

Development

EXTRA

Godman Creek

Blurring the Lines

By Jonas Gagnon

The sun was already riding a little high as we cruised down Kingsway on our way to Godman Creek, a new bouldering area in West Vancouver. It was probably my fault for sleeping in too long, but Trent (Hoover) had obviously enjoyed spending the morning with his kids, too. We packed up Trent's Honda Civic with our bags, bouldering mats and his dog Lupin.

Its mornings like these that inspired Trent to begin looking for bouldering closer to home. "Because I have kids now, I just don't have the time to go to Squamish all the time anymore," said Trent.

A quick pit stop at Gene, a hipster-filled coffee shop at the corner of Hastings and Kingsway, provided us with all the caffeinated fuel we needed, and

we were back in the When Trent first moved here nine years ago, he bouldered extensively in Squamish, opening such classic problems such as Mantra (V8) and One Zen (V10/11). However, he feels that some of his most important contributions to Squamish bouldering were lines that he cleaned but wasn't able to make the first ascent. For Trent, the process of finding new problems seems to be almost as rewarding as climbing.

The weather was beautiful, the sun was shining and clouds were nowhere to be seen. It wasn't more than five minutes into the trip that Lupin started barking like an over-excited child. She was clearly eager to head out to the boulders, but when Trent told me she would probably whine the whole way, I knew it was going to be a long twenty-minute drive.

Several years ago, Trent became curious about the potential for bouldering in Vancouver's north shore mountains. Poring over topographic maps and aerial photographs, he started to hike into areas

that looked promising. He first walked through the boulders surrounding Godman Creek in 2003, but it wasn't until this spring that he had the time to return to the area and start opening problems.

Luckily, traffic was light as we crossed the Lion's Gate Bridge, headed through North Vancouver, and turned onto the Trans-Canada Highway. A couple minutes later we pulled off the highway onto the Cypress Bowl Road, parked, and let out the over-excited dog. Stuffing our bags into the bouldering mats, we headed off to the boulders.

The walk into the boulders followed a paved access road, and after five minutes, Lupin jumped over Godman Creek and ran into the forest at the Roadside Area. Following on a makeshift bridge, we found Lupin excitedly greeting Bill Thompson, who was busy scrubbing a new traverse around a small boulder. Bill, an instructor at UBC and avid Vancouver climber, has been actively developing problems at the area with Trent.

The Roadside is one of the smaller sub-areas that make up Godman Creek, and consists of two small stand-alone boulders and several bluffs uphill. We warmed up on Placid Falls (V0), a fun problem on the end of a long sculpted wall. Placid Falls is typical of many of the problems at Godman Creek, and features cracks, positive edges on a vertical wall, and a sloping topout. The bouldering at Godman Creek is often more reminiscent of the roped routes at Squamish rather than the bouldering, a fact that may strongly appeal to many climbers. We then moved down to Bill's newly scrubbed traverse Cube Root (V2), which Trent onsighted and dubbed a fun addition to the area.

Packing up, we ran into Ronald Gagne, who had spent the morning scrubbing new problems in the Third Tier Area. Ronald, an astronomy student at UBC, is responsible for many

of the problems at Godman Creek.

We followed

Ronald back up to The Tiers to see the problems he had finished cleaning.

Crossing the road into the dark forest beyond, the extent of the bouldering at Godman Creek became more apparent. Trent and Ronald stopped to warm up on an easy highball. Ronald quickly climbed Twice Shy (V2), a problem with a committing move to a shallow pocket on a slab high above the ground. Trent and Ronald then set to work on one of the many projects at the area, a tall blunt arete which

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lower mainland, including pockets, weird fins, and horizontal and vertical cracks that range in size from seams to wide handcracks. Because there are so many high-quality problems in the lower grades, and because of its proximity to Vancouver, Godman Creek will prove to be popular with new climbers who find themselves frustrated with the bouldering in Squamish.

Once finished on the project, we continued on through the beautiful forest up to Moby Dick, a wide flaring crack up the side of a bulging white wall of granite. Although only V1, this 25-foot tall, monster of a problem, is destined to be a classic. The flaring nature of the crack makes jamming difficult but lie-backing a pleasure, while easier face holds above make the topout less stressful than it would otherwise be. In the failing light, we spent time climbing several fun lines including the pocketed Depth Charge (V0) and the pleasantly knobbed Captain Crunch (V1).

During our day of bouldering, there were several sub-areas we didn't have time to visit. Godman Creek is home to over 100 problems, with several difficult projects still awaiting ascents. Trent estimates Godman Creek will eventually be home to as many as 400 boulder problems and several routes.

The short road home was a boon after climbing all day. We bypassed heavy traffic on the Lions Gate Bridge by taking the Second Narrows Bridge, then stopped off at Safeway to buy a cheesecake for a birthday party that night. As I shopped for dessert, my throbbing fingertips reaffirmed my discovery - that for climbers living in Vancouver, quality bouldering is closer than we think.

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will force the eventual first ascensionist to do an almost body-length move between two holds. They quickly tired of repeatedly taking the long fall onto the bouldering mats, and we moved on to check out some of the new problems that Ronald had recently cleaned on the Third Tier.

Most of the climbing in The Tiers is found on cliffs that, while somewhat short for routes, are unusually tall for boulder problems, Trent explains. "The climbing here blurs the lines between bouldering and route climbing. Lots of the problems are in the 15 to 20 foot range." Often, the problems incorporate features that are not commonly found