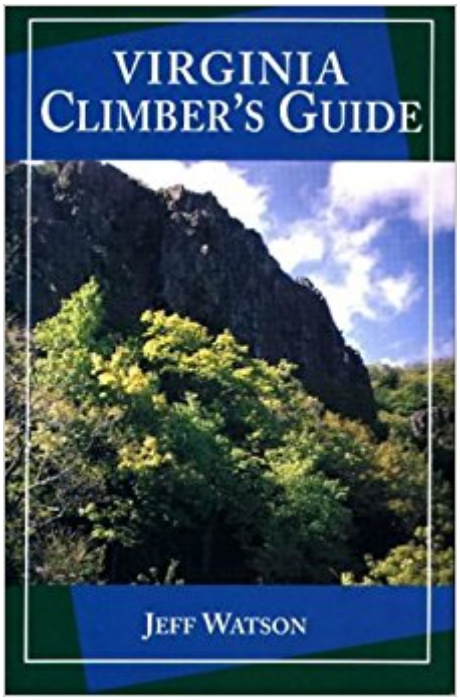
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Virginia Climber's Guide



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Synopsis

200 line drawings 5 x 8 The first comprehensive guide to climbing and bouldering in Virginia Detailed schematic drawings of more than 30 sites Virginia features some of the more popular rock climbing sites on the East Coast, including Great Falls of the Potomac and Crescent Rocks, but its lesser-known areas also offer a wide variety of challenging climbs. Here for the first time is a complete guide to the entire state. This compact guidebook is packed with information: Schematic line drawings present clear, precise guides to each climb, from the myriad routes at Great Falls to small rockfaces the locals love. Multiple routes are shown for each site, graded for difficulty using the Yosemite Decimal Scale. The book also contains specific information on park fees and regulations, the best time to go, and any special equipment or permits required. Jeff Watson is a native Virginian, avid mountaineer, and 17-year veteran of rock climbing. He lives in Burke, Virginia.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Is this book a masterpiece that is a must have? No. Is it a good guide that give the more adventurous climber some places to climb out of path of thousands of weekend climbers flooding from the gyms with their special chalk and fancy lycra tights? Yes. Watson did not include photos and topos, or detail every step of the way from armchair to crag. His drawings are basic, but with just a little patience they are understandable. I am not suprised that some climbers are not happy with this book. People these days expext to drive to the trailhead and walk to the climb with a guide held up to their nose the whole way. I for one have visited several of the sites listed in the book. Sites I didn’t know existed as well as sites I had visited before only because I had heard a rumor

about it, which was the only way to find most of these sites, and as anyone who has ever asked a Pennsylvanian climber about their favorite spot knows, locals usually don't talk. I enjoyed many of the areas in this book. There may have only been two unrated climbs worth climbing after a half day of hiking, but I don't mind that, that is what climbing is for me. Anyone can pick up the new Great Falls guide and follow it's anal retentive path pictures to the 5.10b climb they read about last night so that they can wait for Inner Quest or some other guided group with twenty reborn Bill Gates look alikes to take down their ropes that have been there unclimbed all day. This book is for climbers who aren't afraid of a four mile approach, bees nests, or the dark. Enough ranting and raving. I liked the book. Mr. Watson if you read this, Thank You. If you come out with another book check out the extreme southwest of VA there is some great climbing there. Also the base of the top section on olr rag next to some bolted sport routes is a good roof to practice aiding if one was to CARRY their rack up there. The bottom line -- the information you need to climb in the best areas in Virginia is in this book. If no topos and photos makes you mad, good, climb at Carder rock then and leave the wild places for me.

My climbing partner and I decided to go out to the Shenandoah to hike and do some toprope climbing. We figured we'd head out to White Oak Canyon based on some of the climbs that were described there, completely unaware of the ambiguity of this guide. We couldn't find anything. We had a much easier time finding climbing without it just by following the trail and using intuition than by finding it with the guide. Bizarre landmarks like "at the first bridge, with the northwest facing boulder" (there was no boulder at either of the first two bridges), and the lack of a general area map (climbing areas are listed in A, B, C, etc...but there's no actual map to get you to them in most cases) led us to abandon any hope of climbing in the canyon, even though there were some beautiful spots near the first set of falls. Too bad the guide doesn't make use of such an obvious landmark as the 60 foot waterfall. After hiking a mile and a half back up and out of White Oak Canyon, we decided to go to Blackrock, which according to the guide was "the only place where you could be clutching for your next fingerhold and hear 'Johnson, party of five, your table is ready'". Apparently it was located on the Appalachian trail directly behind a resort lodge. The guide couldn't possibly screw this up, right? We found the Appalachian trail fine. There was no climbing to be found anywhere near the lodge. The guide didn't tell us which way to turn onto the trail. It gave the impression that it would be obviously visible from the trail, but walking a half mile in either direction from the lodge with significant bushwacking in topographically curious areas turned up a single 18' cliff that didn't resemble any of the diagrams in the book. Don't buy this guide. It will only get you

lost, frustrated, and angry at Jeff Watson.

Not a very good guidebook. Watson only uses line drawing to describe climbs, which according to him are much better than photos. I have to disagree with him. I've always found photos easier to decipher than any line drawing I've ever seen, especially of the type he uses. I think the real reason he doesn't use photos, is because it's easier and cheaper to publish. One doesn't have to expose hundreds of frames usually in Winter to get a good shot, at the right time of day. He doesn't give any protection ratings in the guide, presumably because everything is top-roped or a boulder problem. Glancing through the book, there doesn't seem to be much worthy of a road trip. I bought the book because I was intrigued to know if there was other worthy climbing nearby. But with the Gunks, North Conway, Seneca and New River, I think unless you're a local Virginian, I wouldn't bother getting this guide. You can top-rope anywhere in your own state usually at high quality. But what do I know? Being a Pennsylvanian climber, I usually threaten the life of any author who has the gall to write a guidebook.

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