

SOUTH CHEK CLIMBING

Overview

This PDF is an introduction to the new climbing and trail development at Chek, south of the Big Show and east of Highway 99 (see map, page 2). Three years ago there were no recorded routes in this zone. Now there over eighty established pitches and at least four distinct cliffs are either complete or under development. It is likely that the total pitch count in the area will be over one hundred within another one or two years.

Two main events are responsible for this activity, both apparently occurring around 2012-2014. One was Bell Cellular recommissioning the short forest road just right of the normal Chek (Conroy Creek forest service road) entrance, and levelling space at the high point of the road to build a temporary cell base station. The other was BC Hydro carrying out a fresh clearing under the power lines close to that road.

The effect was to make it much easier to explore the area. Toby Foord-Kelcey found “The Substation” in April 2015 then in December that year bushwhacked up the hillside above the Bell base station with Chris Hecimovic to re-discover “The Monastery”. (Tyrone Brett had named and begun development at that cliff in the early 2000’s, approaching from the main Chek trail head, but had become too busy at work to continue.) In summer 2016, contractors from Bell removed the base station, making it possible to start cleaning the faces which have become “Electric Avenue”.

The current situation is that Electric Avenue is complete. It was decided to release a topo now to encourage traffic on the routes before the winter. The Monastery still has a few new route projects awaiting redpoints and is not described in detail here. The other cliffs under development are early-stage and not described. The main people involved in development around the area are: Chris Hecimovic, Dave Southam, Eric Hughes, Jack Fieldhouse, Jay Robinson, Krissy MacKay, Robyn Richard, Scott Milton, Tess Egan, Toby Foord-Kelcey and Tyrone Brett. Luc Martin and Neil Dyer have also made important contributions. Thank them if you meet them.

Electric Avenue

Including the nearby Substation sector, Electric Avenue has bolted routes at every grade from 5.3 to 5.12d. In particular it has four clusters of climbing style: friendly low-angle routes from 5.3 to 5.7 suitable for complete beginners, kids or first leads; superb, often long, intermediate grade routes between 5.9 and mid-5.11; short steep bouldery 5.12’s; 220m long multi-pitch routes (OK, there is only one of those ...). This varying character makes the cliff very suitable for mixed-ability groups, arguably more so than any cliff at Squamish. A mix of south, west and east faces, fast-drying rock and few seepage issues also makes the cliff suitable for use any time of year aside from during actual rain or snow.

Access, parking and trails

The South Chek area is on crown land. Looking at FLNRORD maps, there are no unusual land easements. The short road to Electric Avenue once extended further south for logging use; it is not a “Hydro” road though there is a BC Hydro sign on the yellow gate.

Parking is the biggest issue for this area. The main parking option is the pullout at the Conroy Creek FSR entrance. Electric Avenue is about four minutes walk up the road from the yellow gate. The pullout only has space for about six vehicles. If the pullout is full, drive further north on the 99 for about 200m, park at the large “salt shed” pullout and walk (carefully) back along the east side of the 99.

Since 2017, climbers visiting the Monastery have been using a steep uphill trail from Electric Avenue first flagged in 2016 but already well-trodden. If Electric Avenue becomes popular, as expected, exclusive use of this route to the Monastery at busy times will overwhelm the limited parking space. It would be helpful if a proportion of Monastery visitors instead parked at the main Chek area and used a recently-flagged trail starting just south of the Big Show/ Well of Souls area. See map on page 2. Thanks are owed to students from Coast Mountain Academy (as young as grade 7) who did early-stage work on this trail during their summer service day.

This trail is currently quite rugged but - like the original Monastery trail - will improve rapidly with frequent use. If you have tested this trail and found it challenging, please consider volunteering to improve the trail rather than complaining. The total distance from Chek main parking to the Monastery on the new trail is the same as from the yellow gate to the Monastery by the old route, while the start point is 80m higher.

Commercial use

The Electric Avenue west face is very suitable for instruction purposes and has already been used for that purpose by guides. No-one has exclusive rights to these cliffs and commercial usage is as legitimate as recreational use. However the developers ask that guides ensure they have current membership of Squamish Access Society as it will be the society that replaces worn-out anchors in the future, as it does elsewhere in Squamish. Furthermore, SAS handles the land manager relationship at Chek. SAS membership status can be checked at <https://squamishaccess.ca/join-sas/>.

