% of them were first climbed more than 20 years ago. The majority are protected principally by natural gear such as wire nuts and cams, and few permanent expansion bolts. As a group they are the hallmark climbs that attract the world.

Within a 15 minute access range pickings are slim today for new climbs of real worth at popular levels of difficulty (5.9 to mid-5.11). New climbs of excellence continue to evolve, but invariably require longer approaches and/or are harder than the average climber can hope to get up. Around 50 new climbs continue to be developed each year, by 20-30 or so climbers who are active in that period.

Individual effort and creativity remains highly prized, it has delivered Squamish's amazing kaleidoscope of world-renowned climbs. But among the few hundred activist climbers, an acceptance is growing that as Squamish has matured, some tempering of individual control of bolts in climbing route development has timely merit. The challenges rests in the considerable scope of the climbing environment and the prospect of change to a 50-year paradigm of unfettered liberty. Different policy models present themselves: from 'do nothing'; to government determining all policy. For very different reasons, neither would bring a good result. Some form of management by communal consensus is the ideal model, but no means of how to achieve it, or sectors to be managed, or how, or who would apply it, or with what tools it would be upheld, has yet come forward. But it is an important debate.

The most promising way to begin is through a funded initiative for 2009 to launch a program of public discussion led by a panel of leading climbers.



Spring-loaded Cam for Protection



Natural-gear Equalized Belay Station



Wire Nut for Protection

## Bouldering Terrain

Bouldering, as the name suggests, is a form of rock climbing that takes place on large random boulders, anywhere from a couple metres high to the height of a small house. The focal effort is working out short, often complex sequences of moves – ‘problems’ – between a starting point and a designated finishing point. It is a game as old as rock climbing itself: the climber is alone, with no rope, and no support.

The appeal of bouldering lies in its stark simplicity. Start here ... choreograph a series of often difficult, intense, and physically creative moves between rock features ... and top out. Entry cost is small, approaches are only a few minutes, activity can be highly social in groups, or alone in the forest, and the effort is of short intense duration. Boulders tend to be young, and in that regard, it has high social value as an athletic activity. Climbers are fit people.

The centrepiece of Squamish activity is the magnificent collection of granite boulders in the Grand Wall Forest, ranging along a kilometre from the campground to the Apron. Until the mid-1990s, bouldering interest at Squamish was very limited. Then the emerging generation of the day, looking for their expression of challenge and creative exploration began to explore the hundreds of boulders which over the millennia have fallen from the great western and northern walls of the Chief. Since then, bouldering at Murrin Park, in Paradise Valley, and north of Brackendale have emerged to draw further demand.

So why are they called ‘problems’? To get to the top of a boulder would be simple enough with a thing as prosaic as a ladder, but that would hardly be appealing. To climb a boulder without ropes, without protection, with no bolts and no shoulders to stand on: well, that’s the delightful, creative problem.

Bouldering’s ease of use and year-round availability does not come without stewardship challenge. The boulders themselves are not altered in any way other than cleaning holds where needed from vegetation, but the area at the base of the problems can be heavily impacted, and travelling between the boulders in many popular sectors has created a complex and random web of interconnected trails on the forest floor.

The best direction for stewardship would be to establish a long-term vision of how the bouldering environment, the connect trails and problem bases especially, should be arranged to balance high impact with high demand and the perennial complexity of trying to find a particular boulder.

photos in the Grand Wall Forest



## The Chief Summit Hiking Trails

The hike to the summit of the Chief is one of the extraordinary outdoor experiences of British Columbia. It is the most popular peak to climb in the west, and the most famous summit-hike in Canada. The trail is hidden away from view on the backside of the Chief, a steep and challenging scramble up from the Sea to Sky Highway. The reward is three-fold: overcoming the challenge of the steep pitches that step up through the forest of big old fir and cedar; breaking out into the breathtaking summit environment at the rim of the great walls of the Chief; and the stunning views into Garibaldi Park, the Tantalus mountains, the rich and fertile estuary of the Squamish river, and down to the ocean in Howe Sound. Most hikers will spend a couple hours up and down the Chief.

Today, it is believed that about 200,000 hikers reach the summit annually, a number that is growing at a pace. This immense popularity is derived from the Chief's easy availability, the exciting prospect of standing above the towering walls, and the allure of the popular physical challenge it poses.

The trail has existed in a rudimentary form for many decades, perhaps since the 1930s. By the 1970s, it was in regular use by descending climbers and avid hikers. Major improvements to the lower reaches of the trail and the link to Shannon Falls Park in 1985 spurred more rapid growth, and again after Stawamus Chief Provincial Park was created in 1995. The number of hikers will reach the quarter-million mark in the next few years.

This rapid growth of popularity has, however, overwhelmed the trail. Considerable erosion, braiding, and tree root exposure has arisen. Most acutely of all, the trail in several constrained stretches is unable to cope safely with hundreds of people going up and down the steep terrain at the same time. An analogy would be to imagine Georgia Street in Vancouver, pitched upward at a 15% grade, a single lane only in each direction: traffic jammed far back from each end, chaos on side streets, road surface decay, and economic life constrained. So as with that imagined Georgia Street, widening the Chief trail and investing in it for growth, long-term sustainability, the economy, and health and fitness values would be astute and rewarding policy. It would leverage the Chief's iconic status as an international jewel for British Columbia, and bring sustained benefit to environmental, social and economic objectives.



Tree root erosion on the Chief Trail



Hikers enjoying the views from the Chief's South Peak



## The Public Interface, Liability and Safety Concerns

The Public Interface refers to areas where the non-climbing public ventures into what can be described as ‘significant climbing terrain’. The relevance of this is unfolding as the non-climbing public becomes increasingly informed and curious about ‘what it’s like up there’ and tries to get closer to see the action.

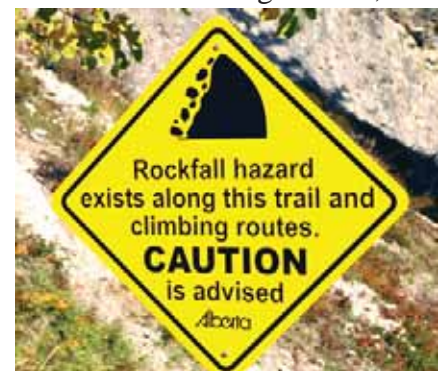
### Public Interface Considerations

In most instances of small crags such as at Murrin and the Smoke Bluffs and bouldering, this is fairly benign, other than climbers enjoying less quietude and becoming sightseeing objects of tourist curiosity, whether they like it or not. This is now a fact of life in the Smoke Bluffs where the general public is welcomed and increasingly active on all trails. In terms of interface safety at the crags, provided belaying climbers have adequate physical space to properly safeguard a leader (such is the case at Octopus Garden and Neat and Cool), there are few concerns. Where that physical space is tighter or constrained (such as Penny Lane), a degree of concern is warranted due to the possibility of inadequate space to belay properly while non-climbers might shuffle past. (Social distraction between groups of climbers was a principle cause of a climber’s death on the Chief a few years ago.) Although the situation is not acute, in the years to come that may change. The Highway 99 Rebuild completion will put the Smoke Bluffs an easy and spectacular drive of 45 minutes from Vancouver, the Squamish population is forecast to double in less than 25 years, and tourism growth is forecast to double in the next decade.

One public interface area merits immediate attention: the wide forest area below the Grand Wall of the Chief, extending south–north from the campground to the Apron. This terrain is rough and contains many hazards for the unwary; deep rock crevasses, large boulderfields, steep drop-offs, and a rugged forest floor, yet it is seamed by bouldering trails only a few minutes walk from a major tourist pull-out on Highway 99. Despite the Rock Climbing Strategy’s policy of no trailhead signage to deter non-climbers, the sight of ill-prepared tourists is now common. A considerable increase in tourism demand-pressure must be anticipated as the Chief becomes an ever-greater showcase to the world.

The hazards to casual tourists are twofold: underfoot from personal accidents, and overhead from stonefall near the base of the walls. Stonefall is an ever-present hazard, from natural causes such as high winds, frost, snowmelt, and rainfall, accidental causes by climbers up on the wall, even hikers throwing things down. In one incident, a family engaged in a picnic near the base of Apron Strings, only to abandon it in fright when stones came zinging down the wall. The general public is vulnerable.

The stonefall risk to climbers is no different, but they wear helmets and are adept at self-protection tactics (or should be). **Assertive signage forewarning everyone of the risks is highly recommended.**



At Grassi Lakes, Canmore

## Liability Concerns Over Hardware Replacement Programs

Liability concern directly impacts stewardship of the climbs in regard to expansion bolt replacement. Historically, government has left it to climbers to decide how best to manage the aesthetic aspects of climbing. Today however, the absence of formal engineering standards (which by industrial standards would be absurdly impractical) has created the spectre of lawsuit-exposure, and brought a chilling effect on the willingness of climbers organizations to move forward with proactive programs of hardware management. This is a particular concern to the District of Squamish's Smoke Bluff Committee, and to the Squamish Access Society.

If government were to take a proactive stance on liability assumption, such as has happened over Sea to Sky mountainbike trails under the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts, the door would open to a more active and progressive action program.

## Safety Hazards to Climbers

While it must be said that climbers are entirely responsible for themselves when climbing, one situation is worthy of bringing forward for attention: the numerous dead and hanging trees on the walls of the Chief.

While these are entirely natural situations, the certain fate for any tree that lives high on the Chief is to fall down the wall eventually to a ledge below, or the base. This happens commonly during winter rain storms and heavy snowfall. The great majority do not pose any particular risk to climbers, but there are some that merit attention, particularly those that get hung up on climbs below.

### Three examples ...

1. the large hanging-down cedar snag below the prominent long roof on Tantalus Wall is alarmingly detached from the rock but must be climbed as part of the route.
2. the log that lodged itself a decade ago in the first pitch of Snake (on the Apron). There are many other examples.
3. the cedar at the base of the Split Pillar has grown from a small bush 50 years ago to a substantial tree rooted in the crack at the base of the right side of the pillar. As is evident to anyone who looks closely, the entire Split Pillar and the Sword above it are attached to the wall at this point by only a few square metres of rock in a shear zone. There is cause to believe the tree's roots may be creating expansive pressure that could weaken the shear zone. Consideration should be given to removing the tree.



Tantalus Wall tree



Split Pillar tree



## Stawamus Chief Campground Operation

The Climbers Campground below the walls of the Chief is renowned world-wide for its accommodating atmosphere and gathering-place ambience. It has existed since the 1960s, and was formalized after Stawamus Chief Park was created in 1995. It is a walk-in campground with 53 tent sites, and 16 small drive-in sites. A high attraction is that it is within walking and easy cycling distance of downtown. Internationally, it ranks with Camp 4 in Yosemite National Park as one of the most highly-regarded climbers campgrounds in the world. The Chief Campground, as was granted to Camp 4 by the US Park Service, is deserving of formal recognition as a heritage site of national standing.

The campground is a hub of energy where climbers gather from around the world, confident they could travel to Squamish and meet others to climb with, message boards alive with dialogue and exchange. This was a record year for activity with over 30,000 individual overnights during the May–October period. The Chief Campground is a huge international draw, and few outside of the climbing community appreciate how significant it is for attracting large numbers of climbers to Squamish. Many well-travelled climbers consider it to be the best climbers campground in the world.

As with many aspects of the Squamish climbing life, growth and demand-pressure has the campground now maxed out at its 69 site capacity, and with no end in sight to the need for more sites. Commercial campgrounds in Squamish, although good establishments, do not easily fulfill the requirements of most visiting climbers, being either too far from the crags, too far from downtown for pedestrian use, or unable to deliver the compact all-important social ambience that makes for a great campground.

There is a pressing need for another 50 to 80 more walk-in type campground sites in the south Squamish area. More generally, the shortage of camping opportunity is a regional, even province-wide concern. A great campground, such as we have at the Chief, is not just a functionary place, it is an international draw to come visit Squamish. It is in the interests of both BC Parks and the District of Squamish to act in concert to develop a strategy to secure more camping opportunity: the case is primarily economic.



## Funding Stawamus Chief Park Operations

It is little-known that the revenue from fees paid at the Climbers Campground pays substantially for the Chief Park Day-Use Operations, such as managing garbage, toilets, picnic tables, parking, user facilities, grass-cutting and much more. Despite the record number of campers in 2008, campground revenue is now failing to meet operational costs due to high growth in the number of Chief day-visitors. Given the portending situation when Highway 99 improvements are complete in 2009, it can be anticipated that operational costs will quickly spiral well above campground revenue. This funding model was set in place when the Park was established, and the Park Facility Operator is a highly regarded steward of the frontcountry. But the inability of the current situation to be sustainable means a new funding model is needed to ensure park management efficacy.

