



Grades: 5.5-5.11

Season: Year Round

Type: Trad, Sport,
and Top Rope

Area

As sport areas in Maryland go, there isn't too much outside the gym. Balcony Junior is a little known area near Harpers Ferry just downriver from the cliffs of Maryland Heights. It's higher on the mountain and the rock is more weathered than the larger cliffs, so you'll find cracks instead of seams, slopers instead of sharp jugs, and rougher rock instead of the sometimes-unnerving smooth faces upriver.

Approach

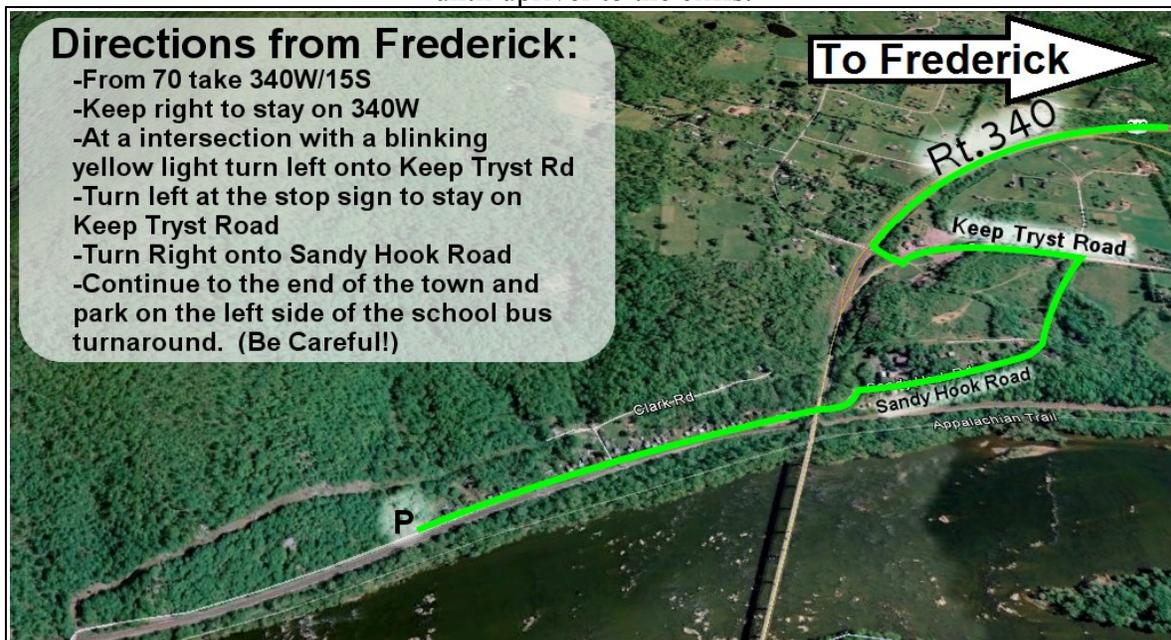
To park, make sure you find the school bus turnaround at the end of the small town and park to the LEFT of the farthest left "No Parking" sign. There is room for only two cars and it's the only spot you won't get towed from.

Once you're parked, head up the road (with the mountain on your right) until you see a small abandoned parking lot. Follow the stairs leading up the back of the abandoned parking lot and scramble the gulley that goes up the left side of Balcony Proper. At the top, follow the faint trail to your left. Follow this trail to the cliffs.

Routes

The routes range in difficulty from short and easy routes best suited for new climbers to overhanging sport and trad lines that will cater to the more seasoned leaders out there. If you're looking to tick off the best routes, look for *John's Project*, *Cold Steel Corner*, *Potomac Power Plant Pump*, and *Founders Forge*.