Funding

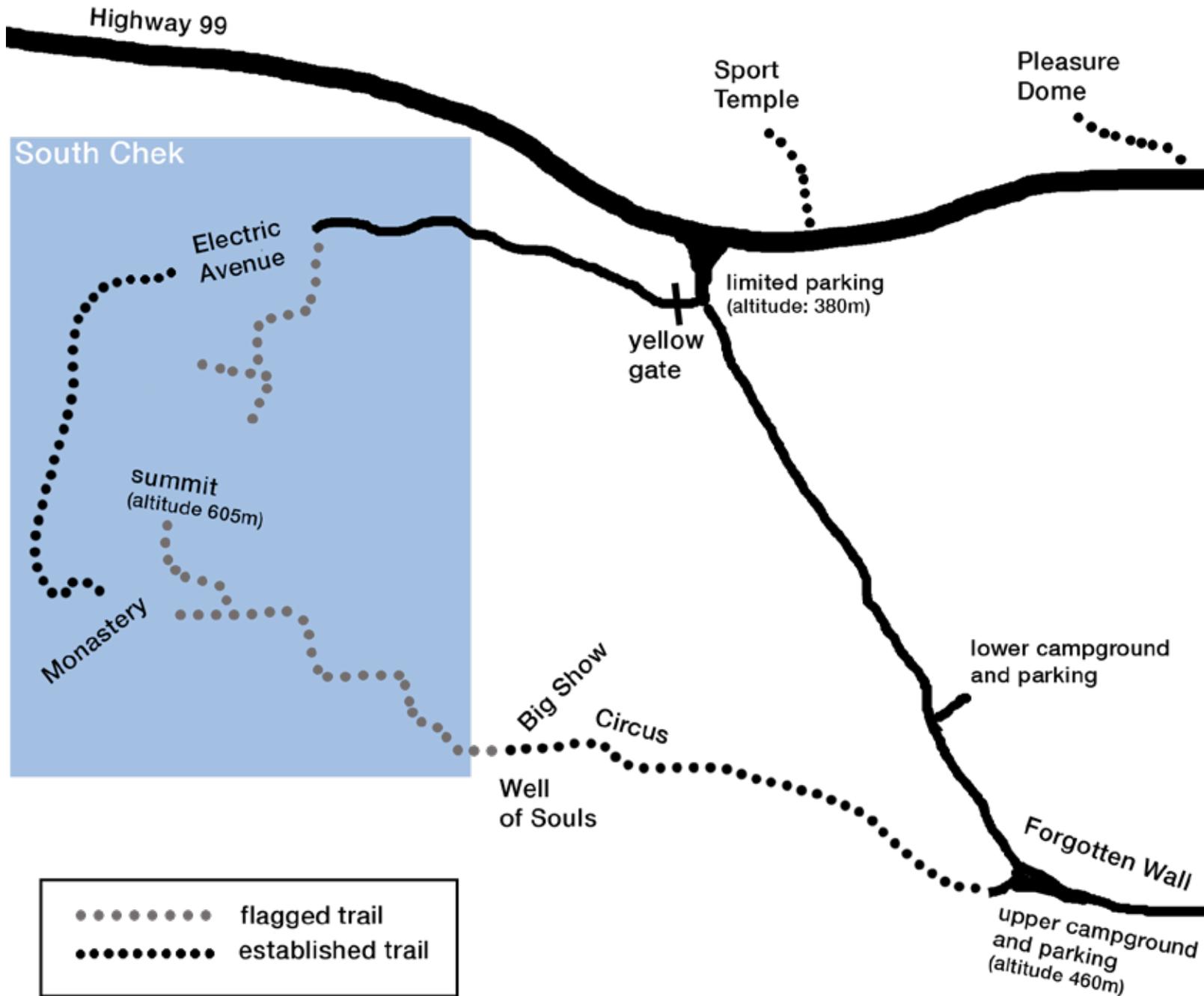
The now defunct CASBC bolt program and the newly-established Squamish Route Development fund have played a role in funding development in this area. The developers encourage climbers to donate to the Squamish Route Development fund. However the majority of bolts, hangers, chains, fixed draws and lowering biners have been bought by the developers themselves.

