



Owens River Gorge - California - USA

Climbing at the Owens River Gorge is somehow and adventure. Already the walk in is steep and the view into the valley is awesome. The climbing is (mostly) bolted. However, sometimes bolts are pretty fare from each other. Never the less (or maybe because of that) is the gorge a very popular climbing place and known all over the world.

You will find everything in the gorge. Slabby, technical, cracks and overhanging climbs. It's all there. Some of the routes are already very polished. Be careful about the length of your rope. Some routes need either a very long rope or the rappel has to be split in two.

unknown climber on Child of Light (5.9, Great Wall of China)

Type		Approach	30 to 40 min	Altitude	5500 ft 1680m
Style		Descent	chain on two bolts	Length	up to 150 feet / 45m
Rock	Basalt	Gear	240 ft / 70m, 12 quick draws, clip stick for some climbs, (maybe trad gear)	Exposure	mostly East and West
Grade	US 5.6 - 5.14d	Protection		Commitment	

When to go

The Gorge goes from North to South. The climbing is on both sides, so there is always a wall in the shade or sun. However, from late fall to early spring the sun leaves already around 3 p.m. But if you get up early you can start climbing in the sun already at 8 a.m. Summer is most of the time too hot for climbing.

Restriction, Access, Ethics and Family Issues

No restrictions or access problems. Use common sense and don't leave anything behind. Some easy climbs for your kids but take the South approach with paved road only. Some walls are hard to get too. Dogs are allowed, but again, some dogs are afraid with the steep approach. Please us the restrooms at the Negress Wall and DMZ.

Hazards and Emergencies

Rattle Snakes and Tarantulas are common in the area. During wet weather or wind rock fall might be a problem. Central and North Approach are steep and falling can end up with injuries. Emergency call 911. Emergency litters are found at the restrooms. Northern Inyo Hospital, 150 Pioneer Ln, Bishop. 873-5811

Camping

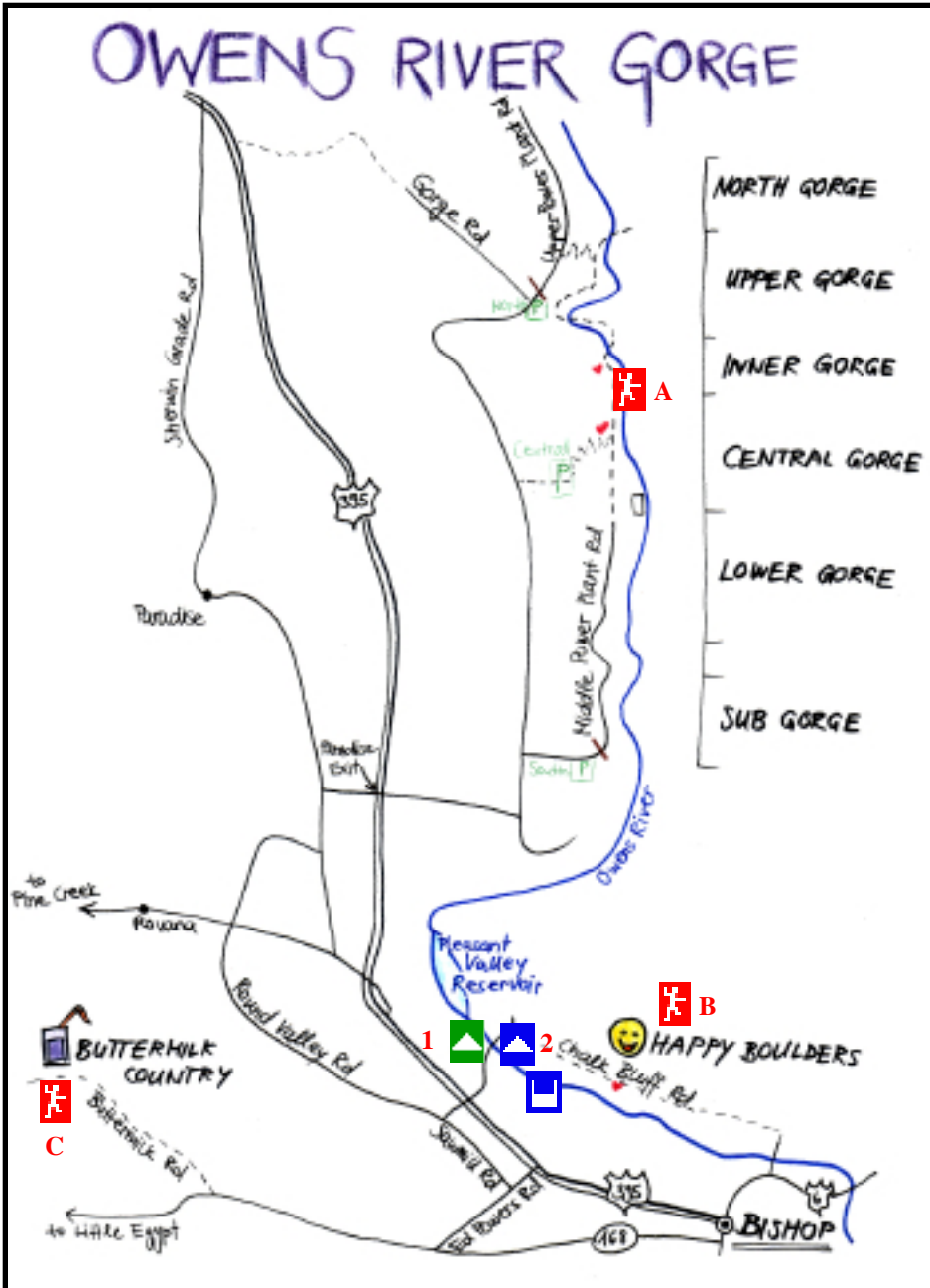
Official free camping at the Pit, a BLM Campground donations are welcomed. Several other fee campgrounds in the area. Primitive camping can be found in the Pines, further up the Gorge Road.

