

**SW WASHINGTON**

In a region known for its great hiking trails beside swift flowing streams that carve canyons through lush forested hills, you might not think southwest Washington has much to offer for rock climbing. Yet climbing sites in close proximity to the metro area have been explored such as the well known granitic formations of Chimney Rocks, and more recently quality bouldering opportunities at Larch Mtn.

Though some destinations are isolated from the convenience of mainstream rock climbing, places like the Dark Divide offer adventurous sub-alpine rock climbing opportunities on a variety of spires both large and small. Avid rock climbers will relish an adventure along the Boundary Trail, just as much as they will find Chimney Rocks to be unmatched in climbing and photographic grandeur.

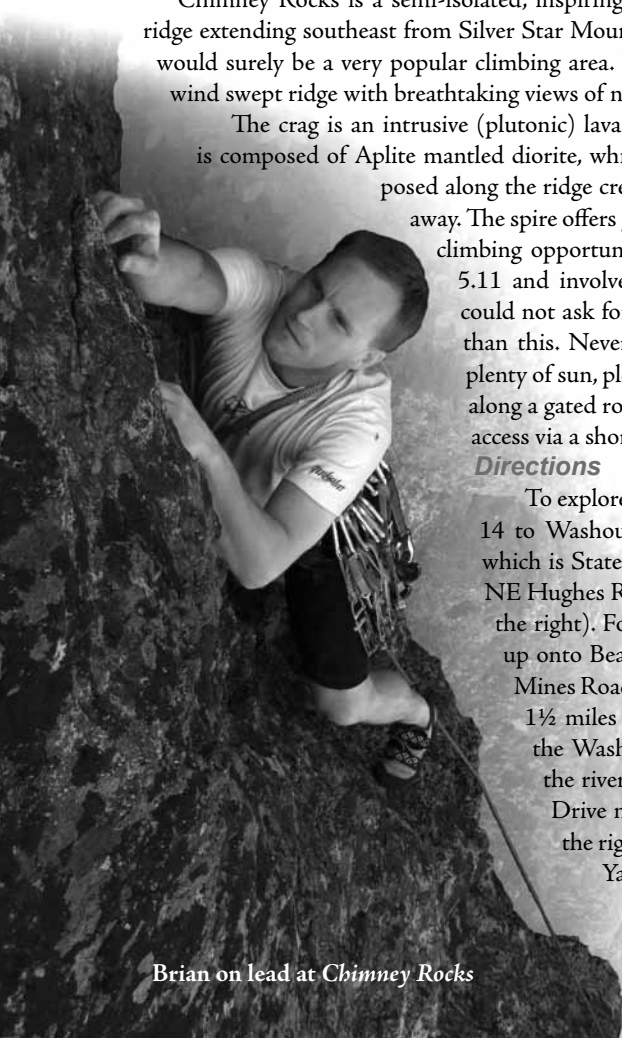
**CHIMNEY ROCKS**

Chimney Rocks is a semi-isolated, inspiring cluster of pinnacles scattered along a sub-ridge extending southeast from Silver Star Mountain. If the crag were located in Portland it would surely be a very popular climbing area. The outcrop though, is nicely situated on a wind swept ridge with breathtaking views of nearby mountains and the Columbia Gorge.

The crag is an intrusive (plutonic) lava formation part of the Silver Star dike and is composed of Aplite mantled diorite, which is granitic related stock that became exposed along the ridge crest after the surrounding terrain had eroded away. The spire offers great quality rock climbing. Numerous crack climbing opportunities exist ranging in difficulty from 5.6 to 5.11 and involve mostly natural gear protected leads. You could not ask for a better alpine environment near Portland than this. Never overrun with crowds, crisp mountain air, plenty of sun, plenty of climbing, easy two-mile hiking access along a gated road, and superb scenery. All we need is better access via a shorter hike in to the Chimney Rock spires.

**Directions**

To explore this climbing area drive east on State Route 14 to Washougal, Washington. Take the 15<sup>th</sup> street exit which is State Route 140 for 6½ miles and turn left onto NE Hughes Road (Vernon Road Bridge is just beyond on the right). Follow this winding uphill road for ¾ miles up onto Bear Prairie to its junction with the Skamania Mines Road (412<sup>th</sup> street & Skye road). Follow this road 1½ miles downhill to the bridge at the West Fork of the Washougal River. Continue one mile uphill past the river to the 3-way intersection at W-1200 road. Drive north (left) for a few hundred feet then take the right branching dirt road. The left split leads to Yacolt/Silver Star Mountain. Continue on the right fork road for ¼ miles and park at



gated road #1250. Walk up this road 1 mile to the 2600' level, then walk north on another heavily rutted and brushy dirt road for 1½ miles to the pinnacles. Access to this pinnacle crosses private land. Hiking is the standard accepted method of approach to access this outcrop of rock so please park your vehicle at the bottom of the hill and hike to the crag.