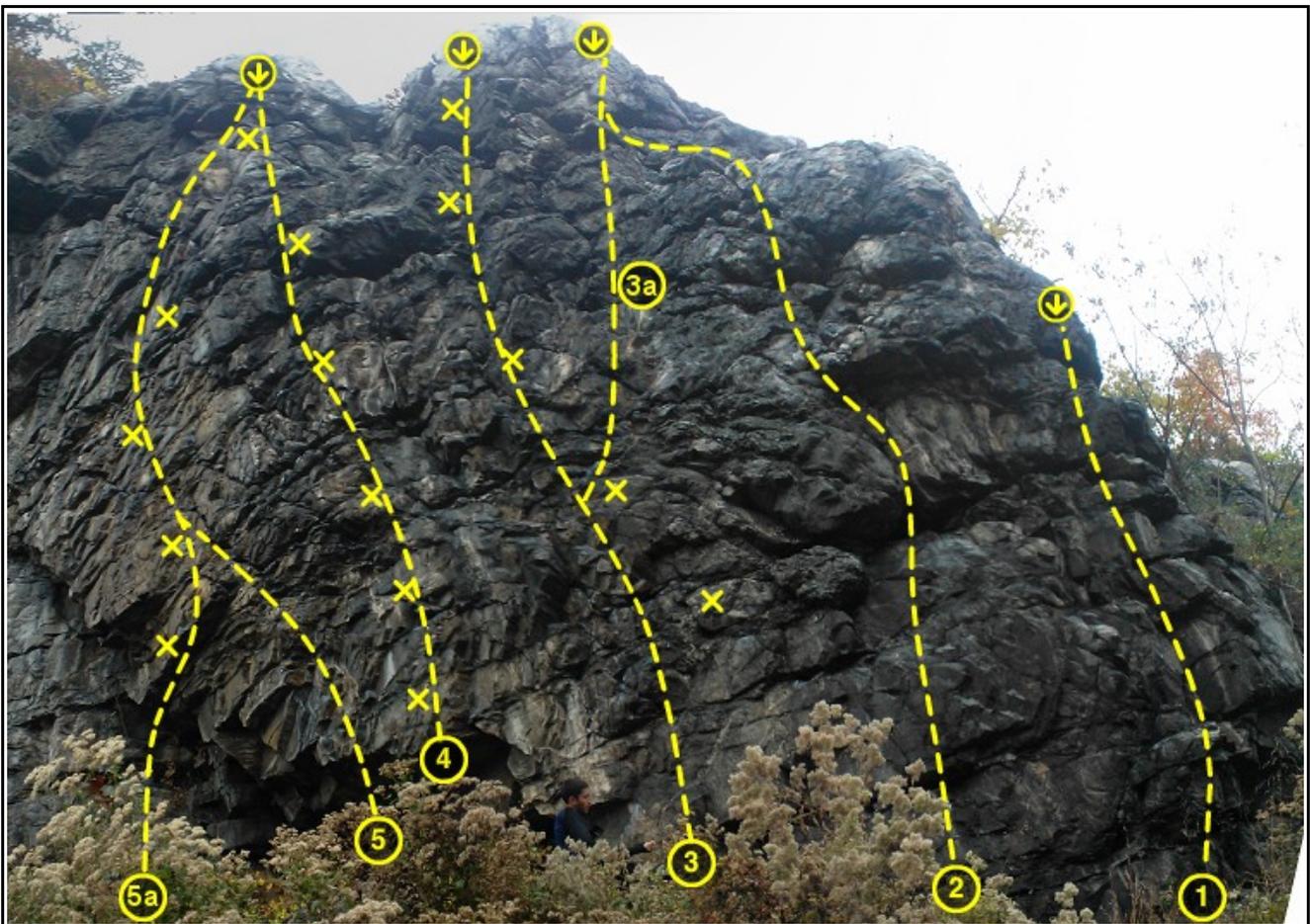
If at any point you get lost, walk up the mountain to a powerline clearing. Follow the powerlines until upriver to the cliffs.