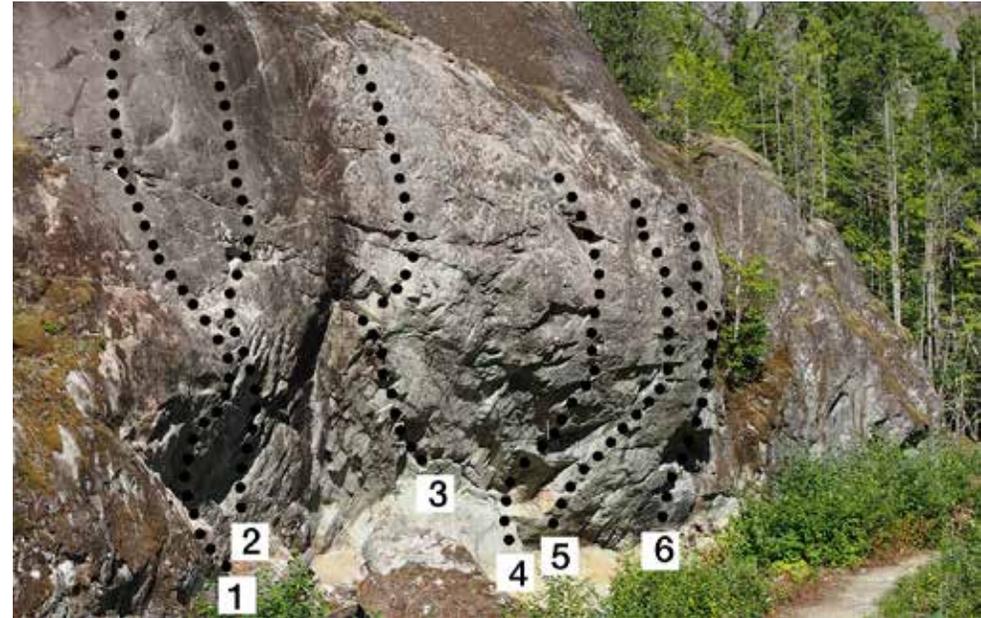
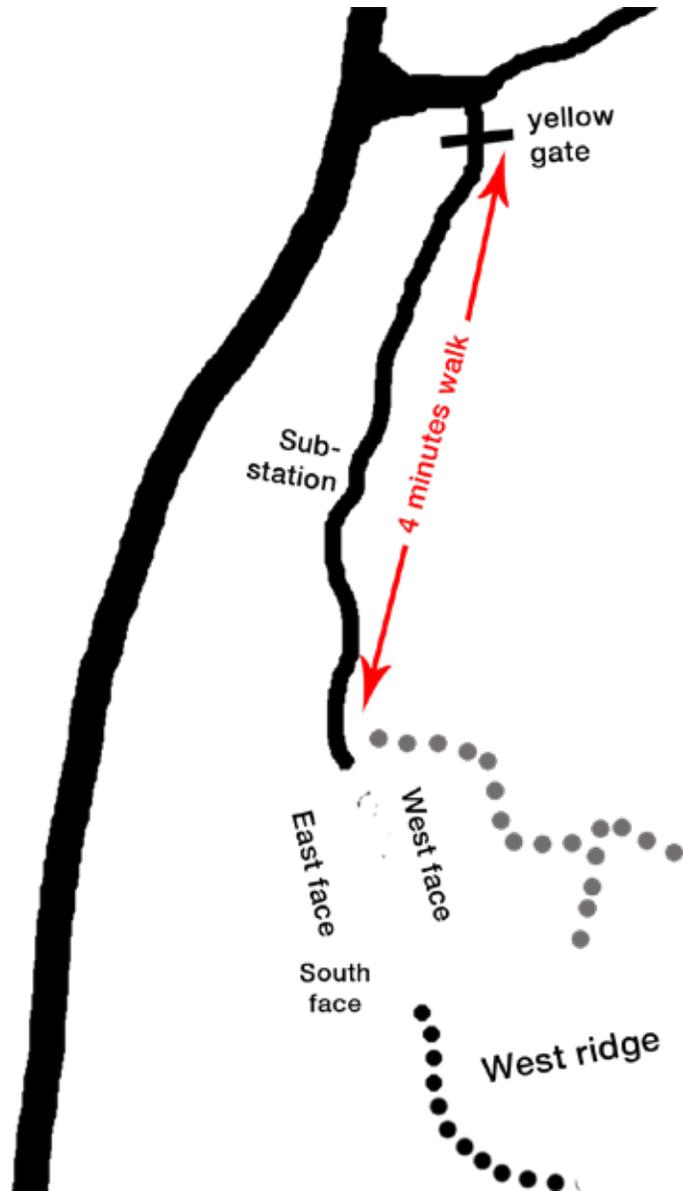
Feedback

Please send any feedback on Electric Avenue to conroygate@gmail.com If you have concerns about any specific routes, please use this channel to contact the developers, or talk directly. Please do not modify routes without the developers permission.

