

## **McGillvray Buttress 250m, about 5.9 or 10a, 8 pitches**

### **Integrale: Scrambling with 1 additional pitch 5.6-5.7, taken to the Mt McGillvray Summit Ridge**

Mixed, 12 draws, single rack to 2", knife blades optional, 70m rope if rapping

*FA: Dave Peabody, Mark Taylor, 27 May 2018*

This route was conceived as a line leading to the summit of Mt McGillvray following the prominent buttress visible from Highway 1 with a swooping ridge leading up to the main ridge of the mountain. It was climbed ground up, placing bolts on lead over two separate days between fall 2017 and spring 2018, with the second day being a full ground up ascent to the top of the buttress. An additional day was put in adjusting some bolt positions and cleaning loose rock. The ridge was followed to the summit ridge where an easy traverse is made to the summit of Mt. McGillvray. One additional 35m pitch of 5.6 – 5.7 climbing requiring some gear and with 3 more bolts was climbed on the way up to the summit ridge. A rappel was made from trees climbers left on the descent. It may be possible to avoid this pitch by traversing to the left but this was not explored. The buttress has been scrambled before, and the ridge at least part way, but no information could be found on whether the ridge has been taken to the summit. If someone knows something, we'd be keen to find out!

We felt the climbing up the buttress was pretty good, with some excellent sections and nice situations, but also some ho-hum sections. Overall it's a nice outing to a cool little island in the sky on top of the buttress, and a nicer way to the summit of McGillvray than the scramble up the west side of the mountain. While it makes use of bolt protection, it still retains some runouts on easier sections and as usual there is loose rock of which to be mindful. The route is set up to be rappelled with a 70m rope, but some raps (especially the lowest one) are stretchers so be sure to tie knots! We gave our sense of what the grades are. These are subjective, and hopefully if the route gets climbed a consensus on the pitch grades can emerge.

**Approach:** Park at the Heart Creek climbers parking and walk up Heart Creek to the Bayon crag. Right of the Bayon cliff, a trail leads shortly up a drainage then cuts back left and goes up over the Bayon, dropping down to the top of Heart Creek falls. Continue up the creek bed for another 5-10 minutes to the first drainage coming down from the right (west). Hike up this drainage over interesting boulders for about an hour until it opens up into a large basin. In spring and early summer there will be a waterfall and slabs marking the end of the easy boulder hopping. Two options exist from here.

1. The first and recommended option is to look for a drainage coming down from the ridge leading to the climb. This is marked with a cairn. Pick up a game trail on the left of this drainage and follow it up through woods on steep slopes moving left. Before the woods breaks into another drainage, move up and right, trending steadily right to avoid steeper, rocky ground. Once reaching the main ridgeline, walk up to the base of the buttress.
2. Where the creek bed transitions to steep slabs, move up left hiking below the lower cliffs of the buttress. Trend left as needed, crossing through an open drainage below the buttress and then up to the ridge.

Both options will take 1.5-2hrs.

**Descent:** The recommended descent is to walk west down from the top of the buttress to a saddle. Descend north down into the approach drainage over shale making use of intermittent sheep trails. Once

the slabs are reached below, move skier's right into low brush to reach the creek bed below. The route can also be rappelled with one 70m rope, but note some rappels are stretchers!

### **Route Description:**

P1 (first start) 5.8: Climb a short right-facing corner a few metres left of the main ridgeline. From the top of this, move left up easier ground past a bulge on the right to the large right-facing corner that overhangs at the bottom. As the corner is loose, move right and climb past a bolt on good rock to where the big corner hits a roof. Turn the corner moving left past one more bolt and traverse left to a belay on a ledge by a small tree. Note: the first corner can be skipped by traversing in from the right. No pro.

P1 (second start) 5.8R: Move up the ridgeline on the right side of the cliff a short distance. Climb up fractured rock leading into a faint groove just to the right of the indistinct main buttress. This start joins the first start at the roof. Some gear is available but there are long runouts. Pitons would mitigate this.

P2 5.6: From the belay climb up a short distance angling left to hit a steep headwall. Move left along the base of the headwall where gear protects the traverse for approximately 20m where a gear belay can be found by stepping down into a small alcove with a small tree. P2 and 3 were originally linked, but broken up afterwards due to terrible rope drag.

P3 5.9: From this belay climb up the face above trending right passing 3 bolts on good rock. After the third bolt and at the top of the smooth slab, a traverse right is apparent with gear in a horizontal crack. Instead of this, continue moving upwards on gear another 3 metres to reach a bolt belay under a roof.

P4 5.7: From the belay step slightly down and move right into a groove on excellent stipple rock. Gear is available to protect the move up and out of the groove. Climb past a bolt above to a small roof, move slightly right and pull the roof past a bolt. Continue upwards on easy ground past 2 more bolts to a comfortable belay on a large ledge. After the first bolt on this pitch, the roof can be pulled directly but the flaring crack may require some frigging with gear.