**How can this be achieved?** A possibility of funding higher day-use operational costs could be met by an expanded campsite at the Chief; there is considerable land available (although it is unlikely to meet all future regional campsite needs). Pay parking also presents itself as a BC Parks policy option, but it is unpopular, and would bring an awkward imbalance of uniformity for visitors, as Smoke Bluff Park has no parking fees. If the province applied a parking fee at the Chief, there is the not-remote possibility the District may choose to follow suit and impose a second parking fee additional to the provincial one.

In the context of user fees, it should be given reflection that for 20 years and more, Squamish has been repeatedly praised by appreciative climbers from afar for its unusually welcoming ambience; from its supportive residents, its urban spirit, and benign government policies. This is embedded deep in North American climbing legend. Astute policy would seek to further reinforce this fine asset.

Weighing all these policy matters in consideration, the destination-centred nature of climbing and hiking in all four parks points inexorably to the benefits of collaborative partnering between BC Parks, the District of Squamish and climbers.

**What form could collaboration take?** A collaboration would have many strengths, a principal one being economic, and would reflect the simple truth that the four Squamish parks share much in common across recreation infrastructure, management, and visitor profiles. They are a destination-focussed collection, a single hub for similar activities, and that strongly influences the decision of climbers and hikers to repeatedly come to Squamish. Supporting and promoting this hub of four parks could be developed into a regional strategy by the Province and the District, all the better if aligned with other organisations, agencies and interests. Such a collaborative body would be well-positioned to enable funding needs for a wide array of operational and infrastructure needs. Momentum to deliver high value to visitors would be returned by assured and steady growth through effective policy, ensuring the climbing life remains vibrant, and hiking and park opportunities expanded. This would protect the Chief's iconic branding as well-invested, with the greater hub of attraction integrally connected.

## Smoke Bluff Municipal Park

Smoke Bluff Park is the crown jewel of the Squamish Municipal park system. Its delightfully mellow character on a sunny, south-west facing hillside close to downtown is shaped by 30-odd bluffy granite crags, a fine interconnected community trail system that features a signature loop trail, and many high vantage points from which to enjoy the valley and surrounding mountains. It is situated adjacent to the Upper Mamquam Blind Channel, quite literally the tidal edge of the Pacific, and the Squamish Adventure Centre. The Bluffs are within walking distance of thousands of residents.

The first climbers were active in the mid-1970s, and since then, climbers have been the largest single user-group by far. The Bluffs have a less daunting atmosphere than the Chief, with considerable sunshine, a drier environment, and year-round climbing. The climbs are easier too: if the Chief's entry level is 5.10, the Smoke Bluffs is 5.8. The Bluffs carry great appeal to a demographic that seeks lighter and easier adventures, more casual, more social. An access time of 15 minutes will gain every crag

A forward-looking Squamish Council created the Park in late 2006 after a three-year planning process. Rockclimbing is the centrepiece of the park, and it was climbers who drove the park's creation. It is managed by the Smoke Bluffs Park Advisory Committee of Squamish Council with representatives of stakeholder groups. The committee have been active since early 2007, and has been pressing forward energetically with an excellent program to enhance the park for the general public and climbers.

The committee has established a trail work group which has greatly improved the loop trail and established signed wayposts, a crag work group has developed a program of vegetation management along the crag bases and bolt anchor stewardship, and progress is ongoing toward a management plan. Funding is supplied by the District of Squamish, most of which has been devoted to improving the Smoke Bluffs environment for the general public. The benefit of this work is very evident and highly applauded.

Some aspects of the committee's program are unable to move forward at this time. The Western Gateway to link directly to the Adventure Centre is stalled until such times as Council determines Upper Mamquam Blind Channel land-use policy. To gain full benefit from regional tourism growth this gateway is needed, as the existing North Gateway parking area is over-capacity to serve even climbers at peak periods.





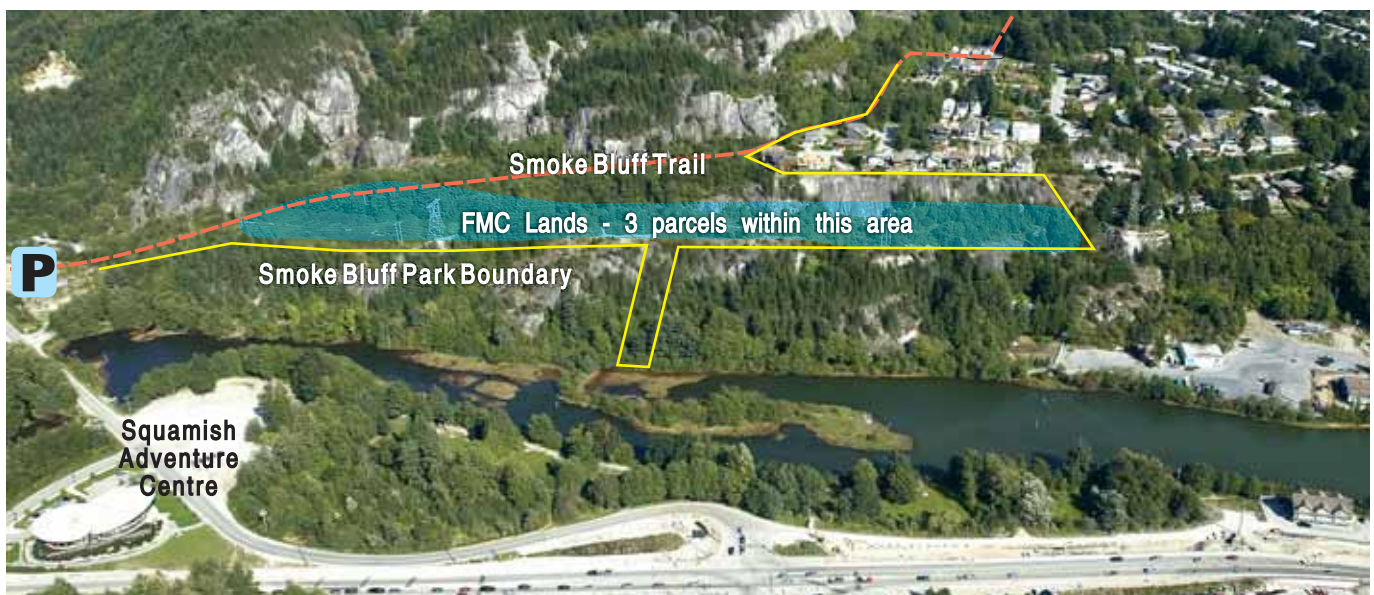
The Park is thriving in public esteem, but it is not yet as complete as is popularly understood. Strategically, important work remains to be done to assure the future.

The western perimeter of Smoke Bluff Park above the Blind Channel is the only flatland in the park. It holds several small crags, is criss-crossed with trails including the Smoke Bluff Trail used by hundreds of residents daily and the annual Test of Metal mountainbike race. This flat land is held under the private control of the Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC (FMC).

In 1988 that flatland was purchased as three parcels through a climbers' initiative, led by the FMC, to forestall commercial development. The purchase was paid for by hundreds of people in the climbing community and financed by Mountain Equipment Coop. The land is now worth a considerable value, but the intent of the purchase has been upheld across three decades, to gift the land to Squamish for inclusion in Smoke Bluff Park.

The historic premise of the land purchase was to protect the future of the Smoke Bluffs by donating the land into a future park to assure rock climbing assets and values were protected. It is now close to two years since the park was created, and the land donation from the FMC to the District of Squamish has not been completed. It is little-known that the District's Smoke Bluff Committee manages the FMC land as if it were public domain, but its continued administration of this private land will be increasingly called into question if the land transfer is not completed in a timely manner. It is strongly recommended that the District brings the land formally into the park, and its rock climbing assets and values correspondingly guaranteed in perpetuity. The park's foundations and integrity would be at significant risk otherwise.

Smoke Bluff Park with its proximity to thousands of residents, the downtown core, the Adventure Centre and the ocean is a municipal jewel. The population growth of Sea to Sky, tourism, post-2010 benefits, and the coming 40-minute commute from Vancouver portend considerable growth for the Smoke Bluffs over the next few years.



## Recommendations to BC Parks

### 1. **An Advisory Committee for the three Provincial Parks.**

Establish an Advisory Committee to support strategic and policy goals and advise on priorities for management direction. The committee would include significant climbers' representation. To encompass wider strategic recreation and economic goals for the Squamish area, and opportunity to explore creative funding sources, the committee could be broadened to include the District of Squamish, Squamish Nation, Smoke Bluff Park representation, other government agencies, and related non-governmental organisations. It is of paramount concern to ensure adequate funding for park operational costs, and to ensure the potential of the four parks is leveraged to catalyze regional economic opportunity. Such an advisory committee would be well-positioned to enable it.

### 2. **The BC Parks Rock Climbing Strategy (RCS).**

Establish a sub-committee of the Advisory Committee, comprised of climbers' representatives on the Advisory Committee and other climbers, to undertake a thorough review of the 1999 RCS with the aim to upgrade it to reflect the circumstances of today. This should begin through the winter of 2008–2009. On completion of the upgrade, the sub-committee should conduct quarterly reviews.

#### **Matters of current concern, in order of priority, would include:**

- a) **Climb Revitalization.** Develop a strategy that would define goals for the revitalization of overgrown climbs and crags, and policy on how to implement the strategy, with clear operational guidelines that recognize the need to balance climbing route development matters (pages 24-25) and absorbing growth demand.
- b) **Trail Signage.** Develop a comprehensive access trail signage plan, the intent of which would include a policy of enabling the climbing public to find less-travelled crags, thus drawing climbers away from the most popular and heavily-used areas.
- c) **Grand Wall Forest Bouldering Trails.** Determining strategic direction for the best long-term trail plan for the area, and allied management policies, in particular consideration of the complexity of way-finding and environmental impacts.

### 3. **A Trail Strategy.** Develop a comprehensive trail strategy for all the parks that would include:

- a) addressing the need to establish a climbers' access trail system that meets upkeep and growth needs as described in this report.
- b) creating an expanded hiking trail system to absorb public growth demand and leverage the Chief.
- c) ensuring integration between a) and b), and trail integration between all four parks.
- d) developing an assured, funded annual maintenance program to address the regular impacts of weather and wind on forest trails.



4. **Climbers' Campground Expansion.** That the Chief campground be expanded to accommodate rising demand. Other locations within walking/cycling distance of downtown Squamish should be considered with the District of Squamish for additional walk-in camp sites.
5. **Interpretive Programs.** Introduce interpretive programs in the Chief frontcountry for the general public, such as geological and forest ecology, regional history, and climbing activity. Given the rising demand-pressure to visit the Chief such programs would be attractive, and the Advisory Committee could be positioned to support funding objectives.
6. **Terrain Hazards.** Develop a strategy for managing climbing terrain to mitigate risk to the non-climbing public that arises from the rugged ground and stonefall hazard. Situations where the general public travels close to belaying climbers should be passively discouraged.
7. **Hazard Trees.** Conduct a Hazard Tree Assessment on the Chief in respect to risk for climbers, and for rock climb management when the need arises.
8. **Park Acquisitions.**
  - a) That BC Parks consider acquisition of the Nightmare Rock and Petrifying Wall lands as additions to Murrin Park, in respect of their standing as crags of considerable significance.
  - b) That the Malamute lands be considered for acquisition into Stawamus Chief Provincial Park as recommended by the 1993 Regional Protected Areas Study Team.
  - c) That the boundaries of Stawamus Chief Provincial Park be reviewed in the vicinity of the Slhanay climbing area. It appears from boundary mapping that the core climbing area may be outside the park (ie, north of it). If it is determined that Slhanay is not in the park, to acquire the lands into the park.
9. **Ranger Presence.** That BC Parks consider increased staffing levels for uniformed rangers on the ground, particularly through the spring-summer season. It is the report's view that an increased ranger presence is essential, but cannot be adequately accomplished at present staffing levels. In light of the high public use by climbers and hikers, totalling a quarter million user-days a year in Stawamus Park alone there is significant need for a uniformed presence in the terrain, providing interpretive direction for visitors, engaging in on-the-ground policy management, and general engagement with the public.
10. **Volunteer Training.** That BC Parks invest in lowering park maintenance cost by enabling volunteer climbers to acquire chainsaw skill certification for recreation stewardship purposes. This would be a cost-efficient step toward having a trained cadre of volunteers sanctioned for such work. The cost of early-season trail cleanups (3d) would be lowered as a result.
11. **Master Plan Upgrades.** That BC Parks update the master plans for Shannon Falls Park and Murrin Park to reflect the presence and importance of rock climbing in the parks.

