

# **A Guide to the "Dam Boulder" of Great Falls National Park (Maryland Side)**

## **Preface:**

Climbing in the National Parks of the United States of America is a sublime privilege. Great Falls National Park, both sides of the river, is no exception. Great Falls National Park is a sanctuary of natural beauty and outdoor recreation playground just outside of Washington D.C. metro area. Kayakers and roped climbers have known this for decades. Boulders are late coming to the Great Falls party. This guide is an effort to proselytize the "small amazing things" of the park.

Needless to say, the rock quality of Great Fall National Park varies. Closer to the Potomac River is generally better. The "Dam Boulder" (my nickname) is close enough to the Potomac River to yield a mighty fine climbing opportunity. The rock is highly textured but without the over-abundance of features, typical of Mid-Atlantic climbing.

Enjoy! (Remember to treat the area with the respect a National Park deserves.)

## **Approach:**

Park in the parking lot across from the Old Angler's Inn in Potomac, MD (N 38 58.911 W 77 13.653). From the parking lot, walk right/upstream on the Tow Path to where the canal widens, becoming lake-like. Before crossing a bridge, turn left onto a well-established path. Follow this path for ~50 yards. Then turn right onto another well-established path. The boulders (N 38 58.986 W 77 14.275) are located to the left immediately after walking across on old dam, hence the nickname. You can see a Tow Path bridge from the boulder.

## **Recommendations:**

#2, #5, #8, & #9



1. **VB-V0** Stand on foot ledge and grab the lip.
2. **V0-V1** Start standing, follow crack to top.
3. **V3-V4** Start sitting. An awkward start sets up a long reach to the start of #2. [Video Evidence](#)
4. **V1-V2** Start standing by compressing the arete and the side of the crack. A delicate stand-up move leads to an easy exit.
5. **V3-V4** Start sitting. A couple of interesting moves leads into #4. [Video Evidence](#)





6. **V1-V2** Jump start to flat edge in dihedral. [Video Evidence](#)
7. **V2-V3** Start standing in the dihedral. [Video Evidence](#)
8. **V6-7** Start sitting in the dihedral, make reach-dependent, tension-dependent moves into #7. [Video Evidence](#)
9. **V1-V2** Start standing matched on ledge at 7ft, climb up and to the right.
10. **V1-V2** Start sitting with side pulls and large broken block for feet. Harder if you choose not use the large broken block for feet.
11. **VB-V0** A short climb with big foot options.