



Marmot Rocks Bouldering Guide



Marmot Rocks are a set of excellent boulders along the South Rim Drive between Painted Wall and Cedar Point Overlooks, about 100 feet (30 m) south of the road. To get there, park at the Painted Wall Overlook and walk along the road until it bends to the right; look for a worn path on the left (south). Follow this path to the boulders.

For such a small area, the rocks offer a surprising number of quality routes. The rock is generally very solid but rough. Easy routes tend to follow good crack systems while the harder ones are usually steep to overhanging faces. It takes a while to get one's fingers accustomed to the tiny and often sharp face holds. The routes are from 10 to 20 feet (3-6 m) high, and though some get excitingly high off the ground, the landings are almost always clear and level.

Rating the Problems

Refer to the accompanying diagram to locate problems. This guide attempts to help the climber find the problems and gives a general difficulty level.

The rating system used here is divided into four difficulty categories. These terms roughly and subjectively correspond to certain levels of the Yosemite Decimal System (YDS), and are rated as if they were cruxes on a roped climb.

Many boulder problems here are underrated when using the YDS, due to the closeness of the ground and the repeated assaults on, or "wiring", on these mini-climbs. The following system is used:

EASY: about 5.6-5.8

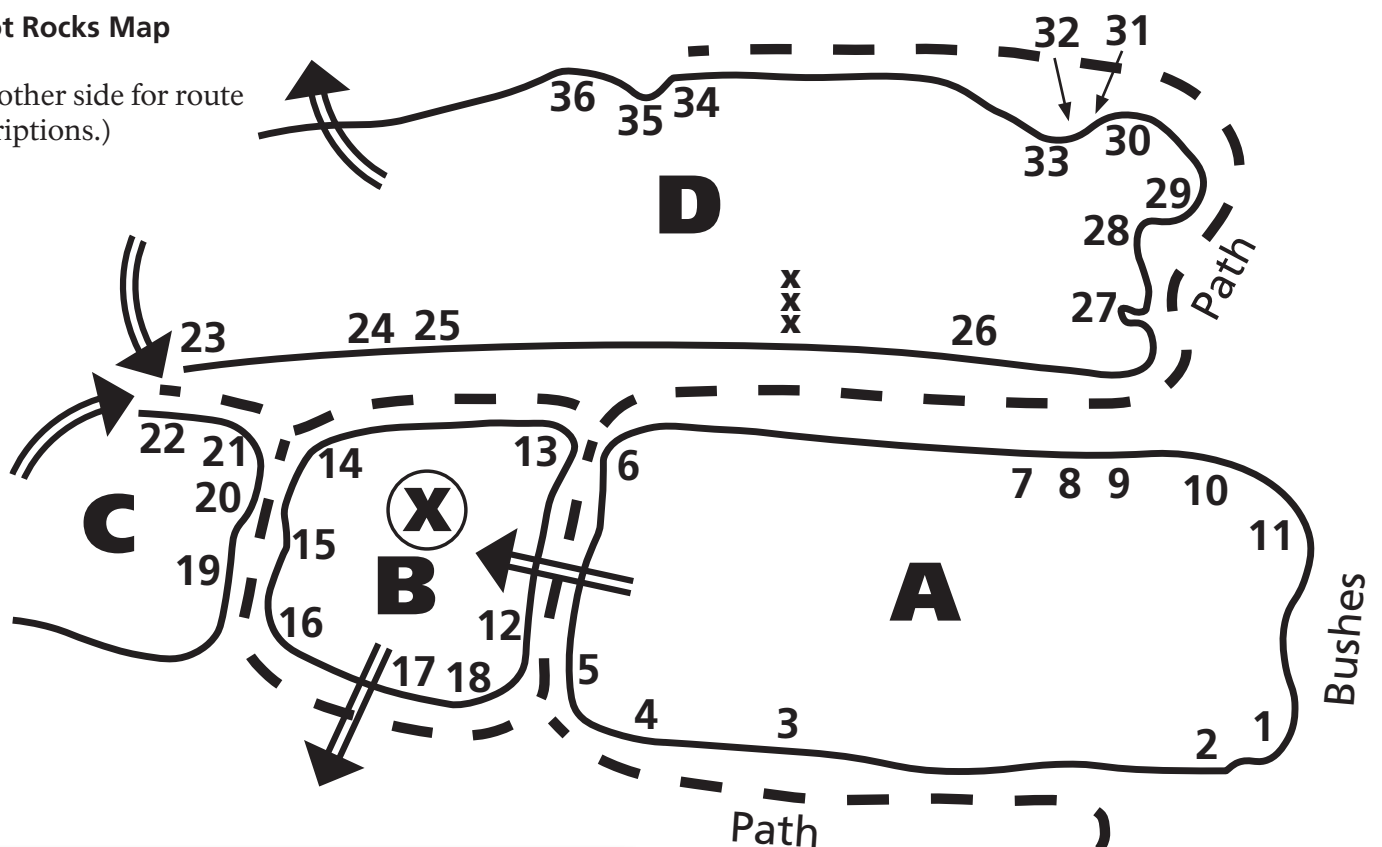
MODERATE: about 5.9-5.10

DIFFICULT: about 5.10-5.11

VERY DIFFICULT: 5.11-5.12 or harder

Marmot Rocks Map

(See other side for route descriptions.)