## Recommendations to All Agencies

- 12. A Survey of Climbers.** That the SAS conduct a survey of climbers in 2009 that would seek wide opinion on matters relating to new route development and retrofit work to help inform future Rock Climbing Strategy direction on vertical terrain policy.
- 13. District of Squamish Climbing Coordinator.** That the District of Squamish assigns meaningful staff time to adequately address management of Municipal rock climbing resources, and work in close alliance with BC Parks and other agencies to address inter-connected management needs.
- 14. An Updated 2009 Rock Climbing Strategy as Regional Policy.** In conjunction with other agencies, consideration should be given to broadening an updated 2009 RCS into a regional policy, where applicable, to ensure common management and conduct standards are established.
- 15. The Official Community Plan.** That the District of Squamish includes an appraisal of the value of climbing, economically and socially, in the Official Community Plan. There is currently scant mention.
- 16. Carrying Capacity.** Undertake a Carrying Capacity Assessment for all four parks to determine future strategy for balancing visitor experience with environmental impact.
- 17. Parking Capacity and Security.** That current parking at all four area parks be reviewed for:
  - a) Possible expansion, if and where feasible,
  - b) The benefits and disadvantages of a cap, and corresponding access-egress infrastructure needs.
  - c) Security concerns and personal storage locker systems.
- 18. Other Regional Climbing Centres.** That government agencies be encouraged to develop an inventory and baseline review of rock climbing assets and alpine climbing resources in Sea to Sky region that are not covered by this report, as a precursor to more active management engagement.
- 19. A Survey of Climbers in 2009.** That BC Parks and the District of Squamish conduct a survey in 2009 to determine the number of climbers active in Squamish and their patterns of activity. To be meaningful and effective, the methodology should be highly cognizant of the inter-relatedness of the parks, the highly nuanced culture of climbing, and all aspects of how best to capture an authentic picture.
- 20. Liability-Chill** That BC Parks, the District of Squamish, and Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts collaborate to find ways to alleviate the roadblock of liability-chill for climbing organizations on matters relating to fixed hardware and targeted revitalization programs.
- 21. Park Use Permits.** That the District of Squamish adopt common policy with BC Parks on Park Use Permit procedures for commercial climbing guide companies.
- 22. Smoke Bluffs Land Transfer.** That the District of Squamish work with the Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC to enable a timely transfer of their lands into Smoke Bluff Park.
- 23. Sky Pilot–Mount Habrich.** That the District of Squamish engage with other agencies to seek practical and reliable access to this area.
- 24. The Art Gallery Crag.** That the District of Squamish recognizes the value of this significant climbing resource on crown land east of Brennan Park, and takes measures to assure future public access.





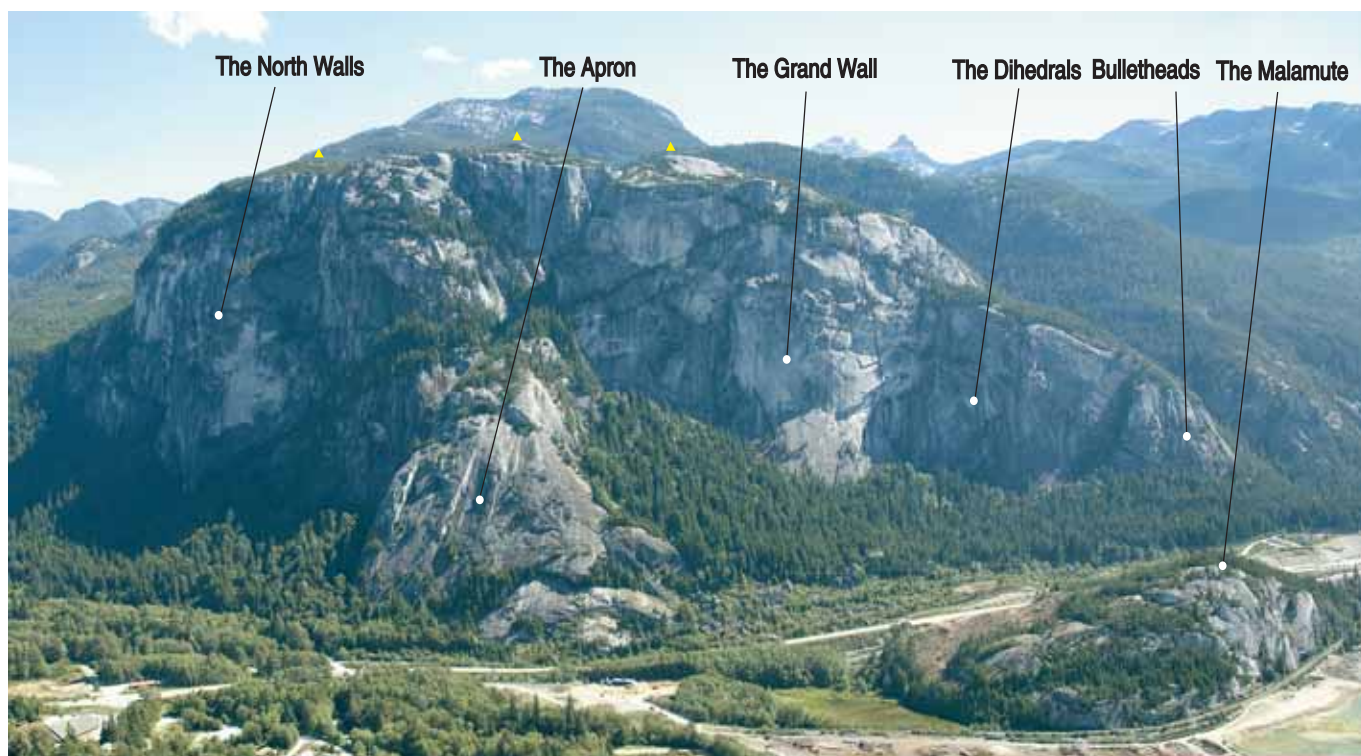
# APPENDIX

## Climbing Resources Inventory

The purpose of this section is to show in a consistent photographic format the climbing assets of the Squamish region, with a text summary describing the nature of the climbs, the crags, trails, jurisdictions and intensity usage. The term ‘Climbing Resources Inventory’ is used to capture the spectrum of assets.



## Stawamus Chief Provincial Park

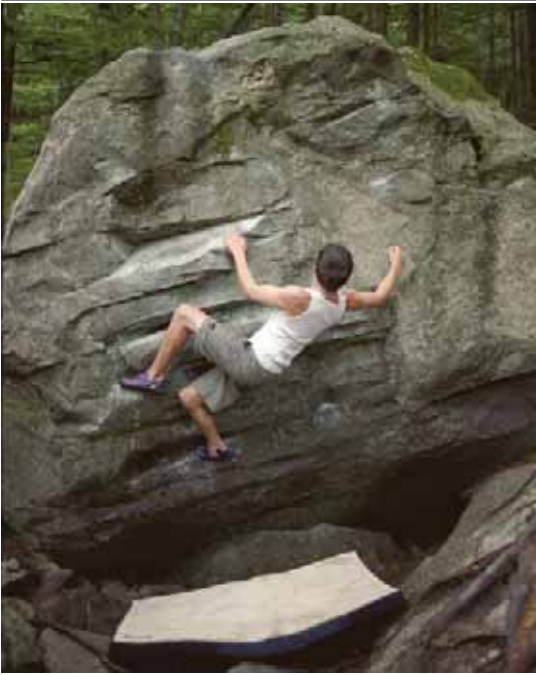


**The Stawamus Chief, better known simply as ‘The Chief’** is one of the most famous rock climbing centres in the world, the premier climbing centre in Canada, and the most popular hiking peak in Canada. Its high international exposure on the Sea to Sky Highway and over a quarter of a million annual visits from climbers and hikers have established the Chief as the premier frontcountry provincial park in British Columbia. The traditional name by which the Big Stone is known to Squamish Nation, is Siyam: ‘Respected One’, adds further testament to this.

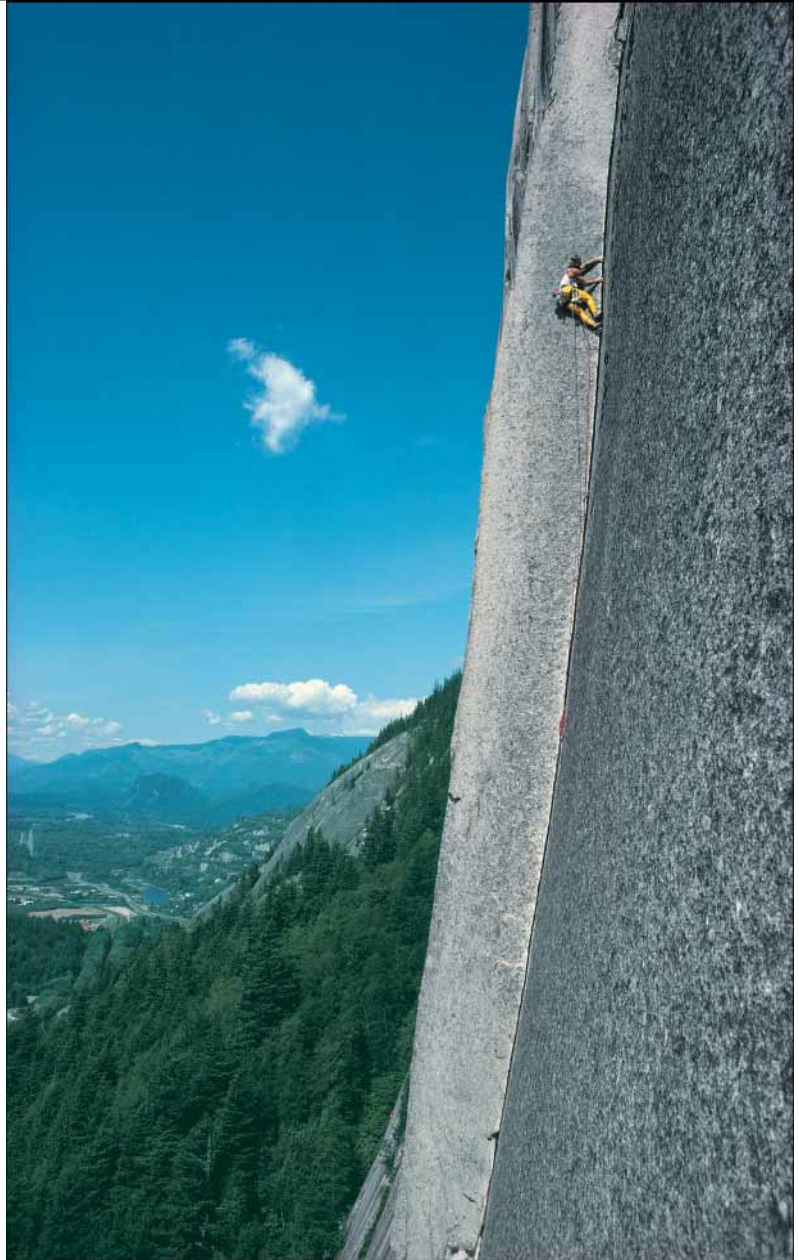
The reasons for this lie in the extraordinary shape of its wonderful granite dome, its open rocky summits, the immaculate rock, the hundreds of splitter cracks, the long demanding free climbs, the hundreds of large boulders scattered along its western and northern walls, the stunning summit views, the short approach, the Pacific Ocean, urban Squamish and its estuary below, and a major city an hour away. With the Malamute at the ocean’s edge and the nearby Smoke Bluffs Park, Murrin Park, Shannon Falls Park, and Skwelwil’em Wildlife Area in the estuary, there is a very wide range of climbing, hiking and viewing experiences in one compact area.

**The Chief became Stawamus Chief Provincial Park on October 17th 1995** as a result of the Parks Plan 90 process. It is part of a contiguous group of granite monoliths beside Shannon Falls Park, the Papoose, and the Malamute, and The Land Conservancy holds a central property between all four.





Bouldering in the Grand Wall Forest



A climber on the Split Pillar, one of the most famous pitches in the world.



Hikers nearing the Chief's Centre Peak.



The view from the Chief's Centre Peak, looking across the Squamish Estuary to the Tantalus Mountains and Garibaldi Park.



