

# A Climbers' Guide to the El Rito Sport Crags

New Mexico

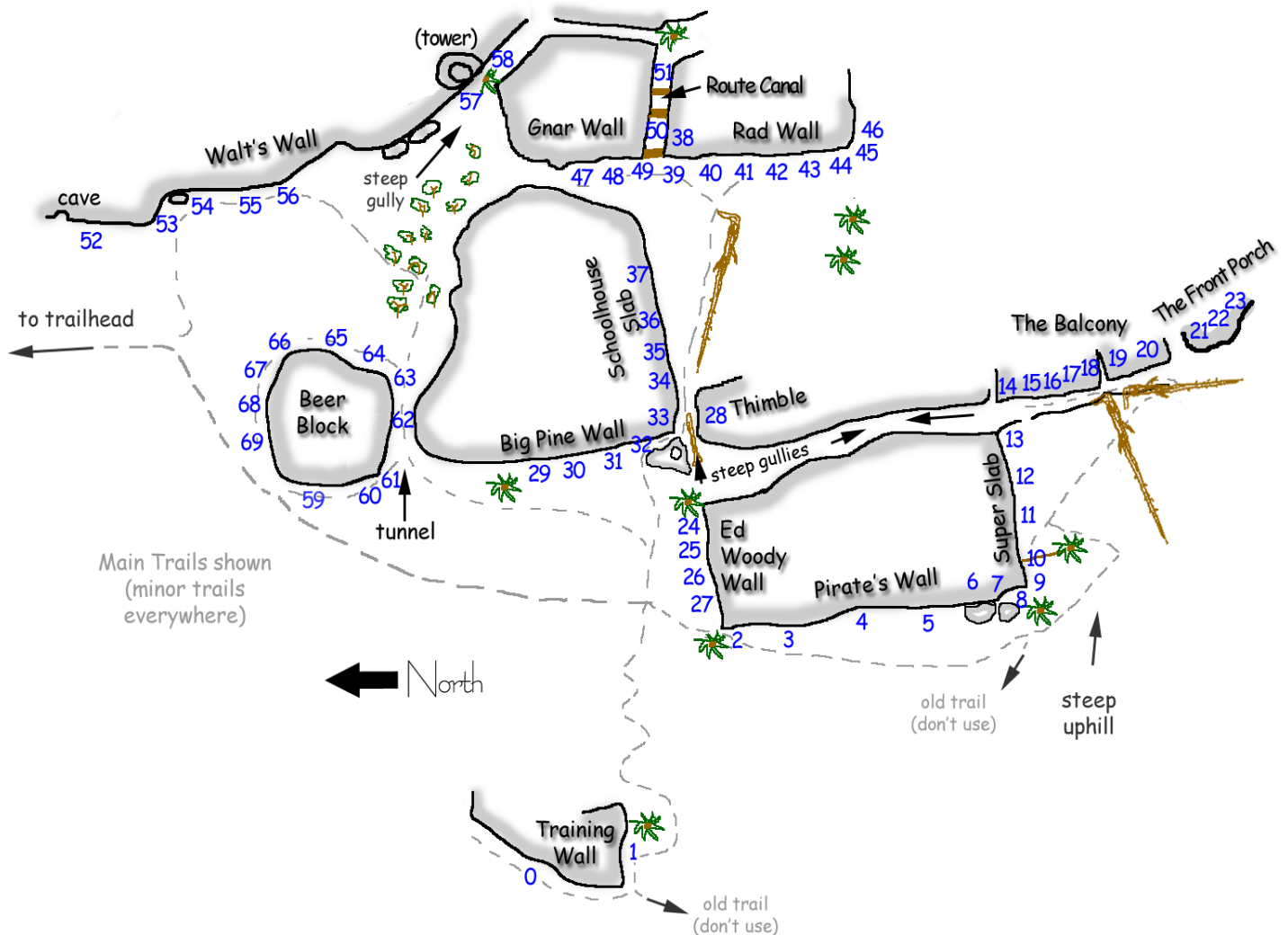
By Gary Clark

Updated by Jason Halladay - Version 07/06/2008

## HOW TO GET THERE

The village of El Rito is located about 50 miles north of Santa Fe. There is a detailed map of Northern NM on the web site, <http://tinyurl.com/5odxa8>, if you are having difficulty finding it on a regular road map. From the east end of the village, turn north on Forest Road 44 (dirt). Drive 3.75 miles from the pavement, and park to the left just after the sign "Cañada del Potrero." Camping is available at several locations up this spur road, which ends in about a half-mile. Now walk across the road to a trail paralleling it headed south. The trail crosses a bridge, then turns south up the sidehill to the crags. (~15 min.)