P5 5.9 or maybe 10-: Move up a short left-facing corner for 2 metres (gear) then move up and right across excellent compact rock with runnels. Pass a bolt and traverse right to where 2 bolts mark the path up through the short steep wall above. Pull a stout move and clip another bolt, then move left across a ledge to where a groove leads up and left. Make a move slightly back right past a bolt through another short steep wall, then move left up a groove with some loose rock, then up to a belay station.

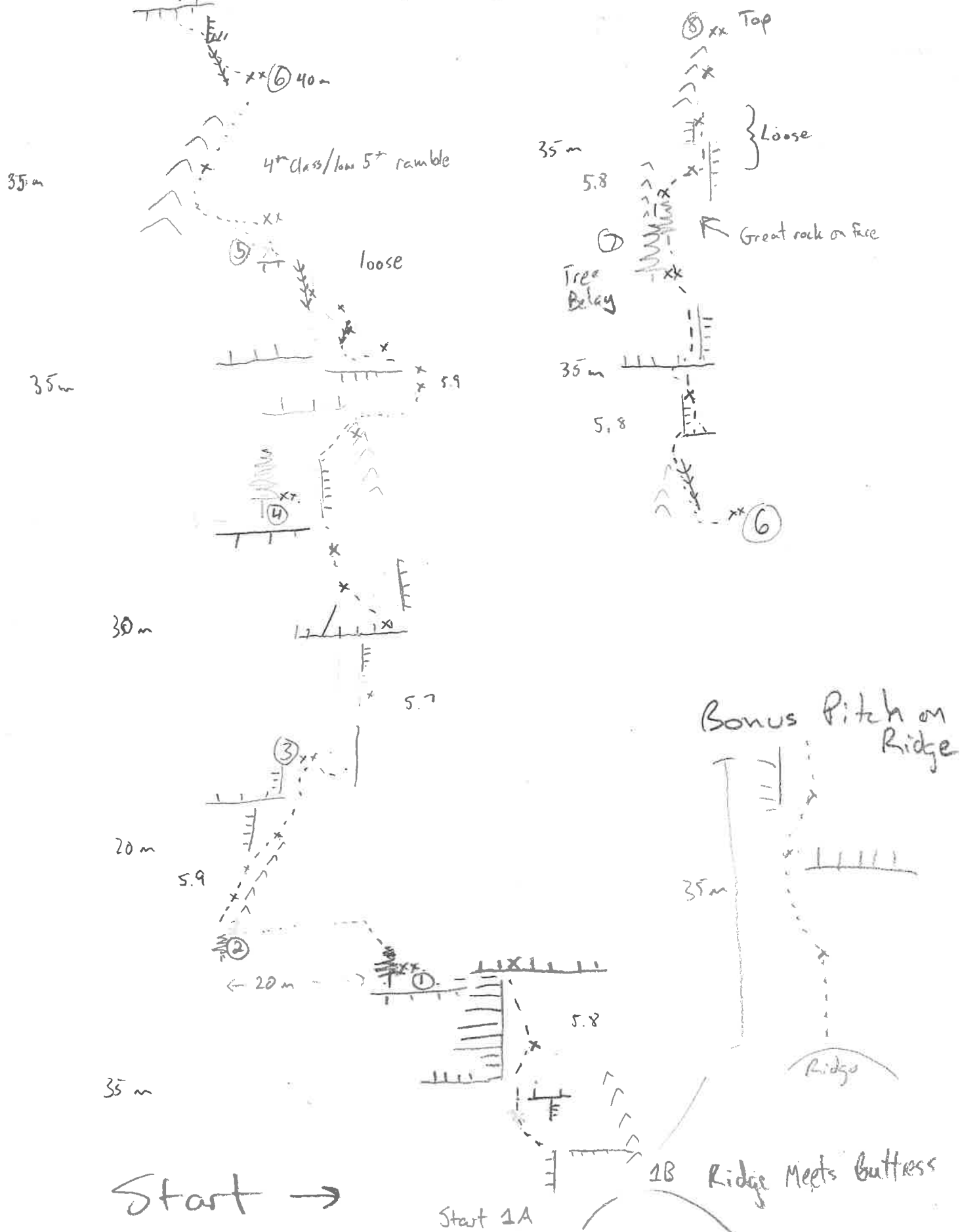
P6 4<sup>th</sup> class, maybe low 5<sup>th</sup>: Move up and left from the belay over easy but broken ground, eventually passing one bolt right of the ridgeline, and up to a belay station at the base of the next steep section. This pitch is runout but it's easy ground. Knifeblades may provide additional protection options.