Guidebooks

Owens River Gorge Climbs by Marty Lewis (in Fall 2004 9th edition was available)

Other Information

Visitor Center in Bishop at Main. Just follow the signs.



Getting to Bishop

Bishop is on Highway 395 in the Owens Valley.

Getting to the Gorge

Take Highway 395 North from Bishop, take a right into Owens River Road after 14 miles (Paradise Exit). At the next junction take a left and follow the road North along the water pipeline (map page 2)

Climbing

- a Owens River Gorge detailed map on page 3
- b Happy Boulders page 9
- c Buttermilk Bouldering not covered

Camping and Water

- 1 The Pit (free camping) take a left up a dirt road before the road goes down to the river
- 2 Fee Camping and Water at Pleasant Valley Campground

More free camping further up the Gorge Road

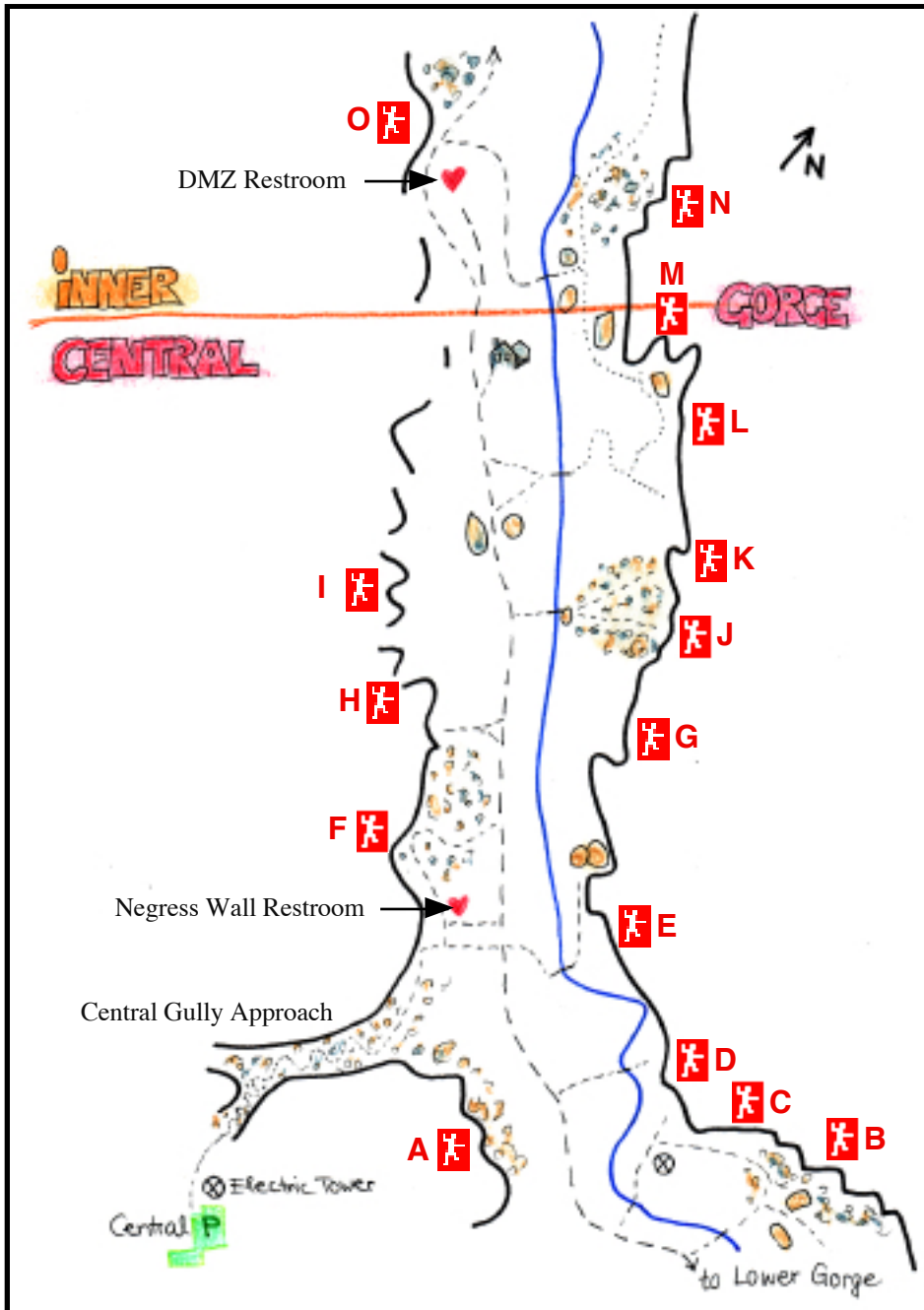
Hot Spring and Showers can be found Keough Hot Springs few miles south of Bishop on Hwy. 395



Mount Tom close to Bishop



View up the Owens River Gorge seen from the Warm Up Wall



Approaches

There are three ways to get down into the Gorge. Best one for the Central Gorge is the Central Gully Approach. However, this trail down into the Gorge is very steep. Nothing for kids, scared dogs or people with knee problems. For those, the long South approach using the paved Middle Power Plant Road is the better option. The Upper Gorge Approach is only good if you want to climb in the Upper and North Gorge.