## El Rito Sport Crags - Map



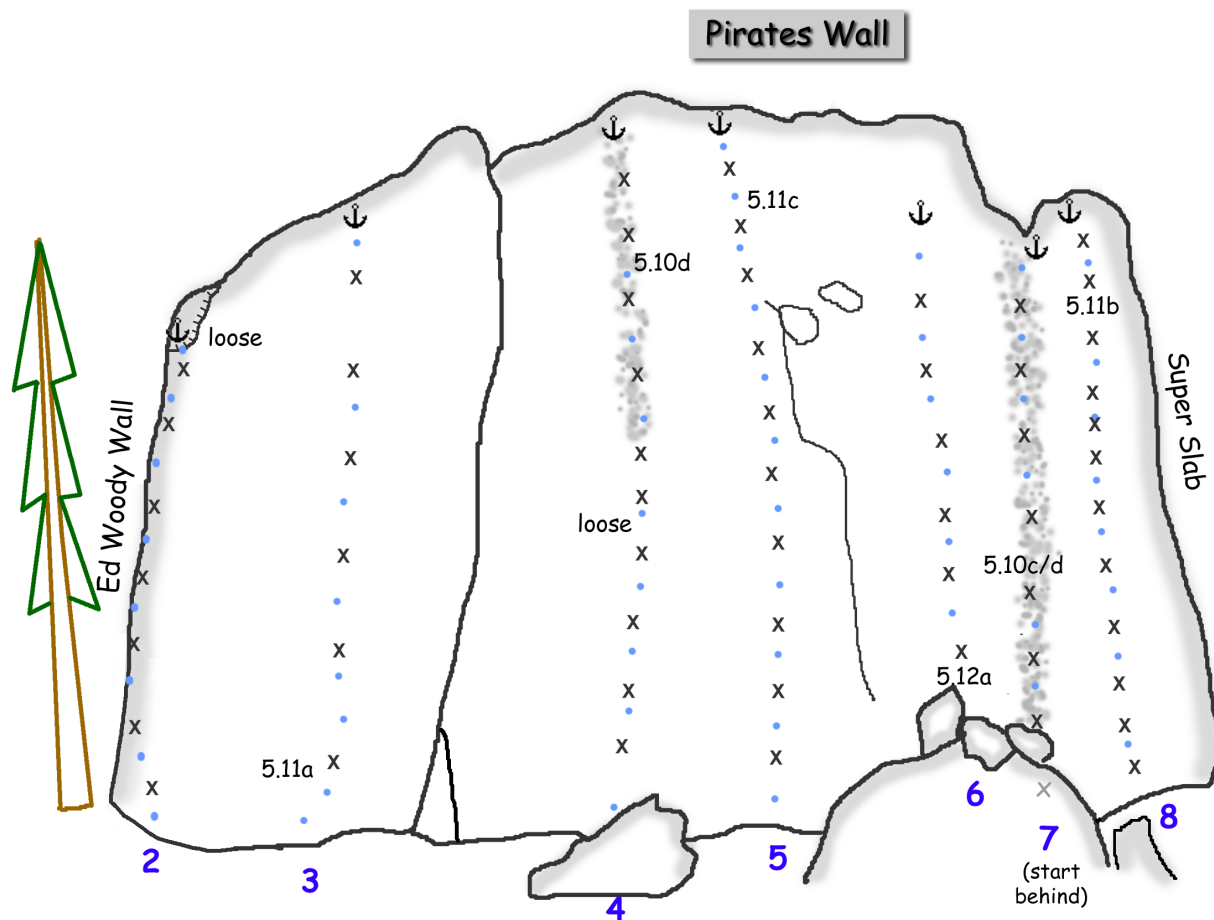
**WHAT'S NEW!? (June 2008)** Since the last revision of this guide in May 2006, one new wall and a total of twelve new routes have been established. The Front Porch is a new wall developed in 2006 by Vaino Kodas that boasts three 5.11 routes. Vaino also established a number of routes on other walls. The new routes added to this latest revision are listed in the table below:

Route #	Rating	Name	Wall
14	10b/c	Dr. Evil	The Balcony
18	8	Mini Me	The Balcony
19	11b/c	Rodent Outhouse	The Balcony
21	11c	Into the Gayle	The Front Porch
22	11c	El Farolito	The Front Porch
23	11c/d	Tree Swing	The Front Porch
27	10b/c	Len's Take	The Ed-Woody Wall
35	7	Que? (Former TR-only route)	The Schoolhouse Slab
37	7+	Short Bus	The Schoolhouse Slab
38	9	Slacker Ken	The Rad Wall
58	10b	Number Two Red	Walt's Wall
59	11c	El Beerto	Beer Block