TFK, August 2018

CHEK MAP





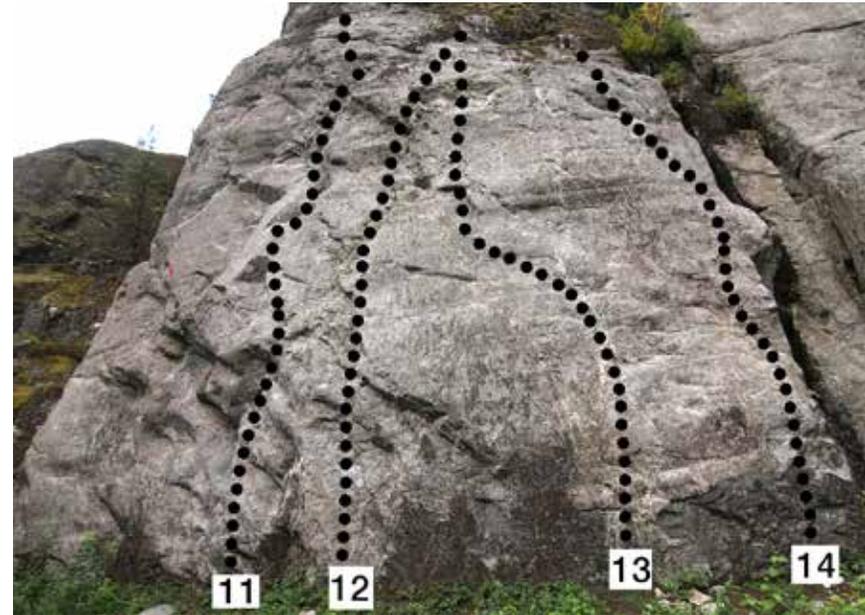
1. **Zero Bars** 5.11c ★
Solve the entertaining boulder problem at the first bolt then wander up the very easy slab. 4 bolts (10m). *FA Chris Hecimovic, July 2016*
2. **Leakage Flux**, 5.10d ★
Like the previous route except the boulder problem is easier and more obvious, and the slab is more interesting. Not a good warm-up. 5 bolts (10m). *FA Toby Foord-Kelcey, Chris Hecimovic, April 2016*
3. **Crosstalk**, 5.12b ★★★★★
Swing leftwards up the diagonal rail then move right and up the headwall. Continuously interesting climbing. The shortest route ever nominated for a Golden Scrub Brush award? 5 bolts (10m). *FA Toby Foord-Kelcey, April 2016*
4. **Incandescence**, 5.12d ★★★
The fierce central line. The route was once replicated as a boulder problem at the Ground Up gym - is there any higher accolade? Fixed quickdraws. (Bolts to the left are a variant, "the pinch project" - no known ascent) 4 bolts (9m). *FA Toby Foord-Kelcey, August 2016*
5. **Impedance Wave**, 5.12c ★★★
The aesthetic right-trending line with a wild finishing move off tiny crimps. Sausage-fingered climbers may struggle. Fixed quickdraws. 4 bolts (9m). *FA Toby Foord-Kelcey, June 2016*
6. **Inductance**, 5.10a ★★★
Fun jug-pulling. A slightly less juggy crux guards the chains. A good warm-up. 4 bolts (9m). *FA Toby Foord-Kelcey, Kay Wong, September 2015*

ELECTRIC AVENUE: SOUTH FACE AND EAST FACE LEFT



7. **Darkness at Teatime**, 5.11a ★★★★★
Crank the steep start out of the pit then switch to slab mode. From the break at half-height the route gets steeper. No really hard moves but sustained.
15 bolts (30m) FA Toby Foord-Kelcey, July 2018

8. **Solstice Delirium**, 5.11b ★★★
Follow the Heel Stone past two bolts then climb the centre of the slab to steeper terrain and a distinct crux at the obvious looming overlap.
14 bolts (28m) FA Toby Foord-Kelcey, July 2018



9. **The Heel Stone**, 5.10b ★★★★★
Step off the block then climb the long slab to where it steepens. A quick swing rightwards gains a ladder of amazing incuts in an exposed position.
12 bolts (28m) FA Toby Foord-Kelcey, Kay Wong, April 2017

10. **Down on the Corner**, 5.10c ★★★
Fun climbing just left of the arete.
6 bolts (13m) FA Jack Fieldhouse, July 2018

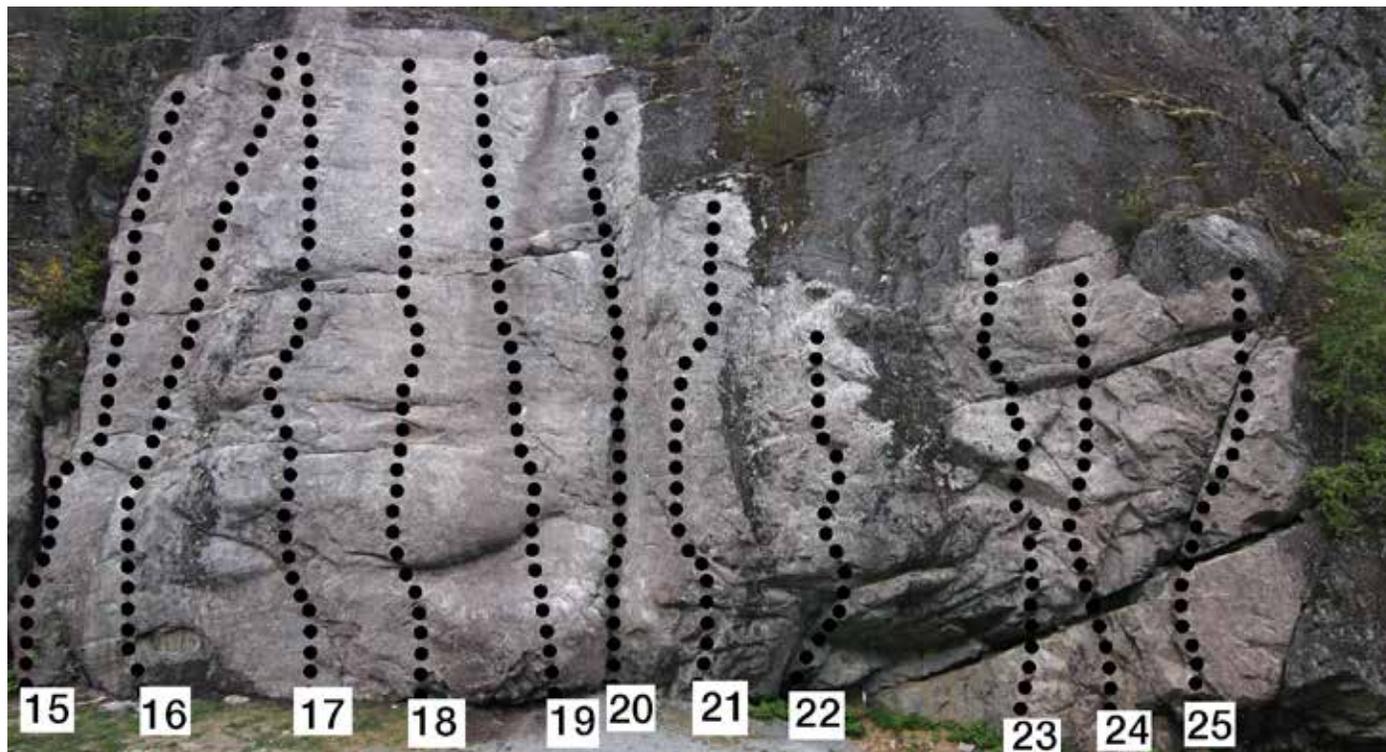
11. **The Torii Gate**, 5.10c ★★★★★
Intricate face climbing on beautifully-featured compact rock
8 bolts (13m) FA Leo Foord-Kelcey, July 2017