South Gorge Approach

A paved road turns right. Park in front of the gate. Walk down the paved road. Bikes could be used.

Central Gully Approach

About 1.5 miles after the paved road for the South Gorge Parking take a right into a dirt road and down the hill. Parking is around the electrical tower. Trial start at the electrical tower.

Upper Gorge Approach

The Upper Gorge Approach parking is 3 miles North of the South Parking before the gate on the Upper Plant Road. Walk down the road and look for a stone pile to your right. Take a right there.

Sectors

- a Pub Area (Page 4)
- b L-Alien Wall (not included)
- c Banana Belt Area (n.i.)
- d High Tension and Riverside Area (n.i.)
- e Negress and Warm Up Wall (Page 5)
- f Social Platform (n.i.)
- g Faulty Tower (Page 6)
- h Mystical Tricks Cliff (n.i.)
- i Pop Tart Area (n.i.)
- j Atilla the Hun Area (n.i.)
- k Health Club (n.i.)
- l Great Wall of China (Page 6)
- m Solarium (Page 7)
- n Staying Power Towers (Page 8)
- o DMZ (Page 8)



Unknown Swiss Girl on Mandarin Orange, 5.11b (Great Wall of China)

Central Gorge

The Central Gorge is the main area. Many crags are located on both sides of the canyon and are accessed easy and fast once you are down in the gorge. On weekends and on holidays can this area get very busy, especially the two most popular crags Warm Up Wall and Great Wall of China.