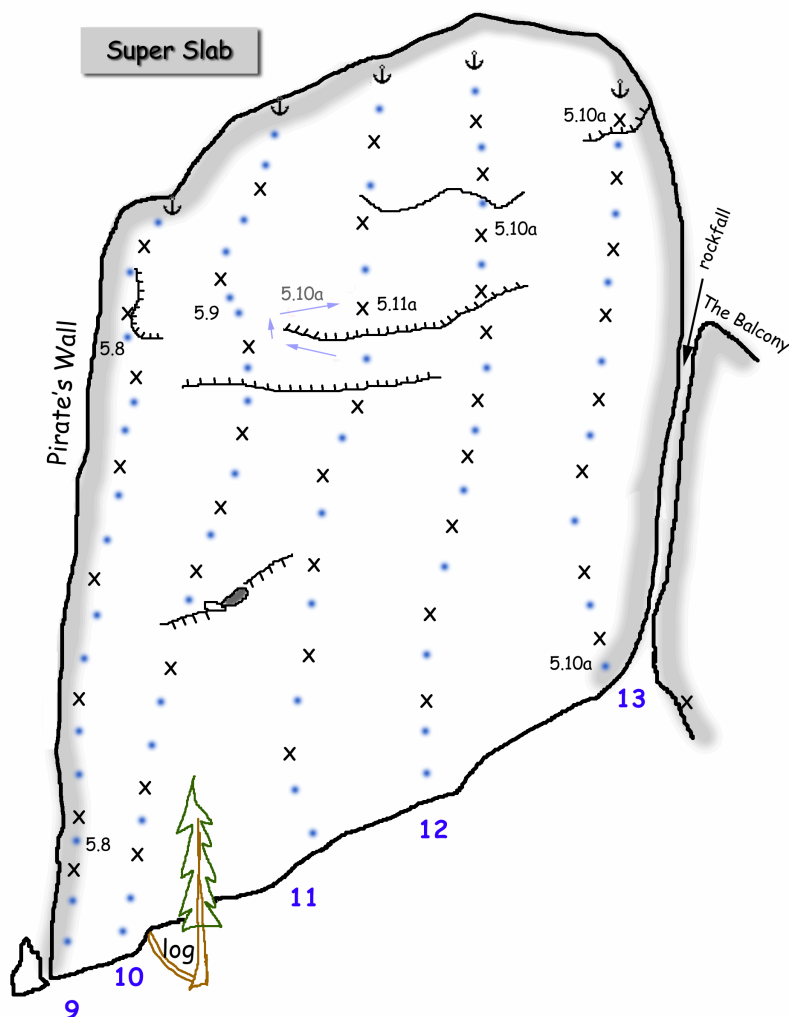
Training Wall		A small block of rock down hill of the Ed Woody Wall. Routes L to R. No drawing.				
Route #	Rating	Name	Length	Bolts	Clip Anchor	Comments
0	12b	Grits	20'	2		Very short, very steep route on the west face with small holds.
1	11d	Just Another Pretty Face	30'	3	⚓	Steep strenuous route on south face. The left line of bolts.
1v	11b	Pretty Face Variation	30'	3	⚓	Start as for JAPF but clip separate bolts on a more natural line of holds to the right. Come back left at top to shared anchor. Short route with great moves.

Pirates Wall		West Face of first major formation. Routes numbered from left to right. See drawing below.				
Route #	Rating	Name	Length	Bolts	Clip Anchor	Comments
2	9	Scurvy Dog	60'	7	⚓	Tricky start 6' right of arete on face. Go to arête, then follow closely-spaced bolts to overhang, which is easier than it looks.
3	11a	Oxymorons	75'	6	⚓	Crux at start, much easier higher. Good route, sophomoric original name.

4	10d	Trick or Treat (a.k.a Captain Hook)	80'	10		A lengthy, enjoyable route. Some bolts up high could use replacing. Crux section at top.
5	11c	Walking the Plank (a.k.a. The Buzz)	75'	10	⚓	Long, strenuous route with the crux near the top. Death cobble for belayer four feet left at the crux section - Don't stray from the bolt line!
6	12a	Pirated	70'	6		Start atop boulders. Difficult clip at the anchors.
7	10c	Blackbeard	80'	8	⚓	Area classic. Start behind boulders in narrow slot. Can bypass 10d crux above 3rd bolt to the right (10c). Caution - potential for leader to hit pillar behind in fall low on route!
8	11b	Booty (a.k.a. Long John)	88'	12	⚓	Furthest right route on wall. Crux at top where it gets steep. Note length - 60m rope, or belayer must be on top of boulders behind base (convenient Ponderosa anchor). Excellent.




Super Slab		Tallest face at area, with high quality moderate routes. Faces south. Routes numbered from left to right. See drawing below.				
Route #	Rating	Name	Length	Bolts	Clip Anchor	Comments
9	8	Super Arete	82'	8	⚓	Best route at this grade with an exciting position. Still some loose rock on the edge - stay on the bolt line to avoid.
10	9	Clast Action	80'	10	⚓	Starts 10' right of the arête. Excellent, popular route.
11	11a/10b	Full Sail	90'	9	⚓	Straight up at bulge is 5.11a. Traverse left is 5.10b. The longest route at El Rito - the only one for which a 60m rope is mandatory (or you can go over the top.) Excellent.
12	10a	Boltaneer	85'	10	⚓	Area classic. Note length - you can do it with a 50m rope if you pay close attention. Excellent.
13	10a	Oreo	75'	8	⚓	On extreme right edge of wall, just under a chute. Note belay bolt at bottom of face to your right. Hard moves at bottom and top, softer sweet stuff in between. Excellent.



