

BASTION

fully bolted multi-pitch sport climb

10 pitches | Grade: 5.10c | Height: 302m

Established by Matt Laird & Andrew Sloodweg

Summer 2024

17 Quickdraws (4-6 Alpine Draws)

70m Rope



A new fully bolted moderate “alpine sport climb” on the lower prow of Castle Mountain. The route features high quality limestone and takes a line up a tower located directly above the popular “Fire Lookout” hiking trail. This is now the quickest route to get to from the parking area.

Although there is a high density of quality climbing the two top pitches are the “money pitches” with huge exposure on a slightly overhanging face and an exciting arete finish.

The best descent method is to walk off, linking into the descent gully/ scrambling trail descending from the Castle Mountain Hut- this will put you back at the base of the route in 30 minutes. However, is it possible to rappel with a 70m rope with the utilization of 2 independent rap stations outside of the climbing line.

PARKING + APPROACH

Total Distance | 3.8km (7.6km round-trip)

Total Gain | ~750m of elevation

Total Time | 80 - 90 minutes from parking lot



Parking Area



From East or West

Exit Highway 1 at the Castle Mountain / Highway 93 S junction and head West on Highway 1A. Take the 1A West for 5 minutes then park at the Castle Lookout Parking lot off Highway 1A.

This parking area only has 1 trailhead - follow the Parks Canada maintained hiking trail, "Castle Mountain Fire Lookout" trail for 1 hour (approx 550m elevation gain, 3.5 km).

Once at the end of the official Fire Lookout trail, leave the viewpoint platform heading North, uphill, towards the mountain on the "climbers / scramblers" trail. The trail ascends steeply through the trees eventually leading to the shoulder of a gully / drainage. The obvious trail has washed out here, be careful not to ascend the gully but instead traverse across it (East). This will require stepping up onto a boulder to get to the other side of the drainage. Once across, pick up the obvious trail in the trees and follow this steeply towards the mountain. Once at the base of the mountain a cairn with a bolt above should be found. This marks the ascent / descent break in the cliff band to continue up towards the castle mountain hut. Using the bolt / cairn as a marker, walk along the base of the rock wall West ducking behind several small groups of trees staying against the wall. After roughly 150m of traversing a bowl shaped wall should be found where the climb can be spotted (look for bolts).

The best place to gear up for the climb is behind a small group of trees on the East end of the bowl. Once harnessed up, walk across the shale band to begin at the base of the route.

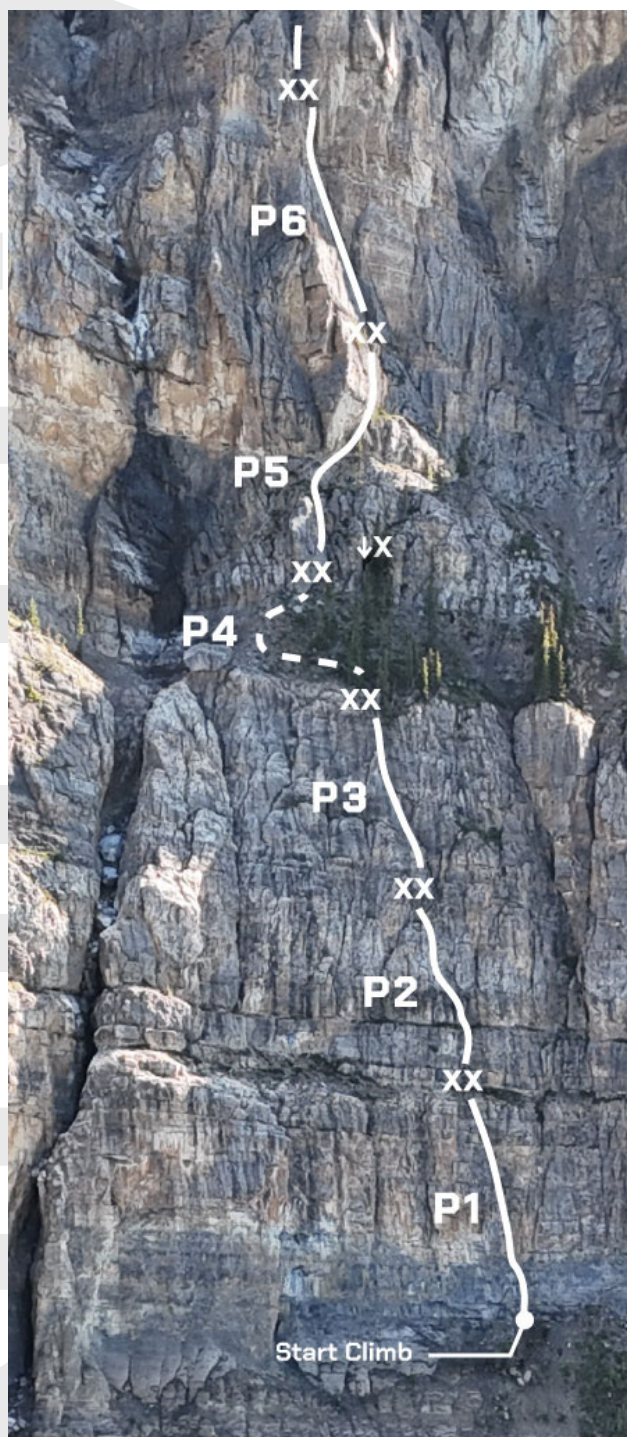
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Climb Start



