

Standard Route is perhaps the classic route of the area, finding a path of least resistance up the middle of the Whitehorse Slabs. Mostly straightforward friction climbing leads up to below the final overlaps. A very devious crux pitch then threads its way through the overlaps and smooth slabs to gain easy slabs and dikes, up which the route finishes. The route finding near the top is rather complicated, and novice leaders are warned to pay close attention to the route description. Standard Route is a very popular climb. While there are many variations on the lower slabs, these all converge at Lunch Ledge, often creating a huge traffic jam which can keep parties waiting, literally for hours. On busy weekends, climbers are encouraged to check out some of the routes on the left-hand side of the slabs as an alternative. Routes such as Wedge (5.7) Sea of Holes (5.8) and Stadmüller-Griffin (5.6) are good climbs which see only a fraction of the traffic of Standard Route.

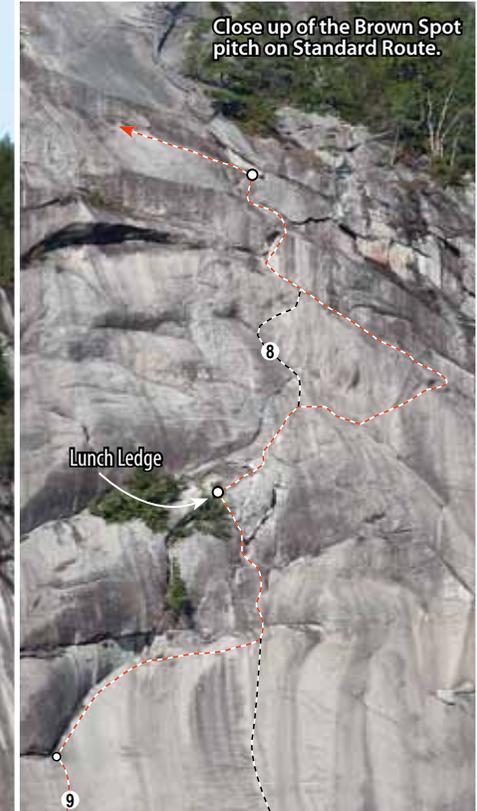
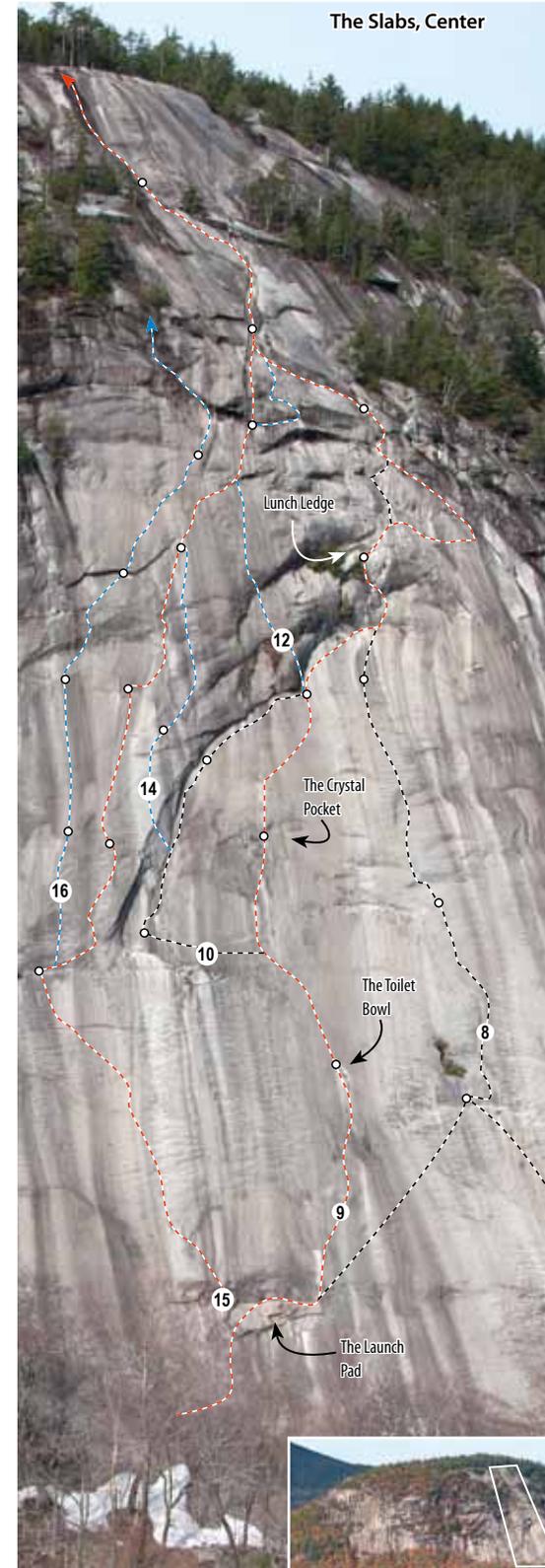
9 Standard Route 1080' 5.5 ***