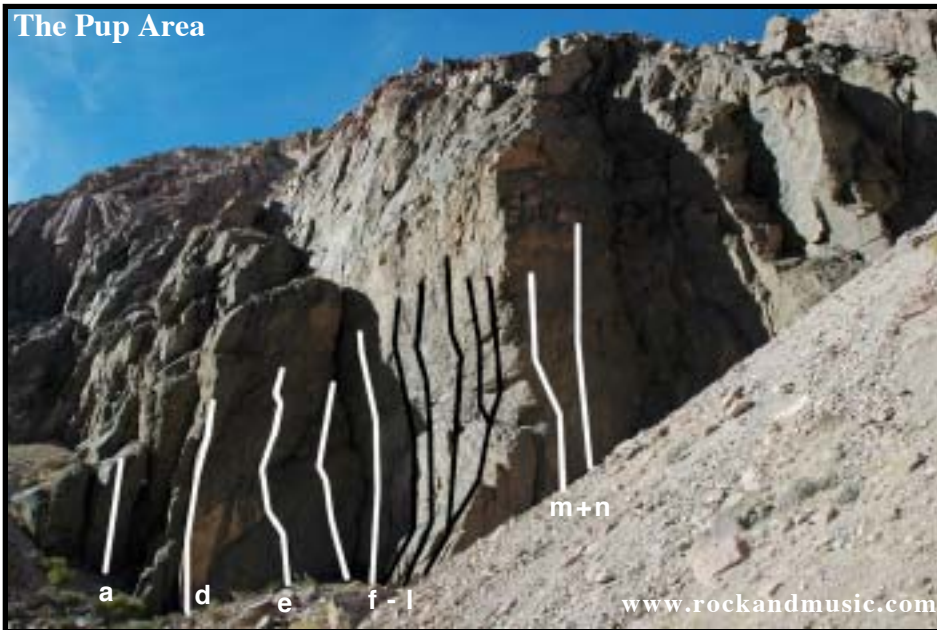
The Pup Area

A great buttness on the west side. Seems not to be that busy. However, one of the gorge classics is found here as well, the Hardly Wallbanger. Hardly any sun in the winter months. All the climbs are bolt protected and the anchors are in a good shape. A long stick clip recommended. **Long rope needed!**



Approach

From the Negress restroom take the trail south (down the gorge) for a minute. The Pup Area is to your right. A climbers trail goes up the the wall.



- a Wonderbar, 5.10c
- b Unknown, 5.10c
- c No topo, between a and d
- d Gary Gray, 5.10b
- e No topo, between a and d
- f Unknown, 5.13a
- g Abitarot, 5.10a
- h Unknown, easy
- i Homebrew, 5.11b
- j Hardly Wallbanger, 5.10c
- k Hungover, 5.11b
- l High Ball, 5.11c
- m Menace to Sopriety, 5.11c
- n Hammered, 5.11b
- m Light Within, 5.10c
- n Tempest, 5.10b



unknown climber on unknown (5.13a, Pup Area)

