

Rock Climbers Now Focusing on Lake George

By Ethan Gaddy

After years of neglect, the Lake George region will finally receive comprehensive coverage in a new rock-climbing guide to be released this year. Co-authors Jeremy Haas, a Saratoga schoolteacher and part time climbing guide, and Jim Lawyer are to include climbing routes on Buck Mountain, Rogers Rock, Deer Leap, and Tongue Mountain cliffs.

“When our book comes out Lake George will be seen as a climbing destination”, Haas said.

The guidebook, *Adirondack Rock*, will cover the entire Adirondack Park. There have been multiple guidebooks over the past four decades covering the park but Lake George has received minimal attention. Instead the High Peaks region drew the most coverage and exploration. Rogers Rock and sections of Tongue Mountain were the only climbs in the area discussed in Don Mellor’s 1995 edition of *Climbing in the Adirondacks* and that coverage was incomplete.

“The southern Adirondacks were a phenomenon right when Mellor last published in ‘95. A lot of the cliffs in the southern region were developed in the past 10 years”, Lawyer said.

The popularity of rock climbing has spread past the Adirondack High Peaks and new locations or ‘crag’ have been explored and routes have been set. The authors have documented hundreds of new routes in the Lake George basin alone.

“We have taken on the role of climbing historians. It’s going to be a thick book that will make Adirondack climbers proud of the diversity of the park and make visiting climbers impressed with the quality of the climbing”, said Haas. Lawyer and Haas have been doing serious research into who made the first ascents and what routes they set, and important fact said Lawyer because the first ascent is often the best.

Climbing legend John Turner climbed routes on Deer Leap in the early 1960s, the climbing there has been largely ignored since. Haas cited high concentrations of rattlesnakes and loose rock as deterrents; he won’t climb there until this fall when low temperatures clear out the snakes.

Speculation on the downsides of publishing a guide of many previously unknown cliffs, heavier foot traffic causing erosion and locals having to share their climbs, does not cause Lawyer much concern. He feels the short climbing season and the preponderance of bugs will hinder a mass exodus to Lake George. Haas says inclusion of new cliffs will prevent climbs from becoming covered in vegetation, which makes climbing dangerous or impossible.

Adirondack Rock is an ongoing project. Lawyer just returned from a remote section of the Adirondack wilderness after a five-day research expedition.

“This is a huge, huge book, hundreds and hundreds of pages. It’s just a giant project. We’re trying to give people an appreciation for Adirondack style climbing”, said Lawyer.