Directions from Frederick:

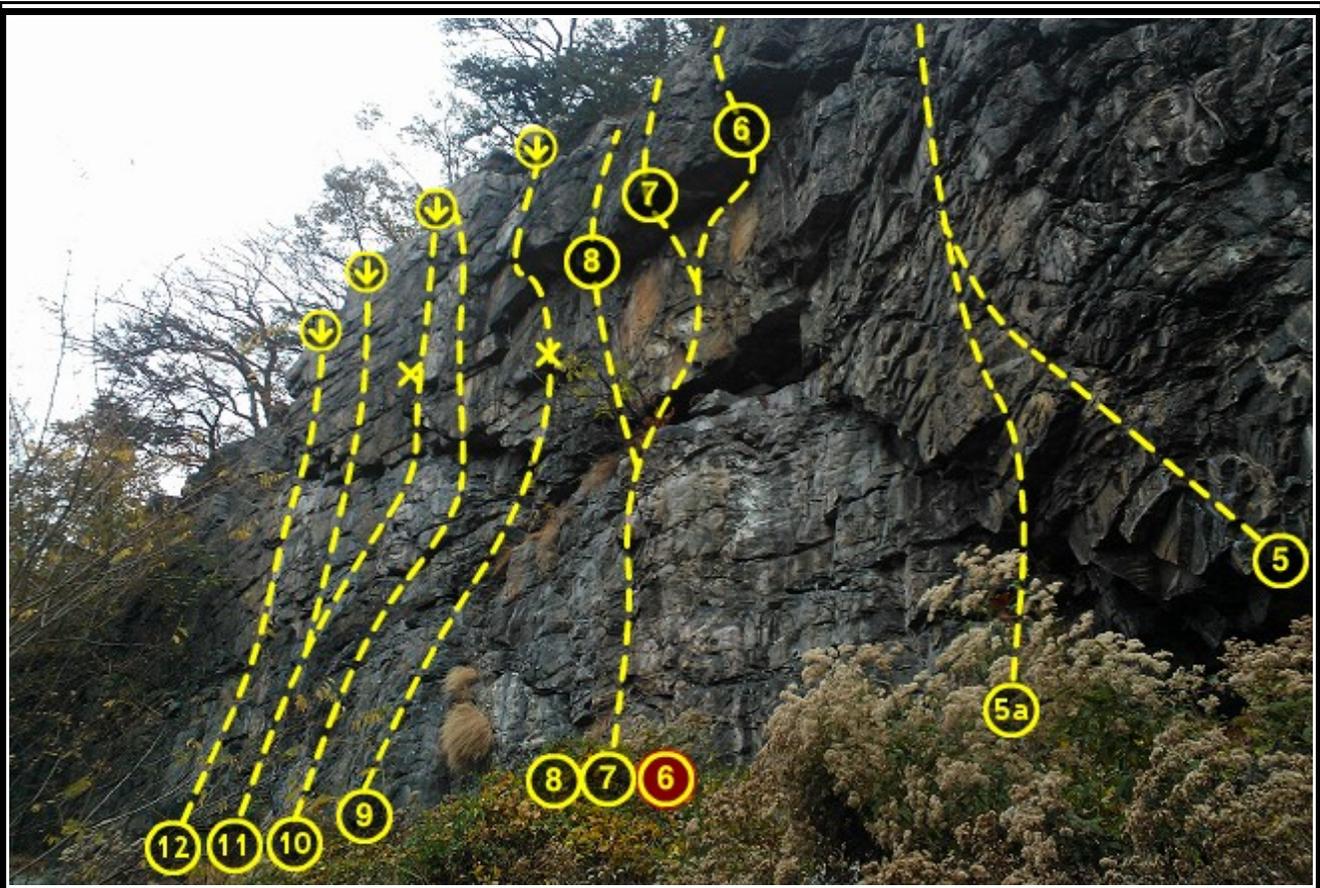
- From 70 take 340W/15S
- Keep right to stay on 340W
- At a intersection with a blinking yellow light turn left onto Keep Tryst Rd
- Turn left at the stop sign to stay on Keep Tryst Road
- Turn Right onto Sandy Hook Road
- Continue to the end of the town and park on the left side of the school bus turnaround. (Be Careful!)