Map Legend

23 Bouldering Problem Number

Descent

X Bolt

XXX Aid Route

To South Rim Road

Route Descriptions

Boulder A

1: Moderate. The right edge or arete of the front (north) face has a line of holds up the arete, with a hard finish. The route is considerably easier if one stems over to the flake on Route 2. This and the next route are identified by prominent black streaks.

2: Difficult. Follow the strenuous, left-curving flake left of Route 1. Finish straight up after the hard initial moves, or for a bigger challenge keep your hands on the flake and follow it left to its end.

3: Difficult. A few holds near the ground followed by a shallow, overhung crack near the middle of the front face, form and improbable but classic route. If you cannot get off the ground you can step off nearby boulders onto the upper section of the problem.

4: Moderate. Start at the left corner of the front face and step off boulders onto a hand traverse right along a flake system. Reach for another flake out right. Reach up and finish up right.

5: Easy. Climb the right side of the east face of A in the chimney-passage without using the face of B.

6: Difficult. Start on the left side of chimney-passage on a set of severely overhanging cracks. Work your way up to easier cracks without using the back wall. Burly.

7: The first reasonable weakness is a narrow footledge a few feet of the ground with tiny crimp/flakes for hands. Climb the steep face using static or dynamic moves to reach holds above. Friction climb to the top.

8: Difficult. A contrived route following small holds and vague seams just right of the obvious crack of Route 2, staying away from the crack as long as possible.

9: Easy. The large flake/crack.

10: Easy. The crack to the left of the flake.

11: Moderate/Difficult. Climb the face/arete.

Boulder B

12: Difficult. The west face has an offwidth crack starting from a horizontal crack halfway up its left side. Do not use the back wall, of course, except to retreat when you've had enough.

13: Difficult. The southwest corner of B has some holds that start a strenuous and tricky route that finishes up the south face.

14: Very Difficult. Perhaps the most difficult natural line done here. The route climbs small flakes on the southeast corner to gain a right facing flake/finger crack. Good luck getting off the ground!

15: Easy. The chimney between B and C.

16: Easy. The left side of the front face offers thin slab climbing using the large horizontal. A more difficult variation eliminates the horizontal.

17: Moderate/Difficult. Another superb and tricky problem. Traverse on the horizontal crack and then pull over the roof on thin holds and face climb to the top.

18: Moderate. Start as for Route 12 but use the horizontal crack to reach around the corner left and climb the northwest arete.

Boulder C

19: Moderate/Difficult. The left side of the west face (facing B) has a continuous thin face with small flakes. There are several ways to do it. Watch for the fragile holds.

20: Difficult/Very Difficult. Another contrived route up the right side of the west face avoiding the good holds to the left but staying off the low-angle arete to the right until it is no

longer possible.

21: Easy/Moderate. Follow the southwest arete using the thin flaring crack and face holds.

22: Easy. A crack/ramp four feet off the ground, followed by low angle face climbing, presents a number of easy routes.

Boulder D

23: Very Difficult. At the left end of the face is a white/orange left-facing flake about ten feet up. Start eight feet to the left, climb up a move and then towards the colored flake.

24: Moderate. The left of the two splitter cracks.

25: Easy. The right of the two splitter cracks. Great hand and foot jams and the climber progressively becomes easier as you climb.

26: Difficult. The area classic climbs directly up to and past an obvious white hold on the right side of the front face.

27: Moderate. The squeeze chimney. Getting into it is tricky.

28: Easy. A nice crack in a slight corner, becoming two cracks at the top.

29: Difficult. Probably the hardest of this grade here. Climb the subtly steeping face just right of Route 14 (without using that crack) using a right-facing flake to get started. Then going straight up or right (easier). A fall at the top puts you in the oak tree!

30: Difficult. The crack on the southwest corner of D, overhanging at the bottom. Strenuous.

31: Moderate. Right of 16 is a ledge or ramp running up right above an overhanging section. Gain this (harder for short people). Then get your feet on it.

32: Difficult. Climb the face immediately right of the Route 17 crack, not using this crack or holds immediately adjacent to it. The horizontal, thin flake/crack is used to make a move leading to the finish up and left.

33: Easy. The crack on the south side of D. A short problem.

34: Difficult. Climb the face to the left of the #35 crack using horizontal weaknesses.

35: Easy. A short offwidth/fist crack. Can be made more difficult by not using any nearby holds for help.

36: Easy/Moderate. A crack ramp 5 feet off the ground provides a number of routes starting with a mantle then up rounded face holds to finish.