12. **Dry the Rain**, 5.10c ★★
Tough start, the rest is much easier
5 bolts (11m) FA Todd Gerhart, Toby Foord-Kelcey, March 2018

13. **Minds of Winter**, 5.11a ★★★
Delicate face climbing following a diagonal line leftwards. For extra value, try to finish independently of Dry the Rain.
5 bolts (12m) FA Toby Foord-Kelcey, December 2017

14. **Stella**, 5.10b ★★
Fun arete and face moves left of the chimney.
6 bolts (11m) FA Toby Foord-Kelcey, Leo Foord-Kelcey, May 2018

ELECTRIC AVENUE: EAST FACE CENTRAL AND RIGHT



15. The Gift of the Magi, 5.10a ★★★

Start in the chimney on good holds then follow the left edge of the giant slab passing a couple of crux sections.

11 bolts (22m) FA Tess Egan, June 2018

16. Bell's Mono, 5.11d ★★★

A very thin start (use the mono!) leads to slightly easier but still thoughtful slab climbing. Shares anchors with the next route.

10 bolts (25m) FA Toby Foord-Kelcey, September 2017

17. Railton Road, 5.10a ★★★★

Swing across the rail to start, then head up the centre of the giant slab via an entertaining ledge manouvre (press it out!) and thin finger crack.

11 bolts (25m) FA Toby Foord-Kelcey, May 2017

18. The Monatude, 5.10d ★★★★

Tighten your shoes! A bouldery balancey start leads to a very thin steep slab section. Eases near the top.

11 bolts (25m) FA Krissy MacKay, June 2018

19. Bolt from the Blue, 5.9 ★★★★

Another tricky start. A second crux lurks at half-height. Perfect stone!

10 bolts (25m) FA Krissy MacKay, July 2018

20. St Elmo's Fire, 5.8 ★★★★

Jams, stems and laybacking in the cool dihedral lead to delicate finishing moves.

8 bolts (20m) FA (on natural protection) Krissy Mackay, Ian Strachan, July 2017

21. Uncontrolled Release, 5.12a ★★★★

A complex bouldering problem past two bolts gains a rest before relentless thin face climbing up the blunt arete.

7 bolts (17m) FA Robyn Richard, June 2017

22. Nihilist Porcupine, 5.12c ★★★

Steep bouldering leads to a balancey finish. "Feisty", said the second ascensionist.

5 bolts (12m) FA Toby Foord-Kelcey, August 2017

23. Credulous Hedgehog, 5.10d ★★★★

Fun steep climbing on good holds, including a stylish gaston.

6 bolts (13m) FA Toby Foord-Kelcey, August 2017

24. TyrannosaurESS, 5.11c ★★★

Crimpy climbing up the rib feature.

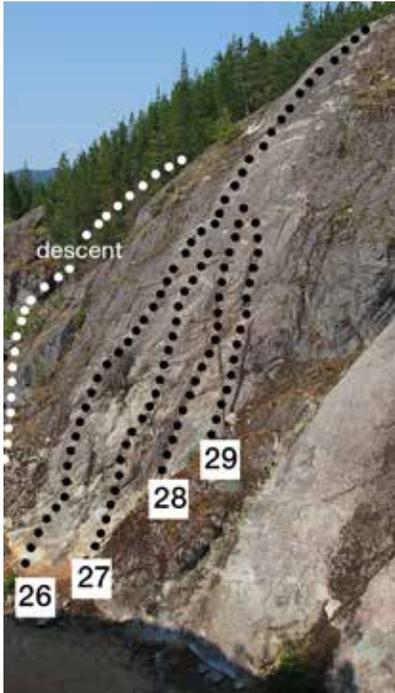
5 bolts (13m) FA Tess Egan, June 2018

25. Momzilla, 5.10c ★★★

The steep crack. Harder and better than it looks.

