

Fathom (5.10a)

Start at the base of a huge right-leaning diagonal crack on the just left of center of the main face of Laurel Knob. Follow the diagonal alternating between the crack (up to a Camalot #3 for the route, bring at least two of everything; including the big stuff) and the poorly protected but easier face as needed (smaller gear only). The pitches were climbed using a 60 meter rope for this description and there are many other ways to link things up. Pitch 1, climb the crack then on the face straight up to a good belay bolt in the crack and a poor older bolt, 5.8 (Note: These ratings are my personal opinion, others may disagree). Pitch 2, climb past the second tree in the crack to a poor gear belay, 5.7. Pitch 3 climbs mainly close to the crack to very poor gear belay depending where you stop, 5.9, (some of the rock in the crack is very crumbly). Pitch 4 was a shorter pitch (75 feet or so), climbing the crack and then out right on the face 25 feet from the crack is a rap anchor sling and a single bolt. This is on the face directly below a big hanging flake, 5.9. Pitch 5 moved straight up (right side of flake) and then right onto the main face past a bolt and horizontally through some exposed moves to a solid 2 bolt belay anchor where it meets the Fathom Direct route, then directly up past a bolt or two to a cluster of two bad bolts and one good bolt for the belay below the roof, super exposed 5.9+ (Note: this could be broken into two short pitches, but rope drag isn't a big issue because there is so little pro). Pitch 6 climbs straight up the groove through the roof following 4 or 5 bolts to a great two bolt rap anchor station - the best pitch of the route, 5.10c (for just one move or two that can be aided if needed). At this point there are several possible finishes but none were obvious or very well protected. The Honeranger finish goes left up the groove but looks completely run out with zero pro and is a short pitch so we didn't do it. Pitch 7, we headed up and right (2 o'clock when looking at the face) across the face about 15 meters to a bolt then headed straight up a scarcely protected water groove - moving past the bolt into the groove was the crux and there is an adequate rap anchor on the right about 50 feet up, 5.9+ (note this pitch is shorter than 60 meters and is the original Fathom finish). Pitch 8 is dirty and it doesn't look like it is done very often with poor protection; move up the groove (take the right one if you want some pro!) and onto the right face looking for gear placements with the great two bolt rap anchors at the top of the left groove when you get to the top, 5.8+. (Look to the right of this groove on the face for pro, the face climbing is often easier.)

Note: You can rap the Direct Fathom route much more easily than the route itself. The rap stations were not very well thought out and poorly spaced and they are all slightly hanging belays so get ready for some pain. At some point soon, some rap stations away from routes are going to have to be put up or else there is going to be major congestion in the afternoons as this incredible area gets more popular.