## The Apron



Jurisdiction. . . . .	BC Parks
Typical Season . . . . .	late March–early October
Access Time . . . . .	5 – 10 minutes
Parking Places. . . . .	Apron
Facing Direction. . . . .	Northwest
Significant Trails . . . . .	Apron Base Trail, South Gully, Apron Descent, Apron Connector
Number of Climbs . . . . .	71
Number of Climbing Pitches . . . . .	257
Number of Highest Value climbs . . . . .	8–10
Difficulty of Most Climbs . . . . .	Low-Moderate
Length of Most Climbs. . . . .	generally 4–6 pitches

# The Grand Wall



Jurisdiction. . . . . BC Parks  
 Typical Season . . . . . late March–early October  
 Access Time . . . . . 10 – 15 minutes  
 Parking Places. . . . . Chief Highway 99 / Chief South  
 Significant Trails . . . . . Grand Wall Base Trail, Grand Wall Access, Dihedrals Access  
 Number of Highest Value climbs . . . 10–15

**Grand Wall Base**

Number of Climbs . . . . . 38  
 Number of Climbing Pitches . . . . . 257  
 Difficulty of Most Climbs . . . . . Moderate – High  
 Length of Most Climbs. . . . . generally 1–3 pitches

**Grand Wall Full**

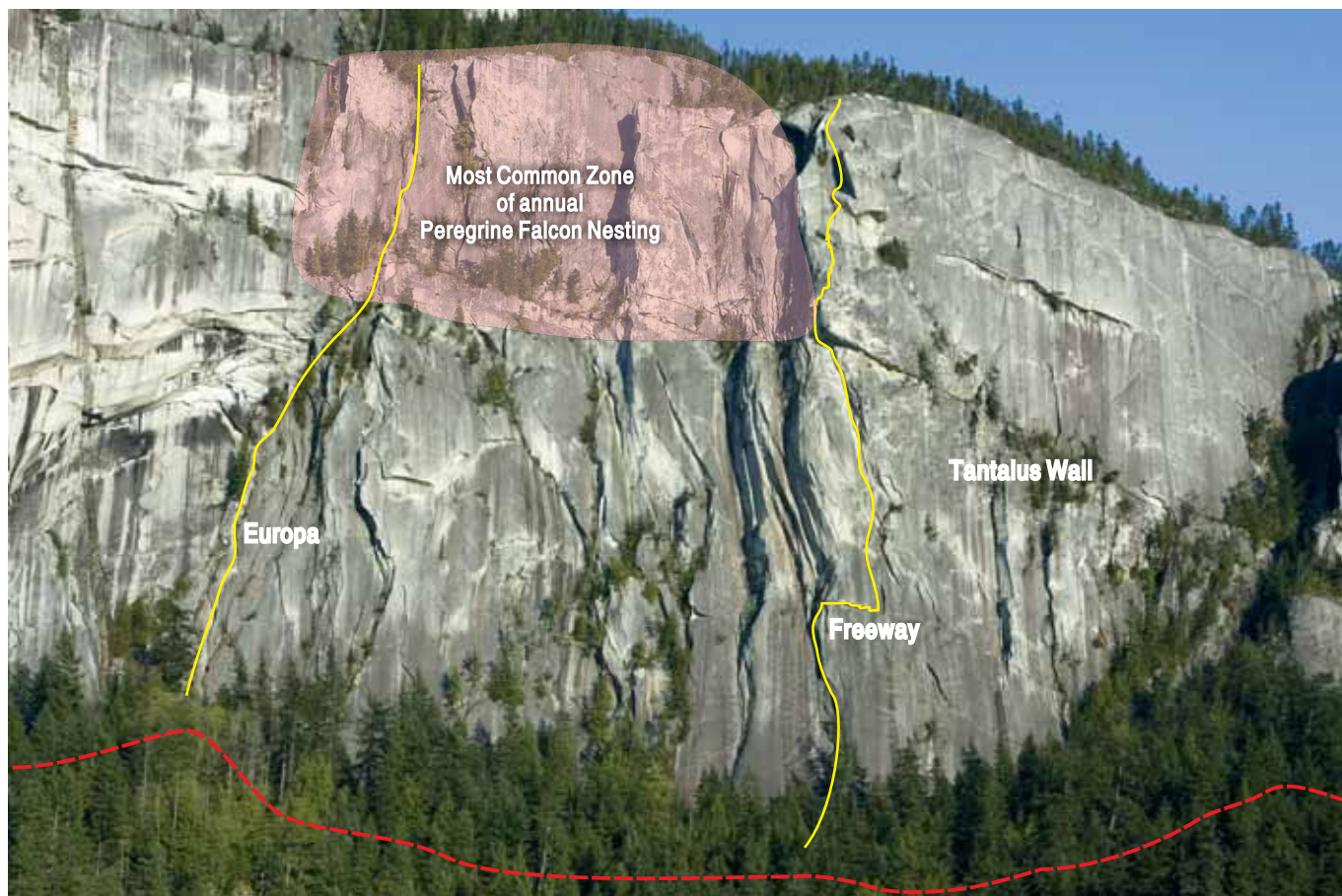
Number of Climbs. . . . . 6, and variations  
 Number of Climbing Pitches.. . 54  
 Difficulty of Most Climbs. . . . . Moderate – High  
 Length of Most Climbs. . . . . generally 7 – 15p.

**Above Bellygood** (includes the Penthouse, Raven’s Castle, off Bellygood)

Number of Climbs . . . . . 30  
 Number of Climbing Pitches . . . . . 42  
 Difficulty of Most Climbs . . . . . Moderate – High  
 Length of Most Climbs. . . . . generally 1–2 pitches

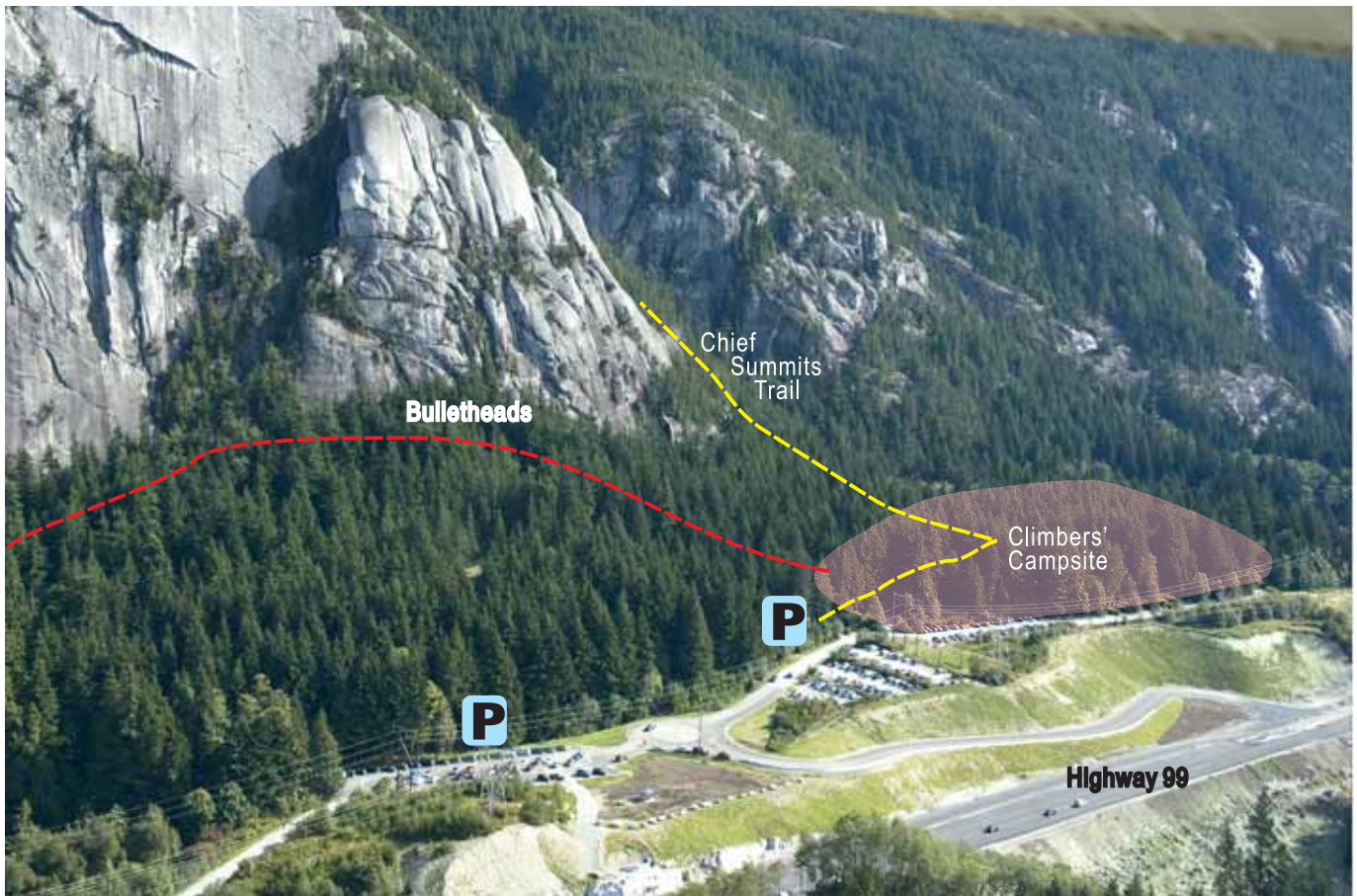


## The Dihedrals and Tantalus Wall



Jurisdiction. . . . .	BC Parks
Typical Season . . . . .	late March – early May, Aug 1st – early October
Access Time . . . . .	10 – 15 minutes
Facing Direction. . . . .	West
Parking Places. . . . .	Chief South
Significant Trails . . . . .	Dihedrals Access, Grand Wall Base Trail
Number of Climbs . . . . .	31
Number of Climbing Pitches . . . . .	129
Number of Highest Value climbs . . .	6–8
Difficulty of Most Climbs . . . . .	Moderate – High
Length of Most Climbs. . . . .	generally 4–8 pitches, many short. . .

# The Bulletheads



Jurisdiction. . . . .	BC Parks
Typical Season . . . . .	early March – late October
Access Time . . . . .	10 – 15 minutes
Facing Direction. . . . .	Southwest–West
Parking Places. . . . .	Chief South
Significant Trails . . . . .	Bulleheads Access, Grand Wall Base Trail
Number of Climbs . . . . .	59
Number of Climbing Pitches . . . . .	107
Number of Highest Value climbs . . .	5–6
Difficulty of Most Climbs . . . . .	Moderate
Length of Most Climbs. . . . .	generally 1–3 pitches.



## Slhanay



Jurisdiction . . . . .	BC Parks
Typical Season . . . . .	Late March – early October
Access Time . . . . .	15 minutes
Parking Places . . . . .	Slhanay
Facing Direction . . . . .	North
Significant Trails . . . . .	Slhanay Access, Slhanay Base Trail
Number of Climbs . . . . .	17
Number of Climbing Pitches . . . . .	69
Number of Highest Value climbs . . . . .	5–6
Difficulty of Most Climbs . . . . .	Moderate
Length of Most Climbs . . . . .	generally 3–4 pitches.

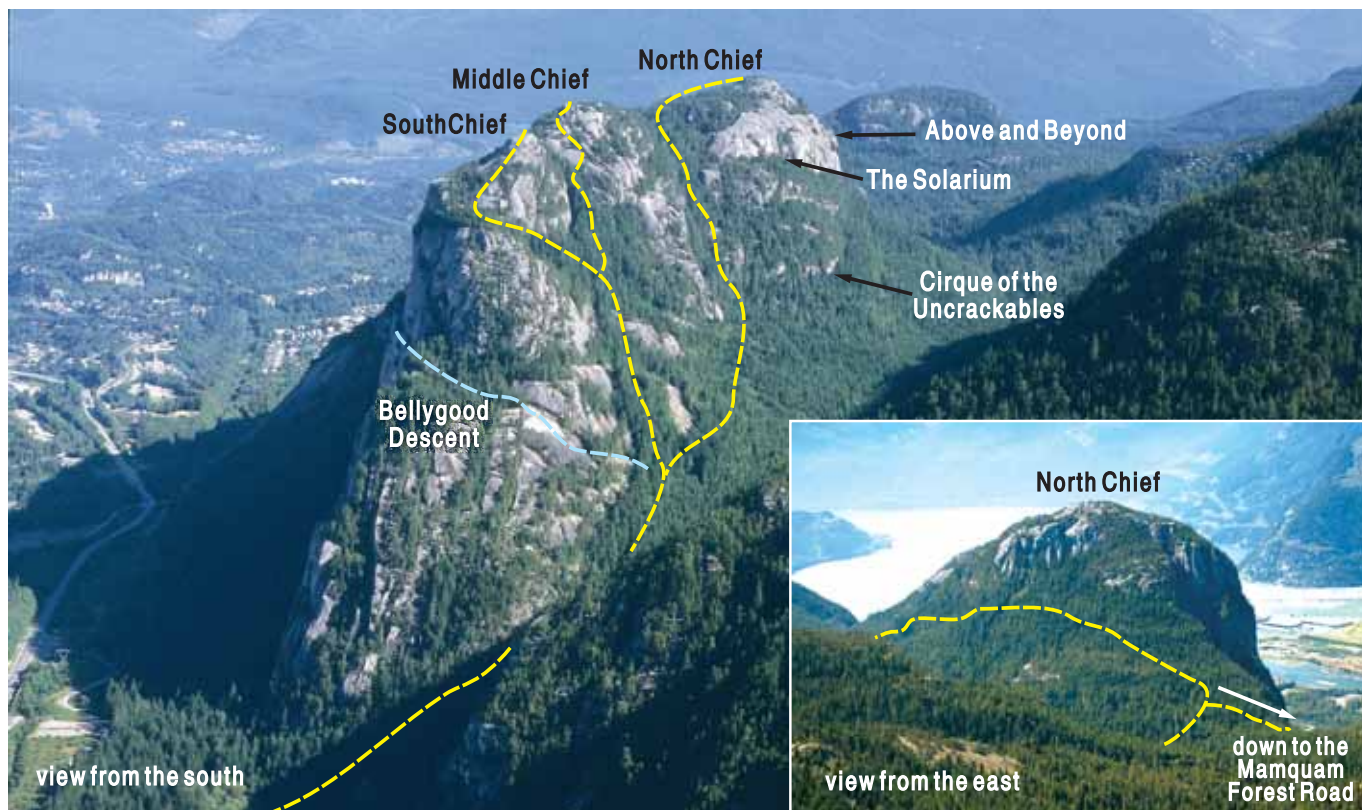
## The Chief — North Side



Jurisdiction. . . . .	BC Parks
Typical Season . . . . .	early April – early October
Access Time . . . . .	15–20 minutes
Parking Places. . . . .	Apron
Facing Direction. . . . .	North
Significant Trails . . . . .	South Gully, Sheriff's Badge, Angel's Crest (North Gully), North–North Gully
Number of Climbs . . . . .	64
Number of Climbing Pitches . . . . .	177
Number of Highest Value climbs . . . . .	8–10
Difficulty of Most Climbs . . . . .	Moderate–High
Length of Most Climbs. . . . .	generally 4–12 pitches.