5 bolts (13m) FA Tess Egan, Jay Robinson, June 2018

ELECTRIC AVENUE: WEST FACE



26. Kye's Stairway to Seven, 5.6 ★★★★★

Two pitches. A great introduction to multi-pitch climbing. From the top, walk uphill into the trees for a few metres to find a flagged horizontal trail. Go climbers' left (north) on this trail to eventually descend climbers' left of the cliff.

14 bolts (40m)

FA Tess Egan, Jay Robinson, Kye Egan-Robinson, September 2017

27. Out in the Street, 5.7 ★★★ 9 bolts (17m)

28. Out in the Daytime, 5.8 ★★★ 13 bolts (20m)

29. Out in the Night, 5.7 ★★★ 11 bolts (20m)

Three fun routes of similar character. Scramble up the ramp to access the starts.

FA Tess Egan, Jay Robinson, Kye Egan-Robinson, April 2018

30. Then We'll Take It Higher, 5.8 ★★★★★

A long pitch up the cool curving rib, with an optional finish at mid-height anchors.

The top section is easy but enjoyable. A 70m rope is needed to lower from the top. Deserves four stars for the obsessively-thorough cleaning job.

13 bolts (33m)

FA Jack Fieldhouse, Kaian Fieldhouse, Shannon Fieldhouse, September 2017

31. Rock Down To, 5.9 ★★★

A harder variant to the previous route, ending at the mid-height anchors.

8 bolts (20m) *FA Jack Fieldhouse, September 2017*



32. The Smart Route, 5.7 ★ 4 bolts (8m)

33. The Amazing Route, 5.6 ★★★ 3 bolts (8m)

34. The Cliff of Awesome, 5.4 ★ 4 bolts (8m)

Three very short lines ending at a nice ledge.

FA Kye Egan-Robinson, May 2018

35. Tailgate Party, 5.5 ★★

The left side of the triangular slab. Slightly harder than its companion route.

7 bolts (13m) *FA James Foord-Kelcey, May 2017*

36. Park Rat, 5.4 ★★

Pleasant wandering up the right side of the triangular slab to shared anchors

7 bolts (13m) *FA James Foord-Kelcey, September 2016*

37. Misty 9, 5.3 ★★★

Squamish's least-challenging lead? Great holds.

4 bolts (9m) *FA James Foord-Kelcey, November 2017*

38. Taiga Feet, 5.7 ★★

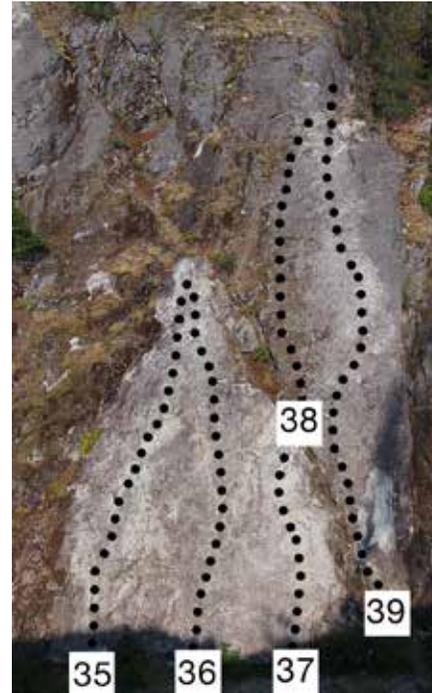
Extends the previous route. Step neatly across the chimney and climb the slab.

10 bolts (26m) *FA Leo Foord-Kelcey, August 2018*

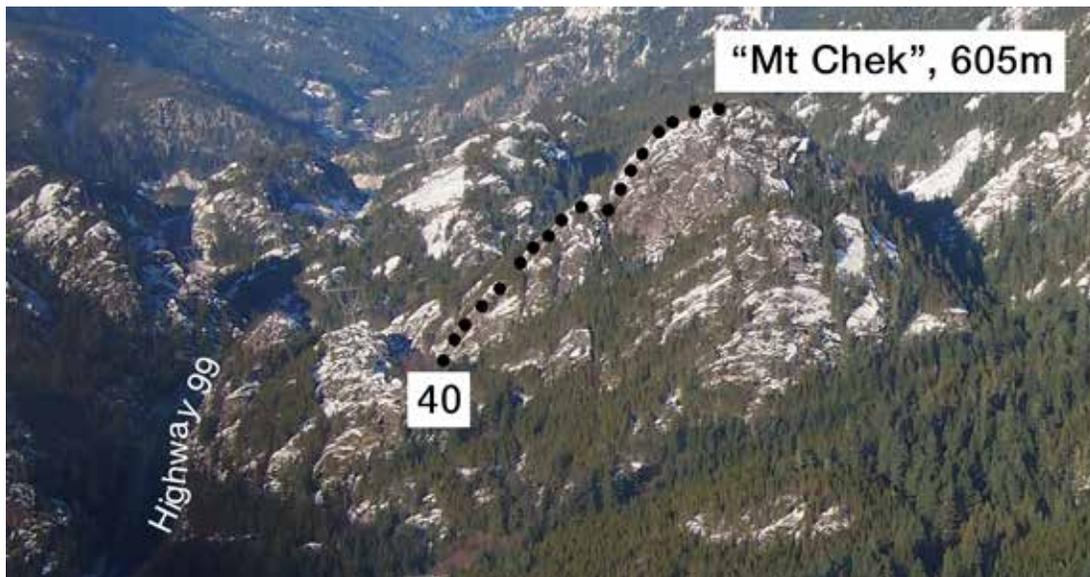
39. Taiga Face, 5.7 ★★★★★

A few moves on basalt blocks gain excellent climbing up the long rib feature.