CLIMBING BREAKDOWN

Pitch 1 5.10b 32m 12 bolts

Climb right of the first two bolts on poor rock before eventually stepping left and moving out to solid flakes / sidepulls to clip the 3rd bolt. Follow bolts up and rightward into a corner and move up under a roof through a brief crux, then finish on good holds and big moves. Belay on a board ledge.

Pitch 2 5.10a 24m 7 bolts

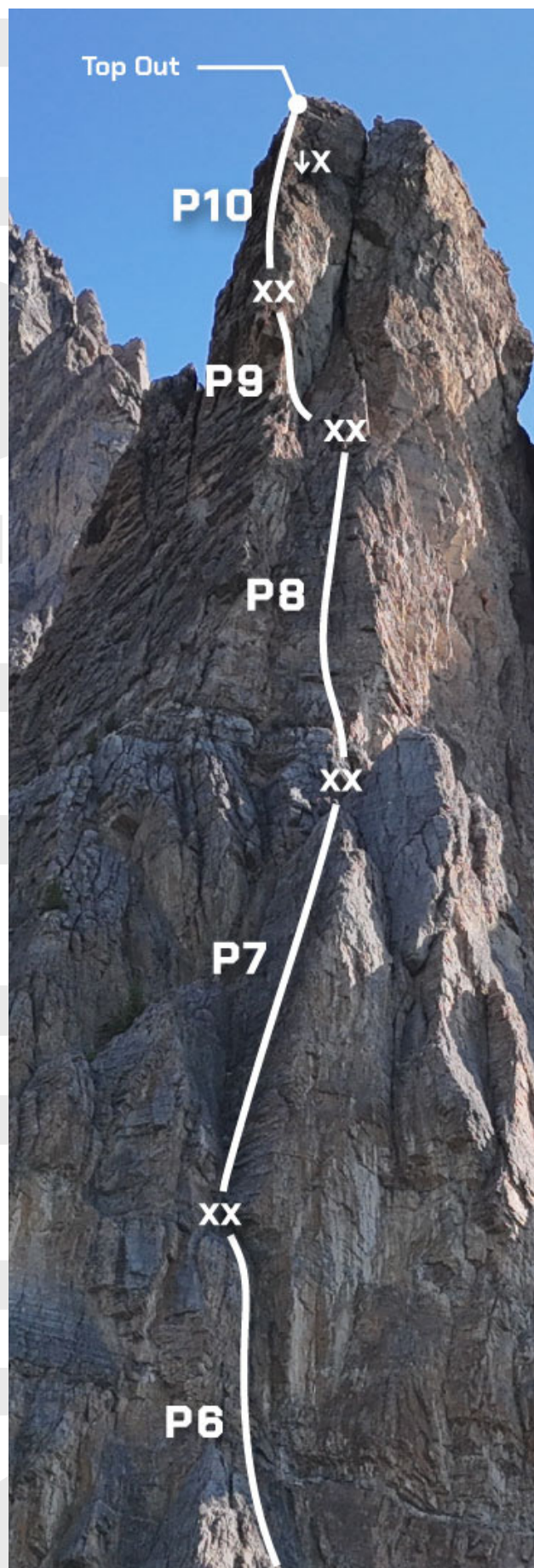
Leave the belay climbing through a series of blocky ledges to pull over a lip at the base of a groove. Follow the groove up a crack stepping out left to face climb on great rock as difficulty eases. Step down into a comfy belay ledge.