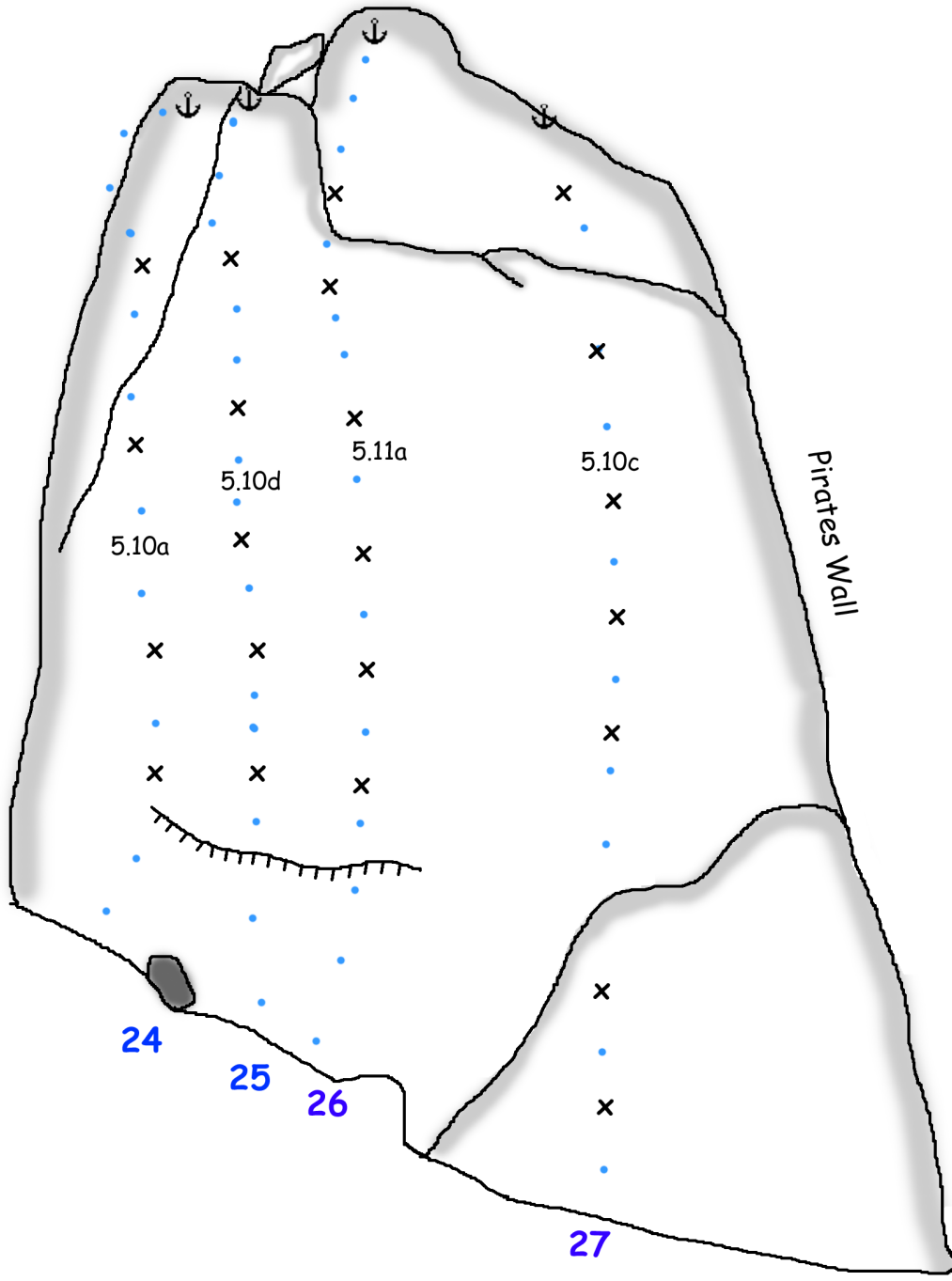
The Balcony		The faces above and right of Super Slab, facing west. Routes numbered L to R. No drawing.				
Route #	Rating	Name	Length	Bolts	Clip Anchor	Comments
14	10b/c	Dr. Evil	35'	6		A fun line up slightly overhanging rock. Use belay bolt and be careful not to kick rocks down chute.
15	9	Austin Powers, International Man of Mystery	40'	4	⚓	Big holds on a short face; would be only 5.7+ if it weren't for awkward final moves to get to an unnaturally placed anchor.
16	8	Cobzilla	40'	5	⚓	Similar to 15 but more consistent difficulty. Easiest if you trend right above the first bolt.
17	10a	Mr. Bigglesworth	40'	4	⚓	Similar to 16. Perhaps 10a for short people. Hardware is sub-par on this route. Spinners!
18	8	Mini Me	40'	7	⚓	Climbs big, positive cobbles. Well protected.
19	11b/c	Rodent Outhouse	40'	7		Right of big gash in wall. Small pockets to a big ledge, then bigger jugs to the finish.
20	11b	Jug-or-Naut	40'	5	⚓	Rightmost route on the Balcony - steep jugs, 1st half hardest, good physical route.