12 bolts (27m) *FA James Foord-Kelcey, August 2016*



WEST RIDGE OF MT CHEK



40. Frontside 180, 220m, 5.8 ★★★★★

A long multi-pitch sport route, following the west ridge of “Mt Chek”: the cute hill visible to Highway 99 drivers travelling northbound between the Big Orange Bridge and the Chek turn. Throughout the route there are amazing 180 degree views along the Sea to Sky corridor, from Tricouni to the north, Tantalus range to the west and Sky Pilot to the south. The style is mostly slab climbing at a moderate grade - with real holds not Apron-like friction padding. Rarely harder than 5.7 but always engaging. The route is generously bolted. Strong teams will link many of the pitches (and skip bolts) but the route as described enables leader and second(s) to maintain visibility. It is possible to bail from the route from below pitches 4 or 7; find trails heading climber’s left (north) then downhill (see map, page 2).

The route starts at an obvious west-facing bolted slab, just above the trail in the trees about 30m south of the main Electric Avenue cliffs. You will need about twelve quickdraws.

Pitch 1: moderate slab with one thin section to ledges. 5.7

Pitch 2: more moderate slab with another thin section. Neat belay spot on an airy ledge. 5.7

Pitch 3: up the blunt arete to reach a scenic open bench area. 5.6

Follow flagging left and downhill to find pitch 4.

Pitch 4: a tricky start move then fun slab climbing to a flat ledge. 5.7

Pitch 5: up to another ledge then steep climbing on diagonal crack features. 5.8

Pitch 6: walk right to a thin slab which leads to an easy groove and a pull over a short bulge to gain the exposed arete, then up to another open bench area. A good place to pause to enjoy the sensational views. 5.7

Follow flagging uphill then leftwards to find pitch 7.

Pitch 7: juggy climbing to a scruffy ledge. 5.6

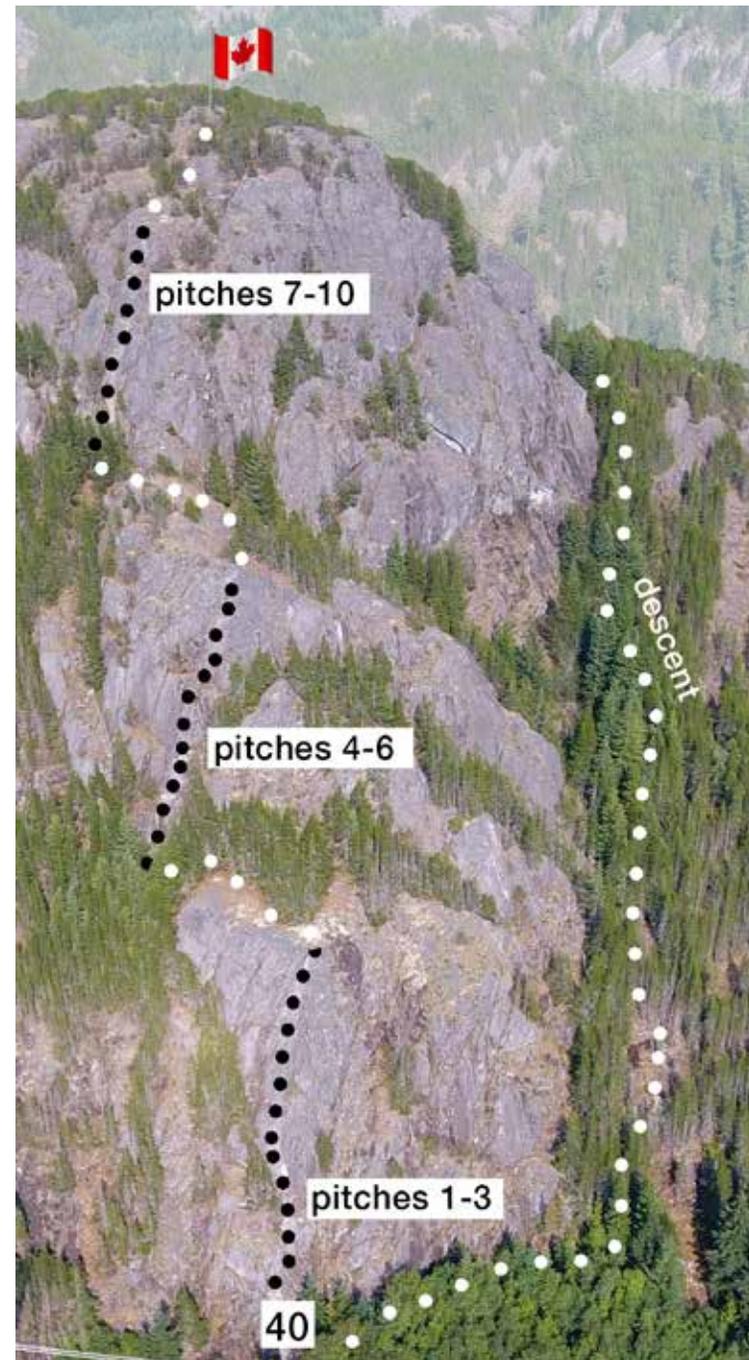
Pitch 8: up the rib with a couple of thoughtful moves. 5.8