The following routes are described clockwise around Chimney Rocks, starting with the standard summit scramble. Most of the common routes have been lead or top-roped.

**1. Summit Scramble 5.0 ★★★**

Scramble 100' up the east side along a ridge crest to the top of Chimney Rocks.

**2. SE Arête 5.10b TR ★**

A huge cavernous slot separates the main massif from the South Pillar. This cavernous slot has several large jammed blocks perched partway up the wall. A convenient walkway leads through this slot to the popular South Face Chimney.

At the east end of this slot on the immediate right is an arête. The arête is a fine top-rope, but a bit challenging to set up protection at the top for a belay.

**3. Wedged Block 5.4 R ★**

This is an alternative means for getting onto the summit of the South Pillar. Climb up the main wall on the right side under the massive block and squeeze around the block. Wander across the top of the massive block over to the South Pillar. Rappel from a horn with a sling or rap from the tree.

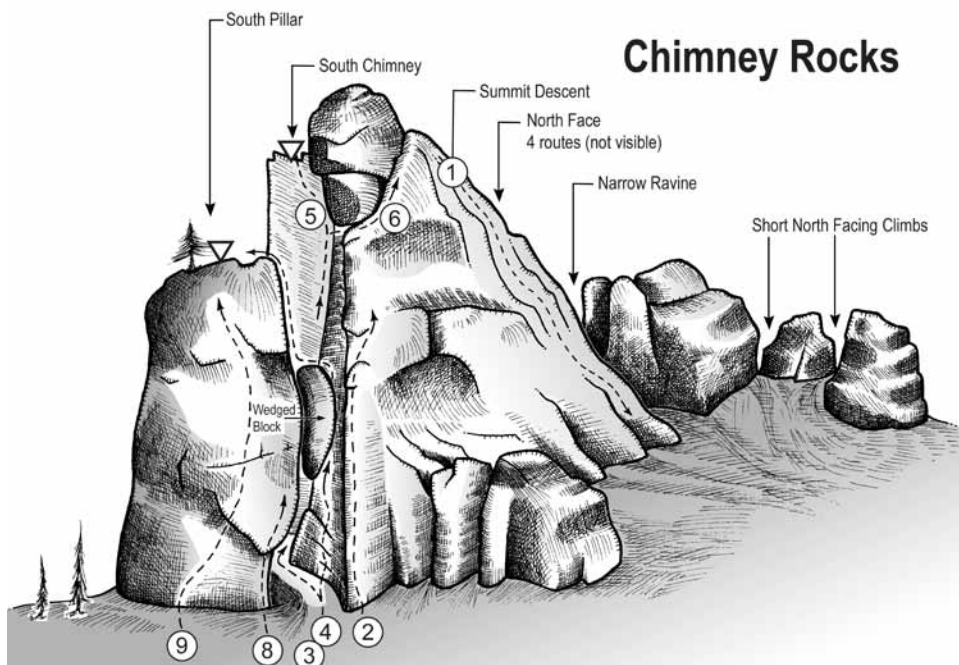
**4. Wedged Block Right Exit 5.4 R**

Climb the right same again passing the massive block. From the top of the block continue up onto the main Chimney Rock and aim for the summit. Descend down the standard scramble route.

**5. South Chimney 5.8 (or 5.9 direct start) ★★★**

*Pro to 4"*

The standard climb everyone aims for when visiting this site because the prominent dihedral chimney system is readily visible on the hike in. Walk through the cavernous slot. The



high trail bypasses the 5.9 crux start. The lower trail lets you tackle the friable 5.9 crux start. The remainder of the climb is 5.8. Start by climbing the obvious wide chimney corner system. As you near the capstone, angle up left into another crack which also steepens to a small roof. Before you reach the small roof (at a bush) traverse right on face holds and exit through a notch to a large fat ledge to belay. Scramble 25' to the summit and descend route #1.

**6. Right Roof Exit 5.8**

*Pro to 4"*

Climb the South Face Chimney, but aim for the capstone, then traverse *right* under the roof and exit around the far end of it. Scramble to the top and belay, but be mindful of rope drag.

**SOUTH PILLAR**

This is the 80' tall pillar on the