Robert Underhill, Kenneth Henderson and others explored this part of the slabs in the late 1920s. A fixed rope, placed from above, was used to bypass the difficulties of The Brown Spot Pitch. This section had a legitimate ascent on July 2, 1932 when Leland Pollock led an AMC party up the route, free climbing The Brown Spot Pitch. Single rack to 3", Tricams, long slings.
 GPS: N44 03.269 W71 09.915.

- In the center of the Whitehorse Slabs is a large right-leaning arch which starts 300 feet above the ground. Directly below the arch is a large, down-sloping ledge, about 100 feet above the ground, The Launch Pad. Start at the base of the cliff at a small clearing to the left of The Launch Pad.
- 1. 90' 5.0** Walk/climb up and right following a shallow scoop in the slab to reach the left side of The Launch Pad. An anchor can be set at the right end of the ledge, in a small flake.
 - 2. 110' 5.1** Climb up and slightly right, passing several flakes,

- then up a slab to a big hole with an anchor, The Toilet Bowl.
- 3. 150' 5.2** Climb straight up to a bolt, then slightly left to the base of a left-arching flake, good thread for protection. Layback up the flake, then go up the slab above to a bolt anchor on a ledge covered in quartz crystals.
- 4. 100' 5.3** Climb over the steeper swell above the ledge to reach a line of pockets. Follow the pockets up and right, Tricams or sideways nuts work well to protect this section. When the pockets end, pad directly up the slab to a small, sloping ledge with a thread anchor in the main arch.
- 5. 130' 5.4** Follow the main arch up and right for about 60' until it is possible to layback up into a small arch above the main arch. Don't continue up and right in this arch, but instead move immediately out left to good holds. Continue up the crack to the left of the huge block, past a small pine tree to a big ledge, Lunch Ledge. This is a great place to enjoy the view, eat lunch, and watch other parties have epics on the crux pitch above.
- 6. 120' 5.5** The infamous Brown Spot Pitch. Extending your protection with slings helps a lot on this long, winding pitch. From the right end of the ledge, climb up 20', then move right across a smooth slab to a bolt. Step down to a tiny quartz "ledge" which is followed rightward to another bolt. Move past the bolt to reach a polished left-leaning ramp (some parties belay on some old pins a few feet up the ramp, to avoid rope drag). Continue up the ramp for 40' to a steep, right-facing corner. Go up the corner (pin) and continue for a few moves left to belay on a cramped ledge below the final overlap. Phew!
- 7. 80' 5.2** Follow the overlap to its left end, then step left into a prominent dike which is followed to a good ledge beside an old tree stump.
- 8. 150' 5.2** Continue up the dike for 100' to a large overlap. Move left around the overlap and continue up to a small ledge.
- 9. 150' 5.1** Continue up the dike, past a bolt, to the top.

Sara Rice in the big arch of Standard Route, The Original Way. Page 138. Photo: Anne Skidmore.



There are many ways of climbing Standard Route. The above description was chosen as perhaps the best, or at least the most straightforward option. However, the original ascent followed a slightly different line, following the back of the great arch to the left of pitches 3 and 4 of the normal route.

10 Standard Route, The Original Way 1160' 5.5 ***

Single rack to 3", long slings.
 This variation is a bit more awkward than the modern route, and is more often wet. However, in dry conditions it has excellent climbing and adds a bit of variety to the route. Start from the Toilet Bowl, at the end of pitch 2 of Standard Route.

- 3. 120' 5.2** Friction up the slab to a bolt at 30'. Angle left to reach the right end of a long ledge. Protect your second here, then walk left along the ledge to a bolt anchor below the arch.
- 4. 150' 5.3** Follow the arch to an uncomfortable hanging belay just above an overhang.
- 5. 60' 5.3** Continue up the arch (often wet), or the unprotected slab to its right, to rejoin the regular route at the thread belay at the top of pitch 4. Continue up pitch 5 of the regular route.