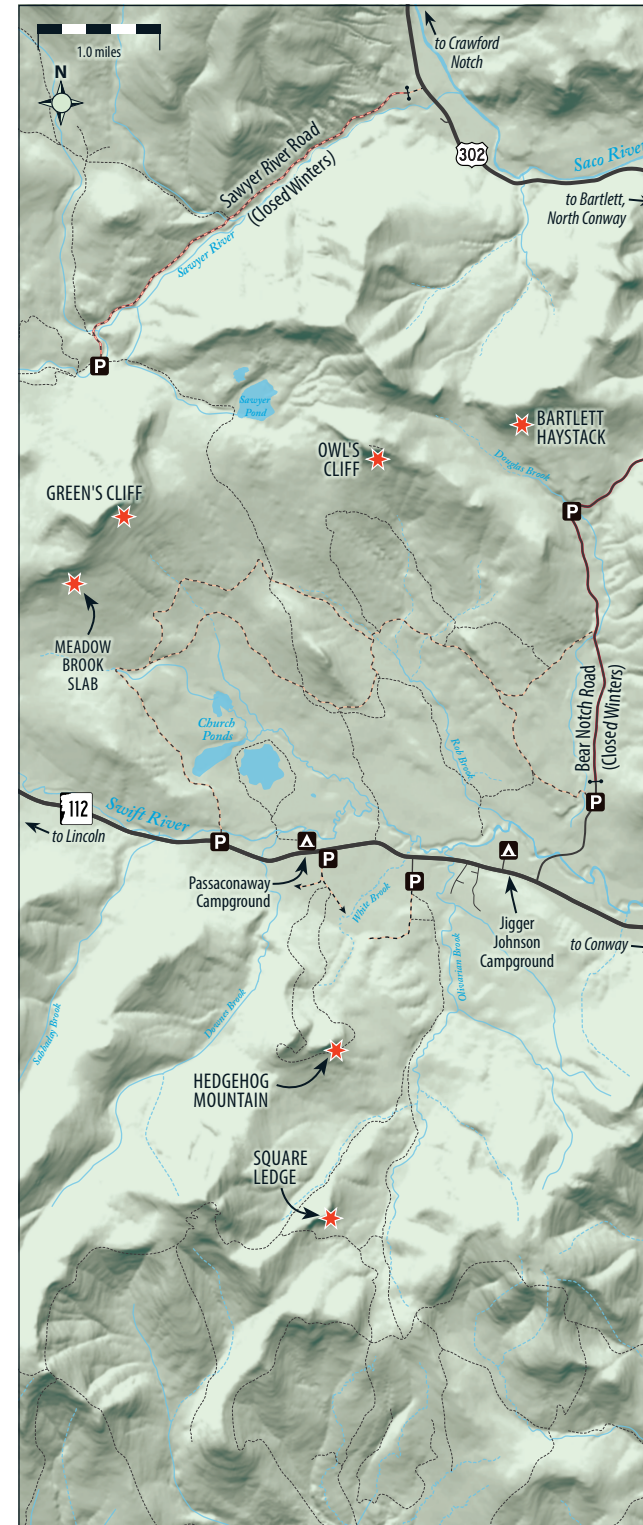




## UPPER KANCAMAGUS AREA

Molly Mundy on Stewart's Crack at Green's Cliff. Page 45.



In the past, this area received few visitors and scant mention in guidebooks. Today, it can take its place as a major addition to the catalogue of North Conway rock climbs, adding yet another dimension to the amazing variety of climbing to be found on this side of the White Mountains.

The Kancamagus Highway (Route 112) runs from Conway in the east to Lincoln in the west, passing through the heart of the White Mountain National Forest. This section covers the cliffs west of Bear Notch Road on either side of the Kancamagus, in one of the wildest and least travelled corners of New England. Several of the cliffs are obvious from the highway, though very distant and seemingly protected by miles of bushwhacking through dense forest and thick swamps. It is not surprising, then, that in the past, most of these walls had seen very little activity apart from the occasional route from local die-hards. The inaccessibility and the whispers of stunning cracks and immaculate walls gave an almost mythical aura to this corner of the White Mountains. In recent years, that has all changed, with cliffs such as Owl's, Green's, and Square Ledge seeing systematic and intense development, resulting in over one hundred new climbs.

The big draw, aside from the stunningly beautiful surroundings, is the quality of the rock. The rock is mostly hard, fine-grained granite, which often provides superb climbing and dramatic sweeps of rock. Each of the three big cliffs – Owl's, Green's, and Square Ledge – have routes that are among the best in New England. Furthermore, new approach information and the use of mountain bikes have made these cliffs reasonable to access.

However, there are access issues. Bear Notch Road is not maintained for winter travel. The road is generally gated at both ends between mid-November and early May. While this doesn't affect the most popular approach to Owl's Cliff, it does rule out the backside approach, as well as the normal approach to Bartlett Haystack. Similarly, Sawyer River Road, used to access Green's Cliff, is not maintained for winter travel and gated for a slightly longer period of time.

Lastly, it is worth mentioning that help is a long way off when you climb here. Be careful, bring appropriate navigation tools and know how to use them, and have a plan in case of trouble.