P7 5.8: From the belay make easy moves up left through a small gap, then move up a small distance and pull around a small left-facing corner on improving rock. Climb up to a ledge and pull over a small roof and move up another short left-facing corner. Continue up easier ground past trees to another large ledge with a belay. On the original ascent, this pitch was linked with P8.

P8 5.8: From the ledge start up the arête on the left, clip a bolt and move right into a broken corner. Climb up past a bolt, right of a bulge and continue up broken ground past a couple of more bolts to a

belay station at the top of the buttress. Pitons may be useful to supplement the bolts as there are next to no clean gear options.

5.9+, 7-8 pitches + Bonus Pitch









Red: Original Route  
Green: Alt P1 start  
Yellow: Possible alt P7







1P, 5.6-5.7, 3 bolts





Trans-Canada Hwy  
Lac des Arcs

P

Heart Mountain

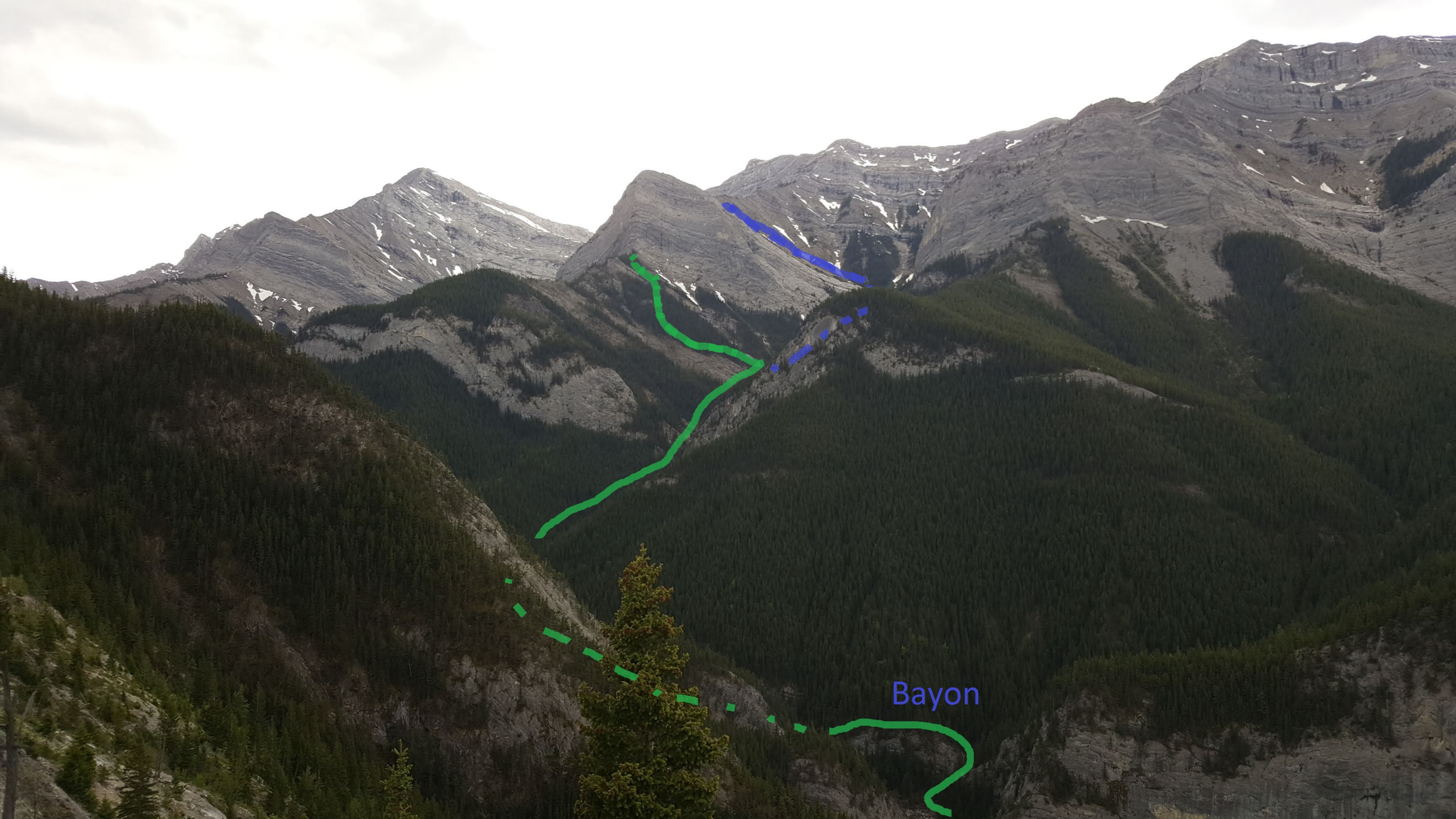
Start

Mt McGillivray









Bayon