## The Chief — Backside



Jurisdiction . . . . .	BC Parks
Typical Season . . . . .	Late March – early October
Access Time . . . . .	25 – 50 minutes
Parking Places . . . . .	Chief South
Significant Trails . . . . .	Backside Trail, Solarium Trail, Slhanay Summit Trail
Number of Climbs . . . . .	76
Number of Climbing Pitches . . . . .	111
Number of Highest Value climbs . . . . .	8–10
Difficulty of Most Climbs . . . . .	Moderate–High
Length of Most Climbs . . . . .	1-3 pitches
Crags . . . . .	Solarium
. . . . .	Cirque of the Uncrackables
. . . . .	White Cliff
. . . . .	Heliopolis
. . . . .	Misc crags scattered

## The Chief — Hiking Trails



“Hiking the The Chief” brings a choice of three peaks and several different routes to reach them.

### The South Chief

This is by far the most popular summit, being the shortest hike, the most well-worn trail, and the rockiest peak of all.

### The Middle Chief

This is by considered by many to be the nicest summit of the three, more open, better views to the north, and acres of bedrock to enjoy.

### The North Chief

This is the longest hike and the least travelled, but it excels in views into Garibaldi Park.

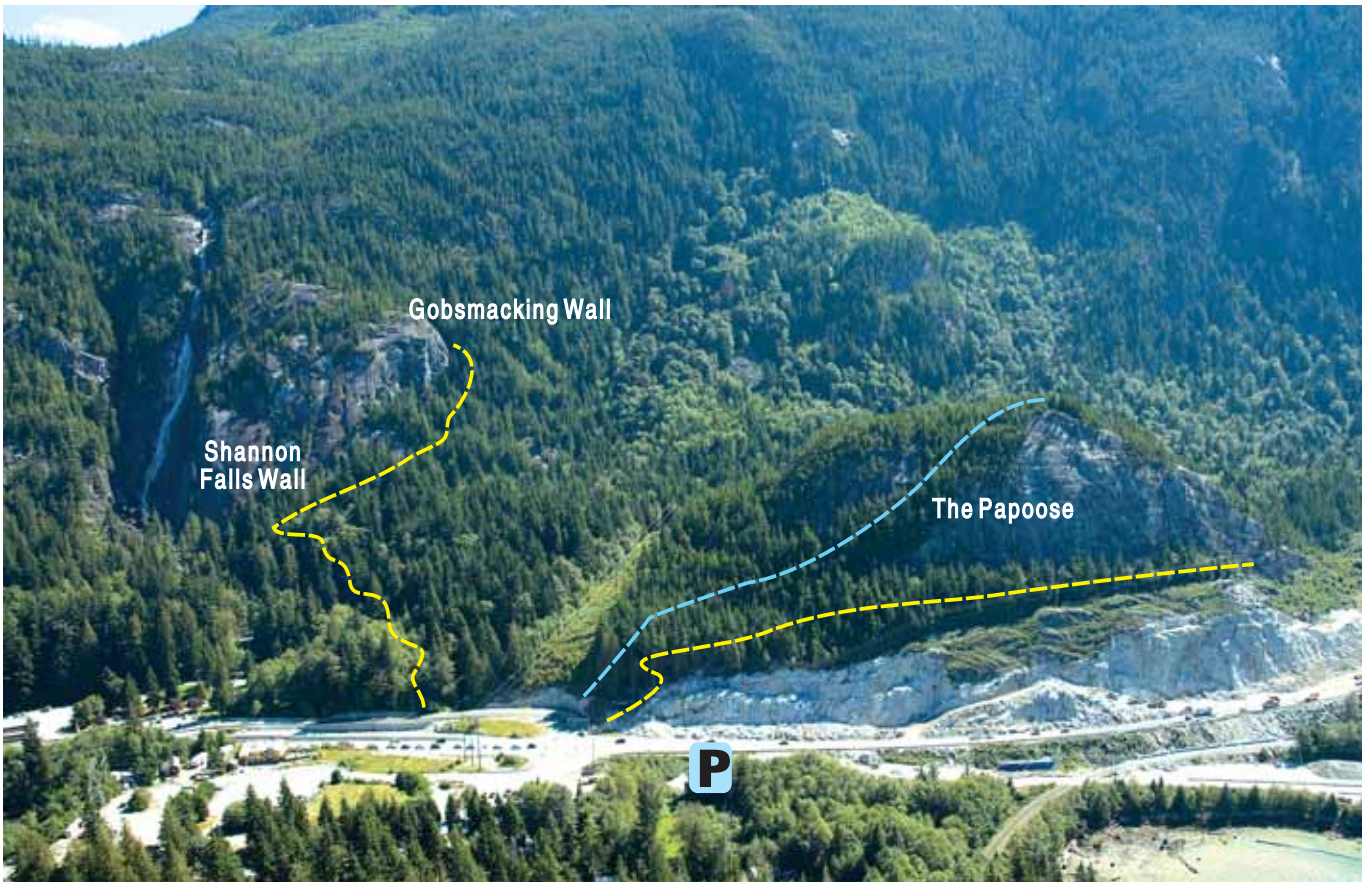


## The Malamute



Jurisdiction. . . . .	CN Rail at the base, Private above
Typical Season . . . . .	early March – late October
Access Time . . . . .	10 minutes
Parking Places. . . . .	Chief Highway / Chief South
Significant Trails . . . . .	Access from Highway 99, Loop trail across the summit.
Number of Climbs . . . . .	59
Number of Climbing Pitches . . . . .	85
Number of Highest Value climbs . . . . .	6–8
Difficulty of Most Climbs . . . . .	Moderate–High
Length of Most Climbs. . . . .	1-3 pitches

## Shannon Falls Provincial Park



Jurisdiction . . . . . BC Parks  
 Typical Season . . . . . late March – mid October  
 Access Time . . . . . 10 minutes  
 Parking Places . . . . . Chief Highway west side  
 Number of Highest Value climbs . . . 6–8

### Shannon Falls

Number of Climbs . . . . . 14  
 Number of Climbing Pitches . . . . . 33  
 Difficulty of Most Climbs . . . . . Moderate  
 Length of Most Climbs . . . . . 1–3 pitches

### The Papoose

Number of Climbs . . . . . 20  
 Number of Climbing Pitches . . . . . 63  
 Difficulty of Most Climbs . . . . . Moderate  
 Length of Most Climbs . . . . . 2–3 pitches

### Gobsmacking Wall

Number of Climbs . . . . . 10  
 Number of Climbing Pitches . . . 21  
 Difficulty of Most Climbs . . . . . Moderate – High  
 Length of Most Climbs . . . . . generally 1–2p.

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## Murrin Provincial Park Area — View from the South

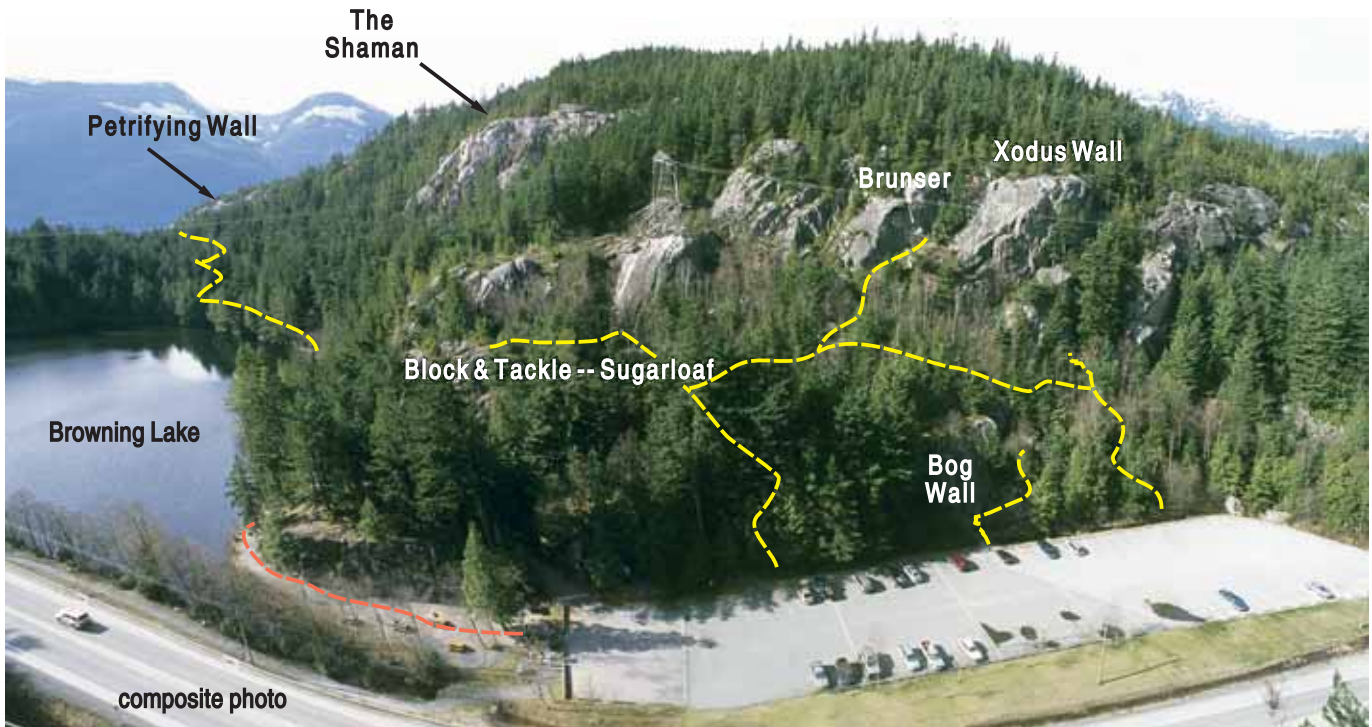


Nightmare Rock



Petrifying Wall

## Murrin Provincial Park Area — View from the East



Jurisdiction. . . . .	BC Parks, MTCA
Typical Season . . . . .	early March – late October
Access Time . . . . .	10 minutes
Parking Places. . . . .	Murrin Park
Significant Trails . . . . .	Access from Highway 99
. . . . .	Access to Petrifying Wall
. . . . .	Central Network.
Number of Climbs . . . . .	269
Number of Climbing Pitches . . . . .	269
Number of Highest Value climbs . . . . .	13–15
Difficulty of Most Climbs . . . . .	Low – Moderate–High
Length of Most Climbs. . . . .	1 pitch

### Murrin Area Crag

Sugarloaf . . . . .	
Brunser . . . . .	
Xodus Wall . . . . .	
Milkman's Wall. . . . .	
Genesis Wall . . . . .	
Baldwin Crack . . . . .	
Bog Wall . . . . .	
Bouldering Traverse . . . . .	
The Shaman . . . . .	
Zoe . . . . .	
Lakeside-In-The-Woods . . . . .	
Petrifying Wall . . . . .	
Up Among The Firs . . . . .	
Above-The-Lake Crag . . . . .	
Leviticus. . . . .	
Jalap Bluff . . . . .	
Nightmare Rock. . . . .	
Valley of Shaddai. . . . .	