The Front Porch		The small wall about 30' south of the Balcony. Routes numbered L to R. No picture.				
Route #	Rating	Name	Length	Bolts	Clip Anchor	Comments
21	11c	Into the Gayle	45'	6	⚓	A left to right traversing route with tricky sequencing.
22	11c	El Farolito	40'	4	⚓	Route up the middle of the wall with increasingly steepening rock and a high crux.
23	11c/d	Tree Swing	40'	6	⚓	Trends left following a leftward ascending seam/corner through sequency moves to steep jugs above. Fun!

The Ed-Woody		North facing, slightly overhanging wall on same rock as Super Slab & Pirates Wall. Routes numbered from left to right. See drawing below.				
Route #	Rating	Name	Length	Bolts	Clip Anchor	Comments
24	10a	Gridlock	35'	4	⚓	10a only if you go to the arête above the final bolt. Direct finish much harder. Not a great route because of this unnatural finish that sandbags many climbers.
25	10d	Redline	40'	5	⚓	Steep pockets, doesn't let up. Excellent.
26	11a	Cobbles and Robbers	55'	6	⚓	Steep pockets to easier finish. Another excellent route just a bit harder than Redline.

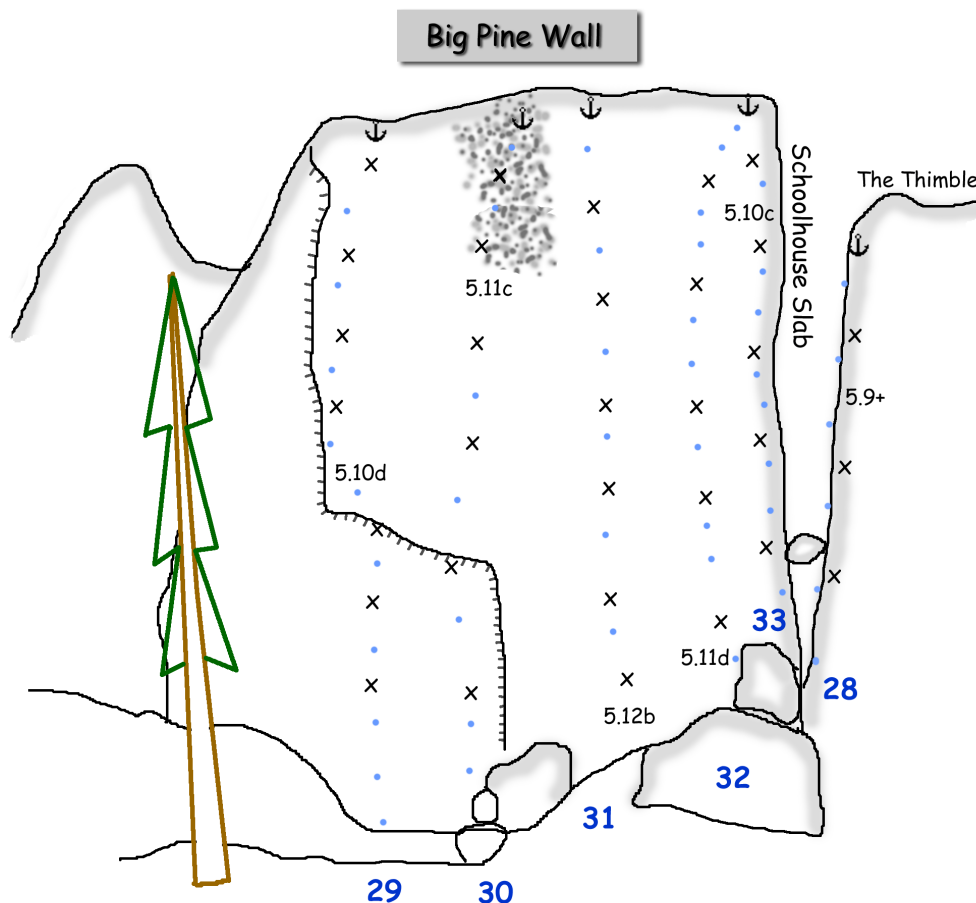
27	10b/c	Len's Take	60'	7		<p>The right-most route of the now four routes on the Ed Woody wall. Clip two bolts to a big ledge. Ever steepening moves above.</p>
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**The Ed-Woody**



The Thimble		Small formation forming the right side of the tunnel through to the upper area at top of log. Faces north.				
Route #	Rating	Name	Length	Bolts	Clip Anchor	Comments
28	10a	El Dorito	30'	3	⚓	Very popular warm-up for jug hauling, but a traffic jam area on weekends - avoid. Ground-fall potential while clipping bolts - dangerous for leader near his/her limit.