Note: On the way up, you'll pass Balcony rock, a dark cliff with a few scattered bolts; the routes are poorly protected, so top roping is your best bet. There's some good route beta at [Indy's page](#).



- (1) **Groovin' Up Slowly 5.5/6** – At the far right side of the cliff, find a small corner a few feet off the ground. Head up the corner to a pair of low anchors. (2 bolt anchor)
- (2) **Mojo Filter 5.7** – Start to the right of a shin-height boulder, below a roof 15 feet off the ground. Climb past the roof, up a shallow groove to a ledge where you can step left to the anchors shared with Founders Forge. (Gear to a 2 bolt anchor)
- (3) **The Founders Forge 5.9/10** – The farthest right sport route. Start at a shin-height boulder just under a low first bolt. Follow the bolt line to the top. (5 bolts to a 2 bolt anchor)
 - (3.a) **Founders Forge (trad finish) 5.9** – After clipping the second bolt of The Founders Forge, keep to the right, following a corner-ish feature, and meet the same anchors.
- (4) **The B&O Burn 5.10b** – A tricky start over the cave will get you to some open handed climbing that will certainly have your forearms feeling the “B&O Burn”. (6 bolts to a 2 bolt anchor)
- (5) **Potomac Power Plant Pump 5.11c** – Pump is right! With the first bolt PRE clipped, pull through a left trending sequence that will take you to the pumpiest face on Balcony Jr. Once you're at the first bolt, head straight up. (5 bolts to a 2 bolt anchor)
 - (5.a) **The Paymaster 5.11b** – Shortcut the bouldery start of PPPP by climbing the easy face to the left and transferring right at bolt #1. Enjoy the interesting holds! (5 bolts to a 2 bolt anchor)

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- (6) **Project** - Climb the groove down low to the orange face. At the base of the roof, traverse right until you can exit up a short corner. It's likely that this isn't a project anymore, but there isn't any information saying that it's been sent either; either way, drop a comment on MDGuides if you do it! (top rope)
- (7) **Forearm Furnace 5.11+** - After climbing the easy groove down low, pull your way up the crimpy orange face and over the challenging roof. Grade Unconfirmed. (top rope)
- (8) **Project** - Start as you would for the previous two routes, but this time traverse left at the roof. A blocky left-facing corner will take you to the top. (top rope)
- (9) **Salty Dog Saloon 5.10cPG** - At a left-facing ramp, head up right to a bolt at the base of an overhanging corner. This is in the running for the best routes at Balcony Jr. (1 bolt to 2 bolt anchor)
- (10) **HorrorZontals 5.9PG/R** - Scary to lead! But if you're on top rope, you'll be able to enjoy the interesting cruxes and the otherwise "not as good as you'd hope" horizontals. (1 bolt to 2 bolt anchor)
- (11) **Cold Steel Corner 5.9** - The crux was originally protected by an old rurp, perhaps the last vestige of the first ascensionists; with the FA party unknown, it's a contemporary name in honor of the original style. The overdriven rurp is still there, but a bolt has been added to keep leaders safe from an otherwise ankle breaking fall from the crux.
 (11.a) **Cold Steel Face 5.9** - Instead of heading up the corner, climb the seam just left of the corner to the same anchors.
- (12) **Johns Project Route 5.10c** - Start in a left-facing corner and leave it when you can make a line directly up to the anchors. A poorly protected crux down low yields way to a great, overhung face above! (2 bolt anchor)
- (13) **Serious Callers Only 5.10b** - It's a bit contrived, but the climbing is nice! If you imagine this and the next climb as an X, Gravitas Free Zone is the left leaning corner. This route starts left of it, crosses at the big horizontal in the middle and finishes on the face to the right of the corner. (2 bolt anchor)
- (14) **Gravitas Free Zone 5.6** - Tied for the farthest left route on the cliff, this route follows the easiest line of climbing, up the left facing corner to a pair of anchor on the left side of the wall. (2 bolt anchor)