Pitch 3 5.10b 32m 12 bolts

Climb a steep short wall above the belay to a slab leading up to a roof. Traverse under and along the roof on great underclings and laybacks making way to a protruding rock feature. Keep aiming for the top of the buttress with sustained effort.

Pitch 4 Class 5 20m 0 bolts

Put approach shoes on (recommended but not necessary) and carefully walk West (climbers left) across a narrow exit at the edge of the cliff to gain the large terrace. Continue walking to the crest of a scree cone and follow this up to the wall. Once at the rock wall, walk East (right) to find a set of belay bolts on a short right facing wall.



Pitch 5	5.08	45m	15 bolts
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Leave the belay heading right and up a dirt ramp into a corner of jumbled but solid blocks onto a short secondary dirt terrace. Continue across [optional rap anchor out right] to a slot chimney ending on another grass ledge. From this third ledge pull over a lip to regain the rock wall and continue face climbing to the anchor. Rope drag can be bad on this pitch, so make use of alpine draws or consider back cleaning. Additionally consider leaving approach shoes on for this pitch.

Pitch 6	5.10b/c	35m	16 bolts
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Start left of the belay face climbing on immaculate gray, textured rock with surprising incuts heading up to a vertical wall guarding the belay. At the base of the steep wall, climb black rock on blocky holds - be cautious of a rotten rock band on either side. Then an out-of-character in your face crux uses small crimps and left hand sidepulls to overcome the vertical wall guarding the anchor.

Pitch 7	5.09	32m	12 bolts
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Stem up to the right wall through the first 3-4 bolts before completely committing to the right face. Nice edgy face climbing on good rock leads to a comfortable belay ledge.

Pitch 8	5.10b	37m	17 bolts
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Step over a gap onto a short wall of interesting gray limestone. Top out this short wall to start up the predominant steeper orange wall. Bolts lead the way over a small roof through to a balancy section trending slightly right. Climb up over a second overlap leading into a crack and then to the belay.

Pitch 9	5.10c	20m	9 bolts
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Leave the broad belay ledge by traversing left across a gully to arrive at a vertical face with increasing exposure. Find a far right incut crimp to start off the sequence on the vertical face. Climb up and left, using intermittent incut crimps on surprisingly solid rock before heading into the crux. As the steepness increases at a horizontal break, use sidepulls out left to gain a series of bucket crimps to overcome the overhang.

Pitch 10	5.10a	25m	11 bolts
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Climb left off the belay to gain the arete. Continue climbing directly up using blind handholds around the left side of the wall. Take in the amazing exposure and 300m of air below. The difficulty eases as the angle of the wall kicks back leading way to the final belay on the very top of the buttress.

DESCENT

WALKING OFF

Walking off the top of the climb heading East towards Castle Mountain hut is the most straight forward and quickest descent. Walking this way will lead you to the scrambling trail used to access the hut. A small water source may be found here before descending into the gully. Follow the obvious trail down the gully back to the base of the wall. A short 30m optional rap exists at the end of the scrambling trail before hitting the hiking trail.

RAPPELLING OFF

If rappelling, make one short 15m rap from the top of pitch 10 to a mid way station on the face (outside of the climbing line).

DO NOT SKIP THIS STATION - your rope will get stuck

From the midway station make an easy 25m rap onto the nice belay ledge at the top of pitch 8. From this belay utilize the belay stations to rap to the top of pitch 6. From here rap initially following the climbing line down to the grass ledge. Continuing rappelling away from the climbing line into a short gully feature. Once in the gully, spot an independent rappel station below.

From this station it's possible to make a 35m rope stretching rap to the belay station at the top of pitch 3 but you will use every inch of rope - use caution! Alternatively either rappel from the independent anchor to the dirt ledge below and walk to the top of pitch 3. Or, using the bolted anchor at the base of pitch 5, rap diagonally to the top of pitch 3. From the top of pitch 3 use belay stations to get down in 3 rappels.

TABVAR

If you enjoy climbing routes like this, or clipping bolts in the Bow Valley area, please consider donating to TABVAR. TABVAR makes projects such as this possible as well as retrofitting old/aging bolts in the area.

<https://www.tabvar.org/donatenew>