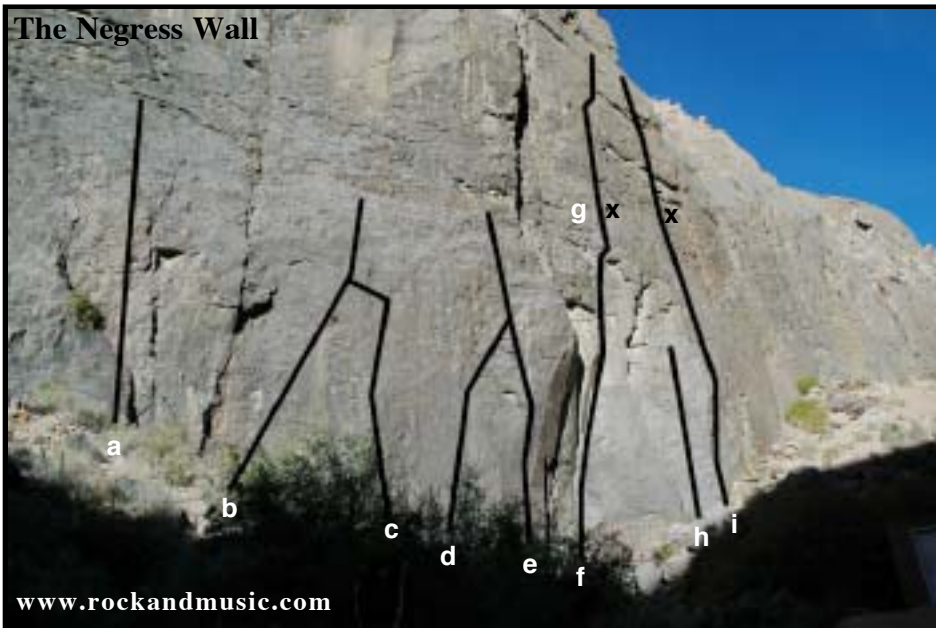
The Negress Wall and the Warm Up Wall

The first area you reach when taking the central gully approach. Especially the Warm Up Wall is very popular and busy. Some climbs tend to get polished, especially the easy routes. Stick clip recommended. **Careful, some routes need two ropes or rappel split in two.**

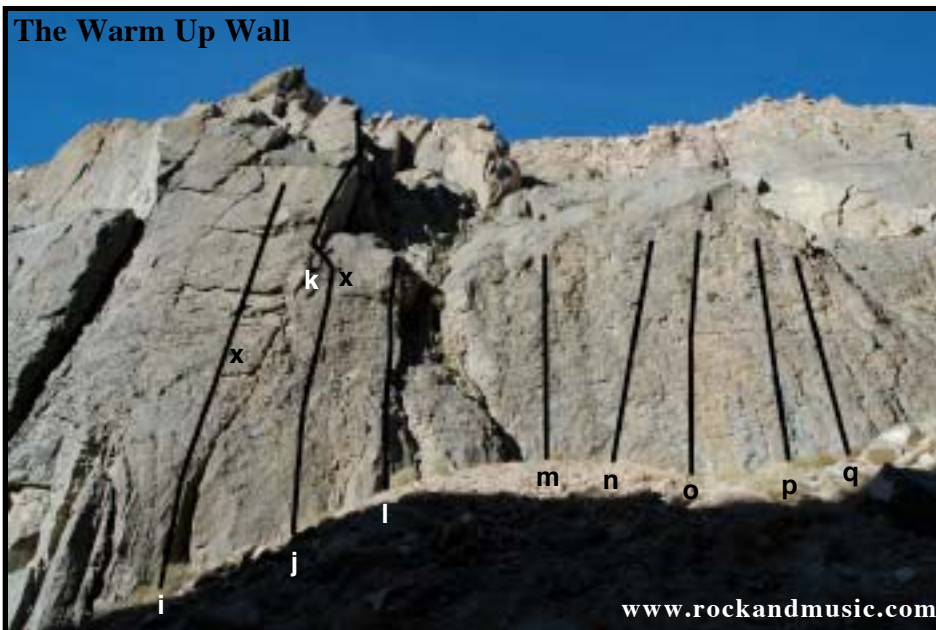


Approach

First area you reach to your left when taking central gully approach. Take the trail at the restroom up to the Negress Wall and further up right to reach the Warm Up Wall.



- a Imprisoned Behind Lies, 5.6
- b Smoothie, 5.12c
- c Malcolm X, 5.12b
- d Broken Battery, 5.11d
- e Chocolate City, 5.11d
- f Fear of a Black Planet, 5.10a
- g James Brown, 5.11b
starts on top of f
- h Mandela, 5.11d
- i Ambassadors of Funk, 10b
(rappel split in two!!)
- .