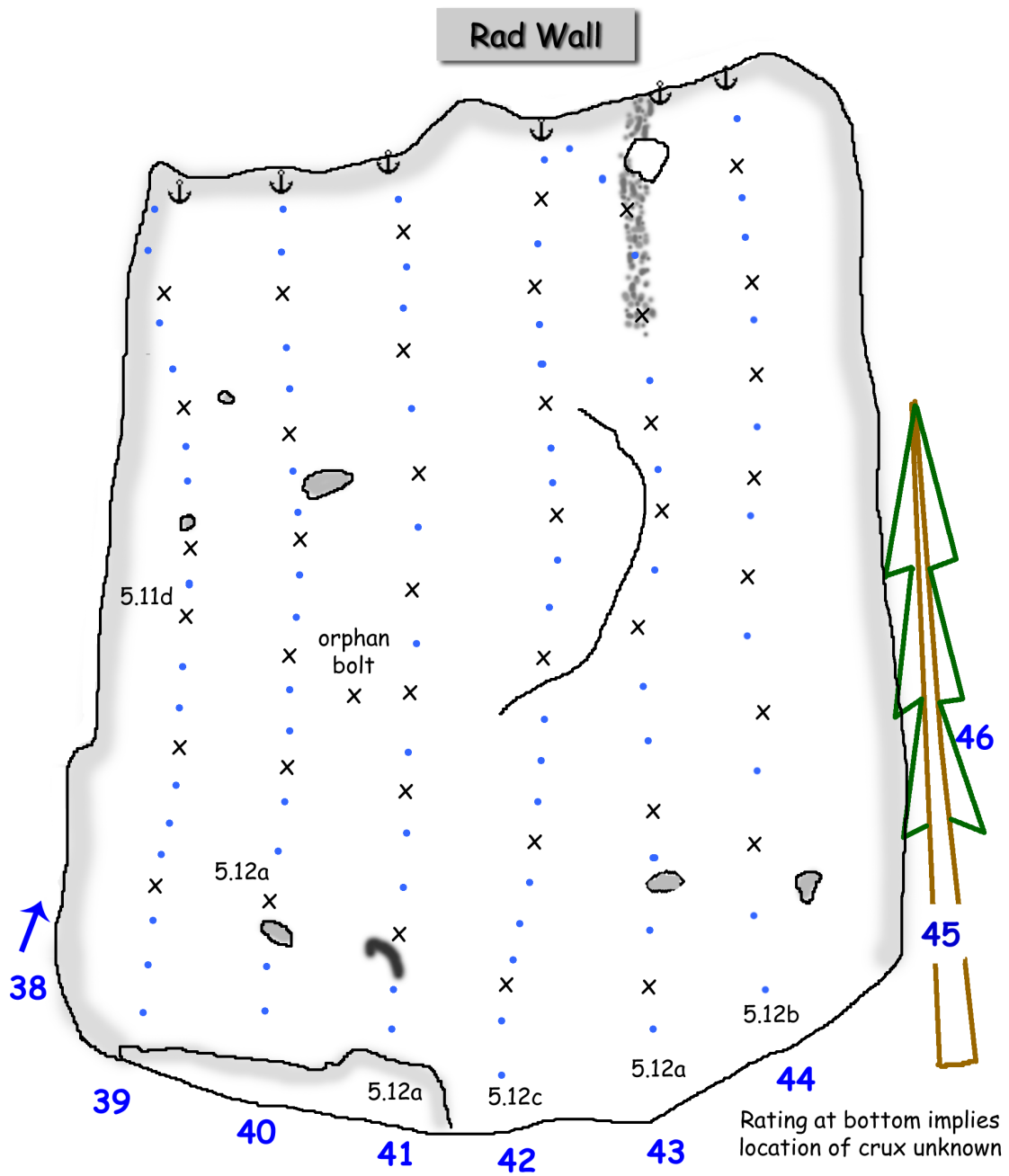
Big Pine Wall		The west-facing major wall at mid-height on the slope. Popular, quality climbs. Routes numbered from L to R. Drawing below.				
Route #	Rating	Name	Length	Bolts	Clip Anchor	Comments
29	10d	Cobble Wobble	55'	4	⚓	Area classic. Steep cobble pulling. Great!
30	11c	Corn on the Cobble	50'	5	⚓	Lower half easy, crux moves quite stiff, then lets up a little. Bolt six is hidden until you're there.
31	12b	Pocket Rocket	50'	5	⚓	Start between rocks at base of face.
32	11d	Peach Cobbler	50'	5	⚓	Tough pocket pulling on unrelenting face. Excellent route.
33	10c	Apple Cobbler	50'	5	⚓	Contrived route on steep face a few feet left of arête. Can escape at any point to south face for easy climbing, but getting back to anchors is 5.9. Shares anchors with 32.



Schoolhouse Slab		Good area for beginners and to watch dog fights. Faces south. Routes L to R. No drawing				
Route #	Rating	Name	Length	Bolts	Clip Anchor	Comments
34	7	Cobb It	35'	4		Short, straight-up climb, not much to get excited about.
35	7	Que? (former TR-only route)	35'	5	⚓	A former TR route with lead bolts added in 2008. Enjoyable.
36	7	School Daze (a.k.a) Herby Goes Bananas	35'	3	⚓	Another route in the same vein as Cobb It.
37	7+	Short Bus	35'	5	⚓	Right-most route. Well protected and fun.