## Smoke Bluff Municipal Park



Penny Lane



## Smoke Bluff Municipal Park



Jurisdiction. . . . . District of Squamish,  
 . . . . . Private and Crown  
 Typical Season . . . . . All Year  
 Access Time . . . . . 5–15 minutes  
 Parking Places. . . . . Loggers Lane  
 Significant Trails . . . . . Loop trail and entire Network  
 Number of Climbs . . . . . 450  
 Number of Climbing Pitches . . . . . 450  
 Number of Highest Value climbs . . . 10–12  
 Difficulty of Most Climbs . . . . . Low–Moderate  
 Length of Most Climbs. . . . . 1 pitch

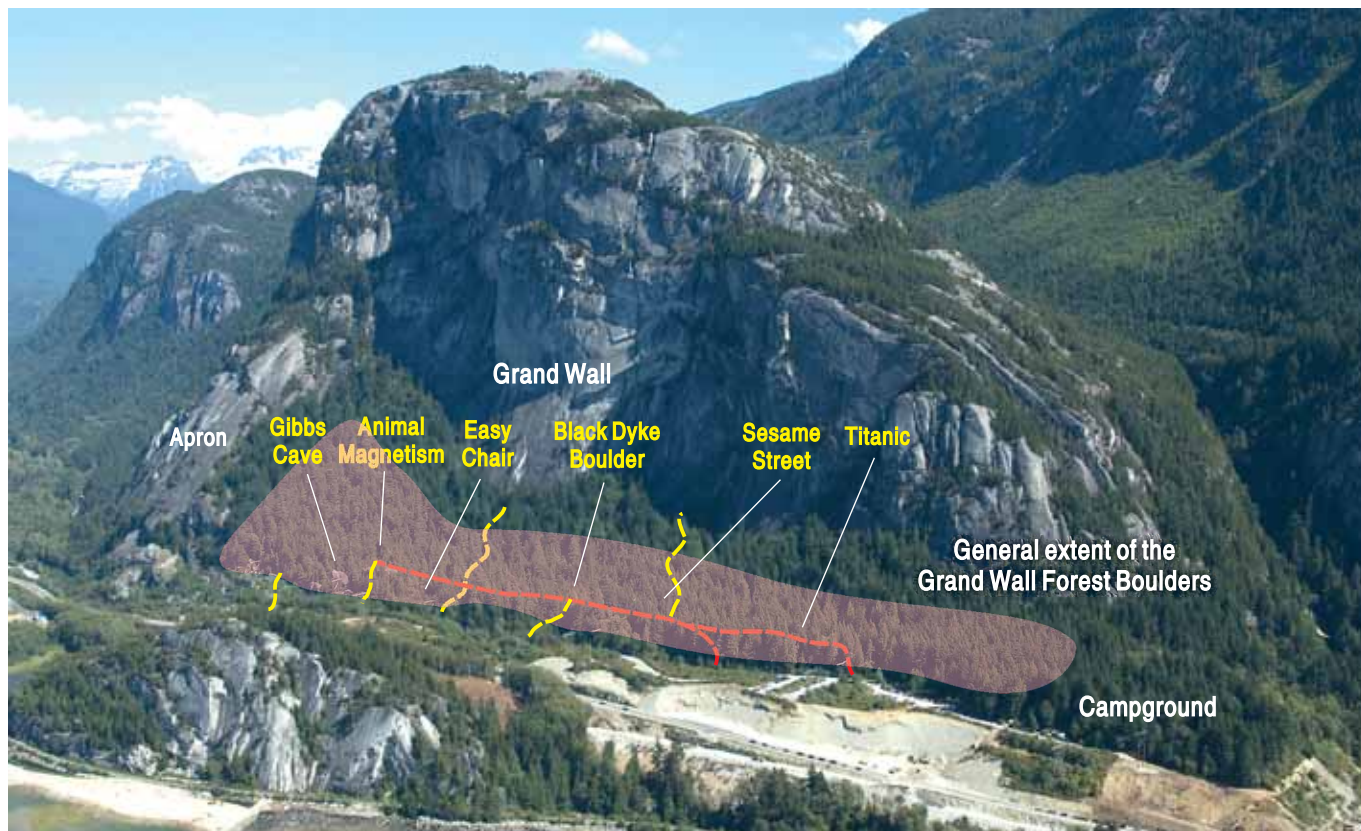
### Smoke Bluff Crag

- The Zip
- Boulder Gully
- Crag X
- Smoke Bluff Wall
- Neat and Cool
- Burgers and Fries
- Penny Lane
- Ronin's Corner
- Octopus Garden
- Alexis
- Black Zawn
- Krack Rock
- Battered Balls
- Pixie Corner
- Split Beaver
- Fern Gully.
- Call it a Day
- Fatty Bolger
- Funarama
- Ferret's Folly
- Tunnel Rock
- Cabin Boys Office
- One Toque Wall
- Blind Channel Crag
- Islands in the Sky
- High Cliff





## Bouldering — Grand Wall Forest



Black Dyke Boulder



Animal Magnetism



ATD



Superfly



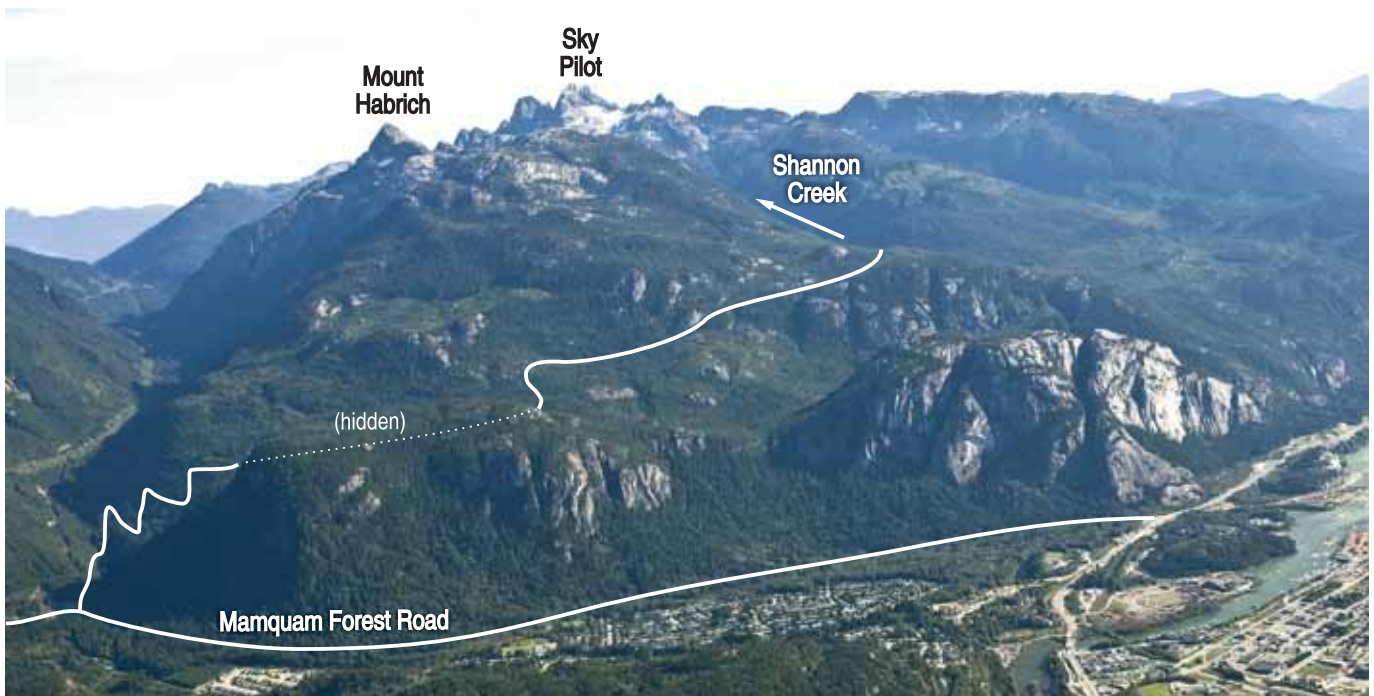
Easy Chair



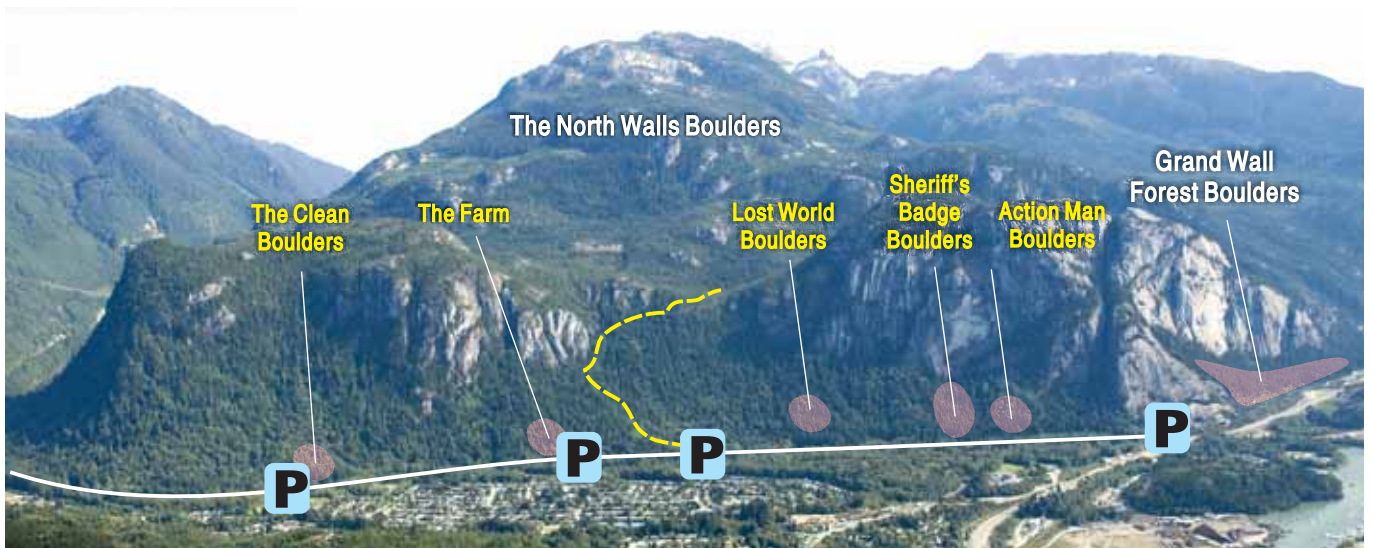
Squamish Days



## Mount Habrich and Sky Pilot — North Walls Bouldering



The alpine area that lies behind the Chief at the south end of the Shannon Creek Valley is a longstanding regional asset. It offers two fine peaks, and a glacier which is closer to downtown Squamish than the Brackendale Art Gallery. Sky Pilot and Mt. Habrich are much in demand as day-trips from Squamish. Road access difficulties, gates, and rock barricades effectively bar access.



## The Primary Climbers' Parking Places



The Chief: Highway 99

**THE CHIEF: HIGHWAY 99.** Major access centre for northbound traffic, Highway 99 tourists, sightseers, and climbers heading to the Grand Wall Base and the Bouldering Network.

**MALAMUTE PARKING.** On the southbound side of the Highway, a dozen stalls for Highway travellers to view the Chief.



The Chief: South

**THE CHIEF: SOUTH.** Major access place for Chief hikers, the campground, and climbers. On many busy days in 2008 it was at or near capacity. As with the Highway 99 and Apron parking, hikers, tourists and climbers make use of all the parking places.



The Chief: Apron

**THE CHIEF: APRON.** Access for the Apron, at the Highway 99 junction with Mamquam Forest Road. Used for Apron climbs, and for North Wall climbs by walking along the FSR. This parking area is smaller than pre-Highway 99 Rebuild, and not well arranged to maximise parking opportunity. It has also become a draw for motorized recreationalists with trailers. Presently under-capacity by 10-20 stalls.



The Chief: Slhanay

**THE CHIEF: SLHANAY.** Mamquam Forest Service Road. The access to reach Slhanay and the North Chief Hiking Trail. Little more than a widened roadside, it is frequently the target of garbage dumping and vandalism. As the North Chief Trail is becoming more established, climbing expanding, and the Backside Trail in heavier use, a cleared, formalized parking is needed.



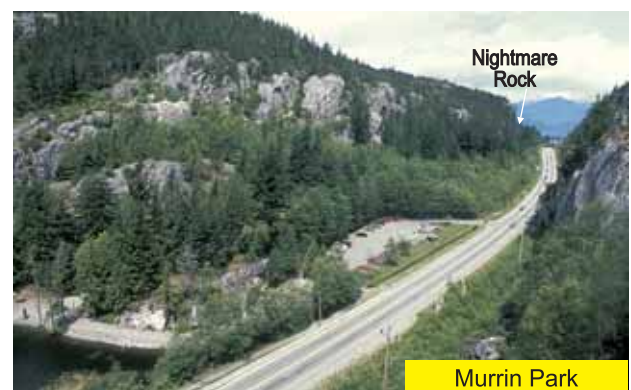
**SHANNON–PAPOOSE.** Paved area on the west side of Highway 99, currently in use by Peter Kiewit Sons. Climbers have parked here for 30 years, the land is under MOT.