- i Ambassadors of Funk, 10b
(rappel split in two!!)
- j Welcome to the Gorge, 5.12c
- k Pulp Friction, 5.10c
- l Clip Jr., 5.6
- m High Seas, 5.7
- n Crowd Pleaser, 5.8
- o Humby, Mumbly Jumbly, 10b
- p Babushka, 5.8
- q What Up?, 5.10b
- .

The Faulty Tower

A large buttress with some impressive climbs. Seems to be a place where you can be alone for a while. Mostly all climbs are bolt protected. All anchors are in a good shape. Stick clip recommended. **Long rope needed!!**



Approach

From the Negress Restroom walk up North (up the Gorge). The Faulty Tower is to your right. Hard to miss.



- a Finger Food, 5.10d
- b Fender Strat, 5.10a
- c Sly Little Fart Blaster, 5.11d
- d Stradivarius, 5.8 (Mixed)
- e Lalaland, 5.11d
- f From the Chocolate to Morphine, 5.11d
- g Project, ??
- h Crybaby, 5.12c
- i Desire, 5.13a
- j Crash Landing, 5.10d
- k Project, ??
starts on top of j
- l Perched, 5.10d
- m What's its Face, 5.10b
- n Double Take, 5.8

www.rockandmusic.com

The Great Wall of China

The most popular wall in the whole gorge. It has a good selection of moderate climbs including some nice 5.9 to the left. Some routes are already pretty polished. All climbs are bolt protected and the anchors are in a good shape. Stick clip recommended.



Approach

From the Negress Restroom walk up North (up the Gorge). Pass The Faulty Tower to your right. The trail passes some boulders and levels out. A climber's trail to your right goes down to a little bridge. Afterwards the trail goes directly to the crag.



- a Cornercopia, 5.10a + 5.11b
- b Child of Light, 5.9
- c Heart of Sun, 5.9
Hu Phulung Pu, ??
- d Fortune Cookie, 5.9
- e Enter the Dragon, 5.9
- f China Doll, 5.8
- g Tsing Tao, 5.10a
- h Mandarin Orange, 5.11b
- i Peking Duck, 5.10d
- j Yellow Peril, 5.10b
- k Tiananmen Square, 5.10c
Tsunami, 5.11c (going left)
- l Beijing, 5.10d
Yellowstreak, 5.12d (right)
- m Geisha Girl, 5.11c
- n Ghengis Khan, 5.11b
Wrath of Khan, 5.11c
- o Kung Pao, 11b
- p Shogun, 5.10d
- q Confusing Confucius, 5.10d

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The Solarium

The name says it all, it is a sunny wall. The climbs on that crag are amazing but tricky. Careful with your robe length. A **long rope is needed** to get down to the ground in one go. All climbs are bolt protected and the anchors are in a good shape. Stick clip recommended.



Approach

Same as Great Wall of China. The crag is very obvious to your left.



- a Contagius, 5.10b
- b Body Count, 5.12a
- c Dead on Arrival, 5.11d
- d Vital Signs, 5.12a
- e Dial 911, 5.10d
- f Cabaret, 5.10d
- g Show us your Tits, 5.10b
- h Shocker, 5.13b
- i Hocus Pockus, 5.13a
- j Dirochossimo, 5.11b
- k Psmead, 5.11b
- l Sanke Eyes, 5.12a
- m Venom, 5.11c
- n Unknown, ??
- o Monkey See, Monkey Do, 10b
- p Power, 5.11d
- q Focus, 5.11a
- r Black Hole, 5.11c + 5.12a
- s Split Descicion, 5.10d
- t Sendero Luminoso, 5.10b



unknown climber on Direchossimo, 5.11b (The Solarium)

Inner Gorge

The Inner Gorge is a remote area and stays quiet even on the weekends. Many crags are located on both sides of the canyon and an amazingly diverse selection of climbs are found. However, this Guide only covers only the two first sections.

The Staying Power Towers

A good place for the moderate climber that doesn't like the crowd. The cliff doesn't get much sun in the cold months. All climbs are bolt protected and the anchors are in a good shape. Stick clip recommended. Two ropes or rappel has to be split in two for some routes.