Rad Wall		Highest major west-facing wall with long, steep, unrelenting physical routes. Routes L to R.				
Route #	Rating	Name	Length	Bolts	Clip Anchor	Comments
38	9	Slacker Ken	50'	5	⚓	Around the corner to the left of the main wall. Faces north. Nice exposure and fun climbing.
39	11d	Procrastination	50'	6	⚓	Left most route on main, steep face. Near arete. Bring muscles.
39a	12b/c	The Traverse	70'	7		Left to right upward traverse of Rad Wall. Start on Procrastination and work right clipping the "orphan bolt" and finish at the anchors for Stoker.
40	12a	Bolting Barbie	50'	6	⚓	Continuous pocket pulling. Crux move above 1st bolt.
41	12a	Stroke Me	50'	7	⚓	Original rating 11c/d, but consensus has it harder.
42	12c	Against All Cobbs	55'	7		Reachy start, crux middle section, endurance finish.
43	12a	Crack Attack	55'	9	⚓	In spite of the name, there is no crack climbing.
44	12b	Stoker	50'	7		Right most route on main face.
45	11c	The Matrix	45'	6		Around corner on SW arete.
46	10c	Resurrection	45'	6	⚓	Use 1st bolt of Rte. 45, then follow bolts right and up. A botched, abandoned project redone and finished June '03.