**NIGHTMARE ROCK.** Paved pullout at the side of the Highway 99 southbound lane, 300m north of Murrin Park. This is a major Squamish crag, with several high-value climbs. There is no safe access from the main Murrin Park parking area.



**MURRIN PARK.** On Highway 99, 5km south of the Chief. Hugely popular with the general public for fishing, picnicking, sunbathing, swimming, lakeside strolling and afternoon barbeques. It is under-sized. On top of general public use, this single parking area accesses around a quarter of all Squamish rockclimbs. Access/egress off Highway 99 is a perennial concern due to limited sight lines and high traffic speeds.



**SMOKE BLUFF PARK.** On Loggers Lane, near the Squamish Adventure Centre with a capacity of 150 vehicles. It is under-capacity at 150 cars, and at peak times people increasingly park by the Adventure Centre.



**OTHER PLACES**

**Comic Rocks:** parking is in a wide turnout on Highway 99, 12km south of the Chief, 3km north of Furry Creek.

**Seal Cove:** parking is the wide tourist turnout on Highway 99, 1km south of Murrin Park.

**Gonzales Creek Wall** is in a wide new turnout on Highway 99’s east side, 3km north of Murrin Park.

## 10.17 RESOURCES INVENTORY — HIGHEST VALUE ROCK CLIMBS

	Effective	Centre	Approach	Grade	Pitches	Sport	Jurisdiction	Type
<b>Multi-Pitch Climbs in the Provincial Parks</b>								
Rock On	1981	The Chief: Apron	15	10a	4		BC Parks	cracks
St. Vitus' Dance	1974	The Chief: Apron	5	.9	4		BC Parks	cracks
Dream On	1984	The Chief: Apron	5	12a	6		BC Parks	slab friction
Dancing In The Light	1988	The Chief: Apron	5	11b	6		BC Parks	slab friction
Unfinished Symphony	1979	The Chief: Apron	5	11b	6		BC Parks	slab friction
Snake	1962	The Chief: Apron	5	.9	6		BC Parks	slab friction
Diedre	1963	The Chief: Apron	5	.8	6		BC Parks	cracks / friction
Apron Odyssey	2000*	The Chief: Apron	5	10d	10		BC Parks	slab friction
Message From The Stars	1994	The Chief: Backside	60	11c	3		BC Parks	steep face
Sunblessed	1988	The Chief: Backside	45	10b	3		BC Parks	face / cracks
Fight Club	2001	The Chief: Bulletheads	15	11d	2		BC Parks	cracks
Wild Turkey	1979	The Chief: Bulletheads	15	11a	2		BC Parks	cracks
Bullethead Connection (and variations)	2000	The Chief: Bulletheads	5	10b	7	sport	BC Parks	face / cracks
Freeway (and major variations)	1989	The Chief: Dihedrals	10	11c/d	12		BC Parks	cracks
The Grand Wall Entire (and variations)	1982	The Chief: Grand Wall	10	11b-13a	12		BC Parks	cracks
University Wall (and variations)	1982	The Chief: Grand Wall	15	12a	11		BC Parks	cracks
Deadend Dihedral	1984	The Chief: Grand Wall Base	10	12b	2		BC Parks	cracks
Rutabaga	1983	The Chief: Grand Wall Base	10	11a	2		BC Parks	cracks
Exasperator	1975	The Chief: Grand Wall Base	10	10c	2		BC Parks	cracks
Apron Strings	1973	The Chief: Grand Wall Base	10	10b	2		BC Parks	cracks
Merci Me	1969	The Chief: Grand Wall Base	10	.8	2		BC Parks	face climbing
Movin' To Montana	1984	The Chief: Grand Wall Base	10	11a	6		BC Parks	cracks / face
Cruel Shoes	1981	The Chief: Grand Wall Base	10	10d	6		BC Parks	face climbing
High Plains Drifter	1990	The Chief: North Walls	60	11c	2		BC Parks	cracks
The Daily Planet	1981	The Chief: North Walls	20	12b	4		BC Parks	cracks
Teddy Bears Picnic	2000	The Chief: North Walls	30	12d	6		BC Parks	cracks
The Northern Lights	1987	The Chief: North Walls	45	12a	12		BC Parks	cracks
Angel's Crest	1963	The Chief: North Walls	20	10b	13		BC Parks	cracks / face
The Opal	1988	The Chief: North Walls	15	13a	6		BC Parks	cracks / face
Cerberus	1989	The Chief: Tantalus	15	11d	6		BC Parks	cracks / face
Cannabis Wall	2008	The Chief: Tantalus	15	13a/b	8		BC Parks	cracks / face
Midnight Run	2003	The Chief: Tantalus	10	12a/b	10		BC Parks	cracks / face
Milk Run	1982	The Chief: Tantalus	10	11d	4		BC Parks	cracks
Tantalus Wall	1968	The Chief: Tantalus	10	11c A0	8		BC Parks	cracks
Joe's Dyke	1978	The Chief: Raven's Castle	40	.7	3	sport	BC Parks	face
Papoose One	1974	The Papoose	5	10b	6		BC Parks	cracks
Centrefold	1980	The Papoose	5	10b	3		BC Parks	cracks / face
Frayed Ends of Sanity	1997	Sihanay	20	12c	5		BC Parks	cracks / face
God Forsaken Land	1986	Sihanay	15	12a	5		BC Parks	cracks / face
The Great Game	1985	Sihanay	15	10d	3		BCP / (MTCA?)	cracks
Right Wing	1983	Sihanay	15	10c	5		BCP / (MTCA?)	cracks
Pipeline	1979	Sihanay	15	10d	4		BCP / (MTCA?)	cracks
<b>Single-Pitch Climbs in the Provincial Parks or Crown Land</b>								
Claim Jumper	1982	Murrin Park: Nightmare Rock	5	12a	1		MTCA	cracks
Hypertension	1975	Murrin Park: Nightmare Rock	5	11a	1		MTCA	cracks
Sentry Box	1975	Murrin Park: Nightmare Rock	5	12a	1		MTCA	cracks
Perspective	1975	Murrin Park: Nightmare Rock	5	11a	1		MTCA	cracks
The Flight Of The Challenger	1986	Murrin: Petrifying Wall	10	12c	1		BC Parks	cracks
The Flingus Cling	1986	Murrin: Petrifying Wall	10	12b	1	sport	BC Parks	steep face
Mata Hari	1987	Murrin: Petrifying Wall	10	12c	1	sport	MTCA	steep face
Burning Down The Couch	1986	Murrin: Petrifying Wall	10	11d	1	sport	MTCA	steep face
Black Water	1986	Murrin: Petrifying Wall	10	12a	1	sport	MTCA	steep face
Take No Prisoners	1986	Murrin: Petrifying Wall	10	11d	1		MTCA	steep face
Dead On Arrival	1984	Murrin: Petrifying Wall	10	11c	1		MTCA	steep face
No Name Road	1986	Murrin: Petrifying Wall	10	11b	1	sport	MTCA	steep face
Even Steven	1986	Murrin: Petrifying Wall	10	10d	1		MTCA	cracks / face
Just Blessed	1998	Valley of Shaddai	20	10c	1		MTCA	cracks
Klahanie Crack	1970	Shannon: Falls Wall	10	.7	1		BC Parks	cracks
Hungry Wolf	1984	Shannon: Gobsmacking	15	11b	1		BC Parks	cracks
Never Say Never	1984	Shannon: Gobsmacking	15	11b	1		BC Parks	cracks
Rainy Day Dream Away	1975	Chief: Bulletheads	5	10c	1		BC Parks	cracks
A Pitch In Time	1974	Chief: Bulletheads	5	10b	1		BC Parks	cracks
Boogie 'til You Puke	1981	The Chief: Backside	30	11b/c	1		BC Parks	cracks
Big Mouth	1981	The Chief: Backside	30	11b	1		BC Parks	cracks
The Scimitar	1984	The Chief: Backside	30	11a	1		BC Parks	cracks
Bop 'til You Drop	1981	The Chief: Backside	30	10b	1		BC Parks	cracks
Cobra Crack	2006	The Chief: Backside	40	14b	1		BC Parks	cracks
Mercy Street	1986	The Chief: North Walls	15	10b	1		BC Parks	cracks
Astrologger	1983	The Chief: North Walls	20	11b	1		BC Parks	cracks
<b>Climbs on Private Land</b>								
Crescent Crack	1976	The Malamute	10	10d	1		PRIVATE	cracks
Quagmire Crack	1975	The Malamute	10	10c	1		PRIVATE	cracks
Agonal	1996	The Malamute	10	11c	3		PRIVATE	face
Overly Hanging Out	1979	The Malamute	10	11b	3		PRIVATE	cracks
Chasing Rainbows	1979	The Malamute	10	10d	1		PRIVATE	steep face
High Mountain Woody	1996	The Malamute	10	.9	1		PRIVATE	cracks
The Zip	1979	Blind Channel Crags	5	10a	1		PRIVATE	cracks
<b>Smoke Bluff Park</b>								
Crime of the Century	1978	Penny Lane	10	11b	1		District of Squamish	cracks
Supervalve	1982	Boulder Gully	5	10c	1		District of Squamish	cracks
Penny Lane	1978	Penny Lane	10	.9	1		District of Squamish	cracks
The Smoke Bluff Connection	1981	Smoke Bluff Wall	5	10a	4		District of Squamish	cracks
Cat Crack	1978	Neat and Cool	5	.6	1		District of Squamish	cracks
Octopus Garden	1982	Octopus Garden	10	.7	1		District of Squamish	cracks
Orifice Fish	1981	Split Beaver	10	.9	1		District of Squamish	cracks
Split Beaver	1975	Split Beaver	10	10b	1		District of Squamish	cracks

Significant Climbers Trails in the Squamish Region, with Characteristics and Current Conditions