Pitches 9 and 10: two short arete pitches above ledges. 5.4

Follow flagging uphill to the fabulous summit area.

Descent: flagging on the east side of the summit leads down to the Monastery trails (see map, page 2).

FA James Foord-Kelcey, Jay Robinson, Kye Egan-Robinson, Tess Egan, Toby Foord-Kelcey (various leads), July 2018. Unknown climber(s) placed a few anchors on the line in 2016, but seem to have then lost interest. Toby and Tess&Jay each worked on approximately 50% of the route preparation.



ROUTE NAME TRIVIA (YOU DON'T HAVE TO READ THIS)

Bell's Mono - the route follows the line of the conduit bolted to the cliff by Bell Cellular to carry cabling to their antenna. When contractors removed the conduit, they exposed an unused bolt-hole, providing the route with a crucial mono.

Leakage Flux, Crosstalk, Incandescence, Impedance Wave, Inductance - random electrical engineering jargon.

Zero Bars - cellphone jargon. Zero bars, zero stars. Chris H was appalled to have his name associated with such a poor route but couldn't resist sending when the developer of the route failed repeatedly on the opening boulder problem.

Bolt from the Blue, St Elmo's Fire - two rare types of naturally-occurring electrical phenomena

Out in the Street, Out in the Daytime, Out in the Night, Then we'll take it Higher, Rock down To - non-millennial climbers will know that "Electric Avenue" is an annoyingly-earworming 1980s hit from British reggae artist Eddy Grant. These are lines from the song.

Railton Road - the "Electric Avenue" lyrics reference the Brixton riots in London in 1981. Railton Road (aka "The Frontline") was the epicentre of the rioting.

Nihilist Porcupine - a phrase in the rap song "Remember the Name", which James F-K was playing repetitively on drives to Whistler during winter 2016/17. It seemed appropriate to an unfriendly route.

Credulous Hedgehog - the opposite of a Nihilist Porcupine?

The Torii Gate - in Japan a "torii gate" often marks the base of a stairs leading to a temple or shrine. The trail to the Monastery cliff starts under the route.

The Monatude - the aloof attitude displayed by select climbers passing through Electric Avenue on their way to the Monastery cliff.

The Heel Stone - a rock outside the stone circle at Britain's Stonehenge which aligns perfectly with the first rays of morning light at the summer solstice. This south-facing route is similarly well-aligned to catch the sun, and has a curiously-shaped start block at its base.

Solstice Delirium - see "the Heel Stone". The FA took place at the summer solstice 2018.

Minds of Winter - in contrast, the FA of this route took place on a brutally cold December morning.

Taiga Face, Taiga Feet - Taiga is James F-K's second name. The FA of Taiga Face was his first ever lead, aged eight.

Kye's Stairway to Seven - Kye was still six when Tess and Jay took him up the route.

The Smart Route, The Amazing Route, The Cliff of Awesome - Kye was given complete freedom to name his FA's on this sector and so liberally sprayed the superlatives. All led aged seven, upstaging James.

Tailgate Party - embarrassingly for his dad - there were witnesses - James insisted on blasting Eminem from the F-K 4Runner during the FA.

Frontside 180 - the route is located on the "front side" of Chek; there are massive 180 degree views from the route ; a "Frontside 180" is the easiest trick in board sports which sort of matches the grade of the route; James and Kye are mini-shredders on snowboard and skateboard respectively.

Park Rat - James was getting psyched about the approaching snowboard season when he FA'd the route.

Misty 9 - a trampoline trick involving two and half body rotations. James had recently landed one.

The Gift of the Magi - Tess is a fan of both the original O. Henry short story and Andrew Jackson Jihad song.

Down on the Corner - a Creedance Clearwater Revival song.

TyrannosaurESS - Tess claims to have short weak arms.

Momzilla - Tess' reflection on the volume of routes she had been cleaning for Kye to climb (though this route proved too hard for him).

Uncontrolled Release - a euphemism for an industrial explosion. Rob just missed working at Syncrude during a serious incident.

Stella - the name of the F-K's dog. Also somewhat ironic as the route is OK but distinctly not "stellar".

Darkness at Teatime - homage to the 1980s Smith Rock classic which Toby was trying intermittently between fall 2016 and spring 2018; the south face goes into shade around 4pm.