Approach

From the Negress Restroom walk North (up the gorge) until DMZ Restroom. The Towers are to your right. Cross the bridge to get to the cliff.



- a Don't Make me Laugh, 5.9
- b Direct North Face, 5.10b+11b
- c Optimator, 5.11c
- d Bender, 5.11b
- e Members Only, 5.10c+5.9
- f Destiny, 5.11b
- g Ya Shoulda' Killed Me Last Year, 5.11c
- h Wirred, 5.10d
- i Blood Sugar Sex Magic, 5.10d
- j Insane in the Membrane, 5.12b
- k Thieves in the Temple, 5.12a
- l Elephant Gun, 5.9

DMZ

Tired of hanging on big hand holds or squeezing your feed into a crack? DMZ has the solution. Some very thin or even slab climbing can be found here. Most of the climbs are bolt protected and all the anchors are in a good shape. Stick clip recommended.



Approach

From the Negress Restroom walk North (up the gorge) until DMZ Restroom. The DMZ cliffs are on your left.



- a Berlin Wall, 5.10d
- b Breaking the Law, 5.10a
- c Holocaust, 5.10b
- d Fingertip Ledge of Contentment, 5.10c
- e Doesn't anybody work around here?, 5.10c



- e Doesn't anybody work around here?, 5.10c
- f No Fly Zone, 5.11d
- g People are Weird, 5.9
- h Come of Age, 5.11a
- i Pump up the Trust Fund, 5.11c
- j Trancendance, 5.10c
- k Fantasia, 5.10c
- l Easy Enough, 5.10a
- m Gecko, 5.10d

Happy Boulders

Tired of clipping bolts all the time. Or is it too cold or too hot in the Gorge. Try out the Happy Boulders. The boulders are spread around just a little bit above the valley. Sun or shade is easy to find. You will find everything at the Happy Boulders. Slabby, technical, steep and overhanging. It is all there. Some of the boulders are pretty high. Maybe two pads or one big one might be needed.



Approach

From the Pit take a left, pass the Pleasant Valley Campground to your right, take a right after the Owens River into a dirt road, follow that road for a few minutes. Parking to your right with a restroom. Take the trail up the hill.



Services in Bishop:

- **Grocery:**
A big Vons at the northern end of the town, several different bakeries in the town
- **Water / Showers:**
Water can be filled up at the pump station in the Pleasant Valley Campground just after the Pit Hot Spring and Showers can be found Keough Hot Springs few miles south of Bishop on Hwy. 395
- **Restaurant:**
Several Restaurants along Main Street including Mexican, Thai or Pizza
- **Internet Access:**
Free Wifi at Kava Cafe next to Wilson's Eastside Sports on Main, best Hot Coco you can find too!
- Public Library in town
- **Outdoor Gear:**
Wilson's Eastside Sports, 224 North Main street, Bishop, CA 93514, www.eastsidesports.com

Other activities and attractions

- **Mountain Biking** is very popular all around Bishop. Get a map at the visitor center
- **Hiking / Back Country** A lot of possibilities. Ask at the visitor center for more details
- **Jogging** is nice around the Pit or any other campground.
- **Skiing and Snowboarding** at Mammoth from November until April for sure.
- Check out www.rockandmusic.com for more information

Climbing areas close by you will find on www.rockandmusic.com

- **Happy Boulders** 10 min from the Pit
- **Alabama Hills** in Lone Pine 1 hour South on Highway 395

Other climbing areas close by

- Owens River Gorge has many more climbs, see also map on page 2
- **Buttermilks** (Bouldering) in Bishop
- **Yosemite National Park**, as long Hwy. 120 is open about 2 hours from Bishop
- Lots of alpine rock climbs in the Sierras

Information on the Internet

Chamber of Commerce: www.bishopvisitor.com

RaM Experience Board

Always check out the RaM Experience Board before you head out to a climbing area. There might be an important message. Should you encounter anything special could we kindly ask you to add your experience/comment to the RaM Experience Board. A big thanks from all the other climbers.



Half Dome in Yosemite. If the Hwy. 120 is open only about 2 hours from Bishop

El Captain is the big wall to the right