Agency	Trail	Type	Parking Place	Time	Importance	Usage	Delineation	Ground Debris	Encroachment	Erosion	COMMENTS
BC PARKS	Grand Wall Base Trail, Campg to Jingu	R	Chief Parking South	20	High	High	Okay	Poor	Poor	Considerable	a major trail corridor
BC PARKS	Grand Wall	A	Chief Parking South	10	High	High	Not Good	Good	Good	Little	bady delineated in places
BC PARKS	Bullethead South Network	N	Chief Parking South	15	High	High	Poor	Poor	Poor	Little	vegetation management needed
BC PARKS	Bullethead Ledge	A	Chief Parking South	10	Medium	Medium	Okay	Poor	Poor	Little	worth improving to draw climbers
BC PARKS	Solarium	R	Chief Parking South	45	High	Medium	Okay	Okay	Okay	Little	sign needed out of gully
BC PARKS	Dihedrals Trail	A	Chief Parking South	10	High	Medium	Okay	Poor	Poor	Little	up from Sesame Street area
BC PARKS	Unrackables--Punk--Above Beyond	A	Chief Parking South	45	Medium	Low	Okay	Some	Okay	Little	worth effort to improve AAB access
BC PARKS	Titanic to Kacodemon Area	R	Chief Parking South	15	High	High	Okay	Good	Good	Little	needs careful planning to balance interests
BC PARKS	Apron Base from parking	A	Chief Apron	5	High	High	Good	Good	Okay	some (roots)	
BC PARKS	Shannon Falls	A	Highway 99 Westside	10	High	Medium	Good	Some	Okay	Some (big gully)	perhaps bypass the steep gully
BC PARKS	Papoose	A	Highway 99 Westside	5	High	High	Good	Okay	Good	No	
BC PARKS	Lakeside-in-the-Woods	A	Murrin Park	10	Low	Low	Good	Good	Okay	No	
BC PARKS	Rock On to Zodiac Wall Base Trail	B	—	20	High	Low	Poor	Poor	Poor	Little	worth establishing fully
BC PARKS ?	Shanay Base	B	—	—	High	High	Good	Some	Poor	Little	
BC PARKS	Apron Descent on Broadway	D	—	—	High	High	Okay	Okay	Okay	No	
BC PARKS	Apron Descent from Broadway	D	—	—	High	High	Okay	Okay	Okay	Some	
BC PARKS	Bellygood Descent to Backside	D	—	—	High	Medium	Okay	Poor	Poor	No	hikers try to get up it, believing it's a short-cut
BC PARKS	Papoose Descent	D	—	—	High	High	Good	Okay	Okay	No	
BC PARKS	Zodiac Wall Descent	D	—	—	Medium	Low	Poor	Poor	Poor	Little	
BC PARKS	Roman Chimneys to Backside	D	—	—	Medium	Low	Good	Poor	Poor	No	
BC PARKS	Murrin Park Central Areas	N	Murrin Park	5	High	High	Poor	Poor	Poor	Little	in rough shape, despite being so heavily used
BC PARKS	Shannon Falls to Gobsnacking	A	Highway 99 Westside	10	High	Low	Poor	Very Poor	Very Poor	Little	
BC PARKS	South Gully (Rock On/Opal)	A	Chief Apron	15	High	Medium	Good	Okay	Okay	Little	
BC PARKS	Opal Wall North	A	Chief Apron	15	Medium	Low	Poor	Poor	Poor	Little	
BCP /MTC A	Petrifying Wall	R	Murrin Park	10	High	High	Very Good	Okay	Okay	No	
BCP /MTC A	Up Among The Firs	A	Murrin Park	15	High	Medium	Very Good	Okay	Okay	Little	
BCP /MTC A	Sheriff's Badge	A	Chief Apron	15	High	Low	Poor	Very Poor	Very Poor	Little	upper parts in rough shape
BCP /MTC A	Angel's Crest	A	Chief Apron	20	High	Medium	Not Good	Poor	Okay	Little	
BCP /MTC A	NN Gully / Astro Ledge	A	Chief Apron	40	Medium	Low	Very Poor	Very Poor	Very Poor	Some (steepness)	needs a lot of work, but high returns
BCP /MTC A	Shanay Access	A	Mamquam FSR (Shan)	15	High	High	Good	Okay	Okay	Some (steep 15m)	
BCP /MTC A	North Chief Loop	R	Mamquam FSR (Shan)	—	High	Low	Okay	—	—	Little	a significant alternate to the Backside
MTC A	North Slope Boulders Traverse	R	Apron	30	Medium	Low	Poor	Poor	Some	No	nice concept, but needs work
MTC A	The Valley of Shaddai	A	Murrin Park	20	Medium	Low	Poor	Poor	Some	Some (steepness)	improvement needed to absorb growth
MTC A	Nightmare Rock	A	Highway 99 turnout	2	High	High	Very Good	Good	Good	No	trailhead is poor
MTC A	Seal Cove	A	Highway 99 turnout	10	Low	Low	Poor	Poor	Some	Little	needs delineating
MTC A	Gonzales Creek Wall	A	Highway 99 turnout	10	Low	Low	Very Poor	Very Poor	Very Poor	Little	improvement needed to absorb growth
MTC A	The Quartz Pillar	A	Highway 99 turnout	20	Low	Low	—	—	—	—	a new trail is needed down from Petrifying Wall
MTC A... ?	Comic Rocks	A	Highway 99 turnout	5	Medium	Low	Good	Some	Some	No	
DOS	Smoke Bluffs Trail & Loop	N	Loggers Lane	15	High	High	Good	Little	Little	No	good example of what can be done
DOS /MTC A	Sanctuary	A	Raven's Plateau	10	Medium	Low	Okay	Some	Okay	No	
DOS /MTC A	Fern Hill	A	Powerhouse Bridge	10	Medium	Low	Okay	Some	Okay	No	
MTC A	Cheakamus Main Crags	R	Conroy Creek FS Road	7	High	High	Good	Little	Some	Little	
MTC A	Cheakamus Gorge (Star Chek)	A	Highway 99	10	Medium	Low	Good	Little	Some	Some (steepness)	
MTC A	Rogue's Gallery	A	Highway 99	5	High	Low	Poor	Poor	Poor	No	trails in rough shape
BC PARKS	Backside Summit Trail	R	Chief Parking South	—	Very High	Very High	Some Braiding	Little	Little	Considerable	needs major investment for growth

A = ACCESS TRAIL // R = ARTERIAL TRAIL // B = BASE TRAIL // D = DESCENT TRAIL // N = NETWORK TRAIL



## Some Recommended Climb Revitalization Projects

The following crags are little-used due to trails being near-impassable and too much vegetation regeneration.

Area	Jurisdiction	Climbs	Crag	Situation
Shannon Area	BCP		Gobsmacking Wall	access trail, vegetation encroachment
Shannon Area	BCP		Olesen Creek Lookout	access trail
The Chief	BCP		Above and Beyond	access trail, vegetation encroachment
The Chief	BCP		Slhanay Eastern Walls	access trails, vegetation encroachment
The Chief	BCP		Zodiac Upper climbs	access trail, vegetation encroachment
The Chief	BCP		Zodiac Wall Base	access trail, vegetation encroachment
The Chief	BCP		Left of the Opal	access trail, rock condition
The Chief	BCP		The White Cliff	vegetation encroachment
The Chief	BCP		Solarium West	vegetation encroachment
The Malamute	Private		North Malamute Bench	access trail, vegetation encroachment
South of Shannon	MTCA		Gonzales Creek Wall	access trail, vegetation encroachment
Murrin Area	MTCA		Nightmare Rock Right	vegetation encroachment
Murrin Area	MTCA		Valley of Shaddai	access trail, vegetation encroachment
Mt. Habrich	MTCA		Life on Earth	access blocked
Mt. Habrich East Side	MTCA		Fluffy Kitten Wall	access blocked
Smoke Bluffs North	MTCA/DOS		Art Gallery	access, bolt mgmt, veg. encroachment

### Good Climb Development Projects

Wall of Attrition	BCP	Grand Wall	bolt management, veg. encroachment
North North Arete	BCP	Zodiac Wall	access trail, vegetation encroachment
Astrologger	BCP	Zodiac Wall Base	access trail, vegetation encroachment
The Malamute	Private	The Main Wall	rappel routes required
The Malamute	Private	North Bench	vegetation encroachment
Astro Ledge	BCP	Zodiac Wall	fixed line, cleanup, will trigger routes

### Some Promising New Route Prospects

Wall of the Early Morning Light		North-North Gully Trail	a collection of multi-pitch splitters
Zodiac Wall off Astro Ledge		North-North Gully Trail	cleaning projects, new variants
Zodiac Wall Right, up the North Gully		Angel's Crest Trail	long hard lines, summer-only
West side, upper North Gully		Angel's Crest Trail	long hard lines, summer-only
Above and Beyond		North Chief Loop Trail	trail condition and distance
Gobsmacking Wall		Gobsmacking Wall Trail	a hidden crag behind
Slhanay, above and right of main wall		North Chief Loop Trail	a new trail leads below it
Slhanay North Walls		Up from Mamquam FSR	major lines, steep access, summer-only
Mount CoCrumpit West Side		Raven's Plateau	worth a look for easy sport climbs
Upper Sheriff's Badge		Sheriff's Badge Trail	major work, major lines
Caramba Crags		Sheriff's Badge Trail	much work, but promising moderate lines
Olesen Creek Wall		Olesen Creek	good potential, but needs a trail



Squamish's Wall of the Early Morning Light  
(backside of the Zodiac, facing south-east)



Sihanay North Face



Astroledge and above



Above and Beyond



Sihanay Upper

## Significant Climbing Centres Outside The Four Parks

### SMOKE BLUFFS AREA

The Sanctuary	A group of sport climbing crags on the south slope of Mount Crumpit, 10 minutes walk from the Raven's Plateau residential area.
Fern Hill	A sport climbing crag on the east side of Five Point Hill in Crumpit Woods. Accessed from the Powerhouse Road.
Art Gallery	A mostly-sport crag east of Brennan Park on crown land. Unique climbing, of Smoke Bluff character and difficulty. Accessed from the Mamquam River road.

### CHEAKAMUS CANYON AREA

Conroy Creek	An important collection of sport crags several hundred metres up Conroy Creek Forest Road.
Cheakamus River Gorge	Several crags, including the destination Star Chek climb in the Cheakamus Gorge. Accessed from parking on Highway 99.
Rogue's Gallery	Important area off Highway 99 where it skirts close to the Cheakamus River.

### MURRIN AREA

Quartz Pillar	A fine but little-used sea-cliff on the southern coastline of the Murrin Peninsula. Access is only possible by using the CN line, but a new trail cut down from the south end of Petrifying Wall would be practical, and open up this unique sea cliff to climbers. A good growth absorption project.
Seal Cove	A good sea cliff near the 'Welcome to Squamish' sign. Access from the Highway 99 tourist pull-out. As with Quartz Pillar, it offers a unique experience.
Valley of Shaddai	A large area east of Murrin Park, access from the Murrin parking. Somewhat overgrown. A significantly improved trail would draw climbers away from more busy centres. A good growth absorption project.
Comic Rocks	An important crag south of Britannia, with a collection of a dozen very fine climbs. Access off a wide Highway 99 pull-out 3km north of Furry Creek.

### SHANNON PARK AREA

Gonzales Creek Wall	A good but little-used wall between Shannon and Murrin near the Highway.
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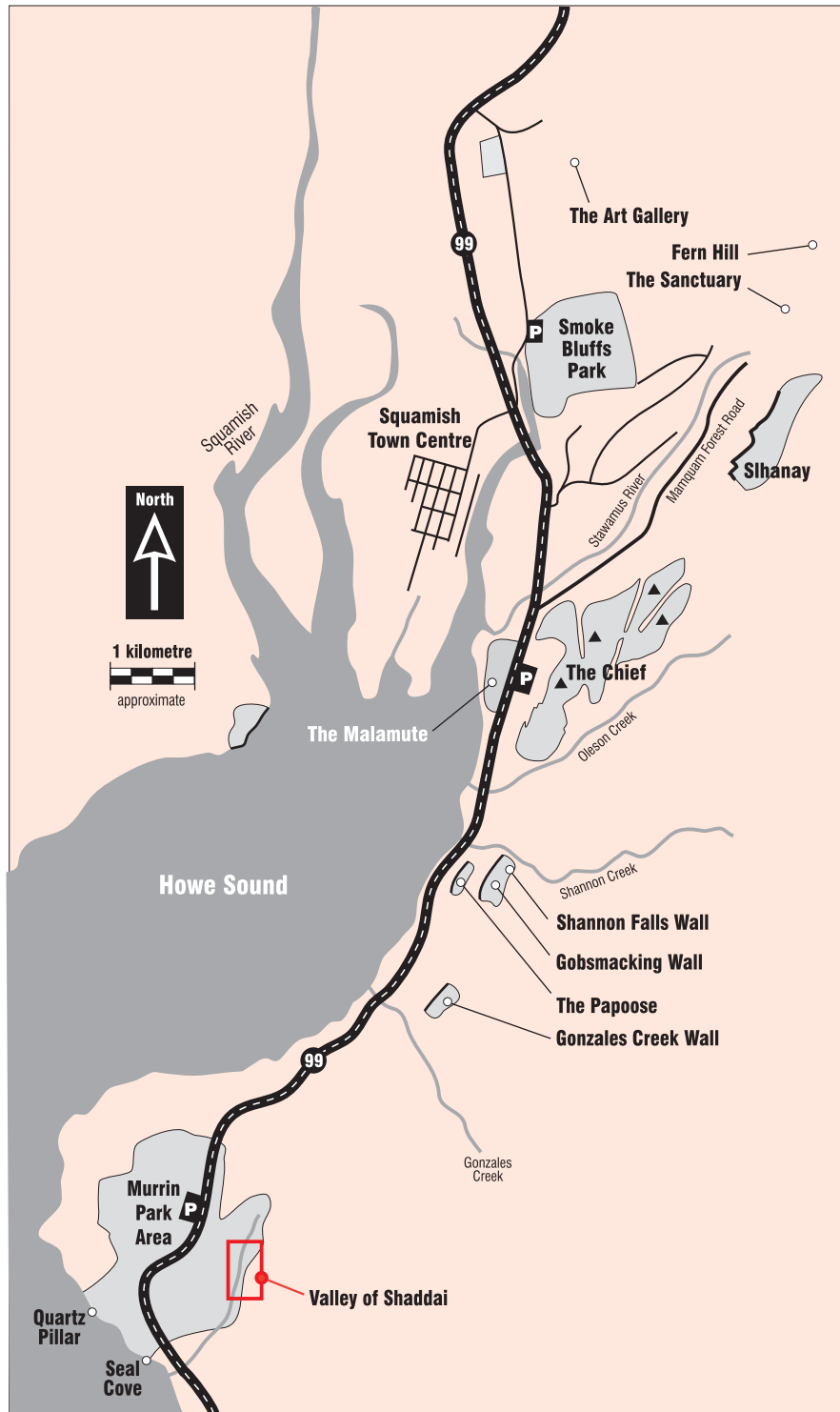
### SHANNON CREEK FOREST ROAD

Sky Pilot - Mt. Habrich	A fine alpine environment with both rock climbs and alpine peaks. It is a long-standing matter of contention that access is curtailed by the province. There is a opportunity for incrementally expanding the recreation economy of the region by supporting better access.
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### BOULDERING

Murrin North	A collection of boulders inside the park, running north toward Nightmare Rock.
Paradise Valley	A collection of good bouldering near the North Vancouver Outdoor Centre.
Brackendale	A collection of good boulders on the east of Highway 99 between Dryden Creek and the Alice Lake.





## The Back



### Squamish Climbing Strategy Report

Toward Environmental, Social, and Economic Sustainability.

Squamish Access Society

Commissioned by the Ministry of Environment, the District of Squamish, and the Sea to Sky Highway Improvement Project.