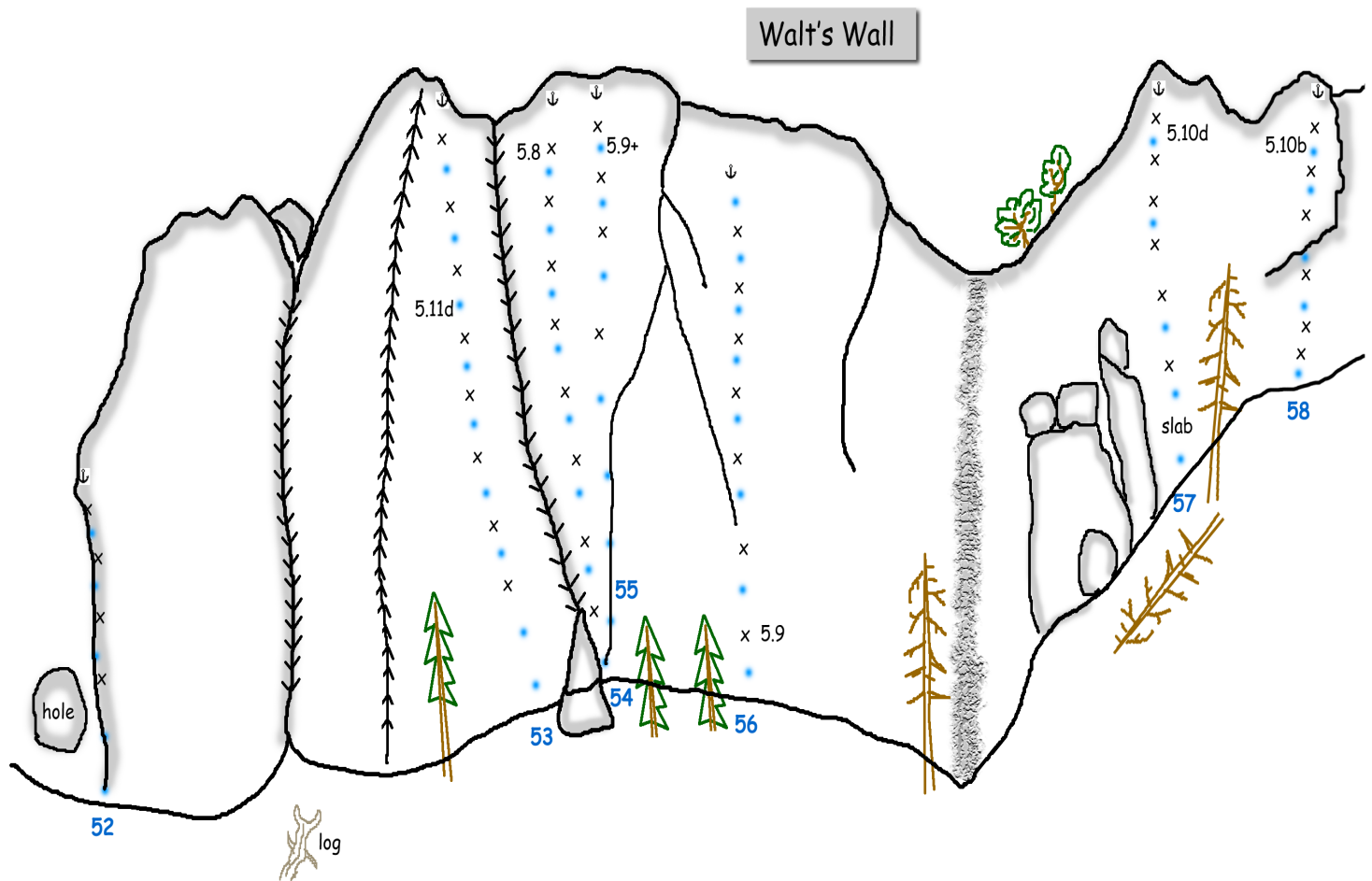





Gnar Wall		The big block just left (N) of the Rad Wall. Routes numbered L to R (CCW). No drawing.				
Route #	Rating	Name	Length	Bolts	Clip Anchor	Comments
47	10b	Balls to the Wall	40'	5	⚓	Leftmost route on west face. Rock looks manky, but is actually pretty solid. Fun steep climbing with good holds just where you want them.
48	10c	Blackballed	35'	4	⚓	Fun short route in the middle of the west face. Crux near top.
49	9	Crest Chewel	40'	5	⚓	Start on the right arete of the Gnar Wall. Easy climbing past 3 bolts, then move right to pull the overhang on good holds and continue to the shared anchor with "Tooth Fairy". The 3rd bolt hanger spins, but the bolt is solid - no worries.
50	10b	Tooth Fairy	40'	6	⚓	In the usually shady "Route Canal" between Rad Wall and Gnar Wall. Turn bulge on the right, then back left to anchor. Note belay anchor bolt near ground on right wall.
51	10c	Look Ma, No Cavities	40'	4	⚓	The rightmost route in the Route Canal. Continuous "stand and deliver" climbing on small (for El Rito) holds. A relief from the pumpy routes. Note belay bolt on the corner of the rock behind you!

Walt's Wall		The major wall first on your left as you arrive at the area. Routes numbered L to R. See drawing below.				
Route #	Rating	Name	Length	Bolts	Clip Anchor	Comments
52	12d	Unknown/Unfinished?	25'	4		Quite far to the north - look for cave. Short, severely overhanging route - looks very hard.
53	11d	Electric Pet Gri	70'	8	⚓	Strang guide is not complimentary of this route, but FA party thought it was quite good. Someone wrote "Shit Pile" in chalk at the base once, if that's any clue. I haven't tried it.
54	8	Walt's Wall Waltz	72'	8	⚓	The leftmost route on the main wall close to a large right-angled dihedral. Climb a 15' flake attached to the wall behind a big detached leaning boulder. Moderate climbing leads to a crux headwall. Popular warmup.

55	9+	A Jap in the NBA	80'	4	⚓	Almost never climbed, and not because of the crass name - you'll either need some gear (medium cam + small chocks), or face a 60' ground fall - the developers didn't bolt the lower half. Start up a black seam ~ 5' right of Walt's Wall Waltz, passing a horizontal crack at ~12'. Continue up easy rock with some opportunities for protection. The bolts on the upper half are poorly placed and of questionable quality, and there are large loose blocks.
56	9	Bloodline	72'	7	⚓	Near the center of the main section of wall. A few moves of 5.9 to get to first bolt, then moderate (5.7-5.8) fun climbing. Stick-clip first bolt if 5.9 is challenging!
57	10d	Drive-By Genocide	55'	6	⚓	High up the slope on the face of a tower section. Moderate climbing leads to a steep headwall finish.
58	10b	Number Two Red	50'	6	⚓	Start with a few moves to get over an initial steep section to the cruiser middle section clipping three bolts along the way. Then climb up steepening cobbles past three more bolts to the top.



Beer Block		There are routes all around this enormous detached boulder. Routes are numbered CCW from the W face. No drawing.				
Route #	Rating	Name	Length	Bolts	Clip Anchor	Comments
59	11c	El Beerto	40'	6		Leftmost route on the west face. Small holds by El Rito standards. Move left past 6th bolt to anchor.
60	12a/b	Whipper Wonderland	40'	4		Straight up and over "the wave" to a big power move. A sequential testpiece. The jug at the top is positive, but very sharp - have plasma ready.
61	13c/d	The Thing	40'	5		Up the steep "cave" and onto the wall just right of route 50.
62	11c/d	Texas Whine	45'	7		In the dark depths of the gully. Homemade hangers, dirty, potential for hitting wall behind in leader fall. A big thumbs down for this route.
63	11b	Village Cobbler	40'	5		Starts at the top of the gully. Original rating 11c. Excellent.
64	12a	It's Time to Drink Beer	40'	5		Steep initial section to a difficult slab.
65	12a	Buddha's Beer Belly	40'	5		
66	12a/b	Tecate Two Step	40'	3		Up the arête, then an overhanging corner. Excellent.
67	13	B.Y.O.B.	40'	4		Small holds, tough finish.
68	12d	To Beer or Not to Beer	40'	4		Small holds and gastons.
69	12b	Little Kings	40'	3		

Please send corrections, suggestions and route updates to Jason Halladay at [halladay@gmail.com](mailto:halladay@gmail.com). Also, please contribute your experiences on the El Rito Sport page on MountainProject.com at <http://tinyurl.com/3ob4zx>.

For more in-depth information on the El Rito Sport area, take a look at Jay Foley's [Toas Rock](#) guidebook as well as Dennis Jackson's [Rock Climbing New Mexico](#).