

ICE IN MAHOOSUC NOTCH, MAINE

Over the past several years, Dan Cousins, Dave Custer, Jim Paradis, and Susan Ruff have extensively explored the ice climbing in Mahoosuc Notch on the Appalachian Trail at the border of New Hampshire and Maine and climbed some 40 pitches of ice there. We find the ambiance in Mahoosuc Notch in winter conditions to be unique in its wildness and big mountain scale and hope that the area will continue to foster a sense of adventure in those who choose to make the considerable effort to get there. The Notch's reputation as the most difficult section of the Appalachian Trail hints at the challenges a winter approach and traverse through the Notch (~one mile) might entail. The whiff of crevasse and avalanche danger in the Notch and on the slopes above it makes climbing in Mahoosuc Notch a serious winter undertaking.

GETTING THERE

There are two ways to get to Mahoosuc Notch in the winter, neither of them easy. Either take the Success Pond Road (if passable) from Berlin, NH to the Notch Trail and hike to the upper (SW) Notch; or, drive past Sunday River to Ketchum, Maine, and hike several miles NW (then SW) on old logging roads along Bull Run Creek to bushwhacking at the NE end of the Notch.



access hint: consider a sled



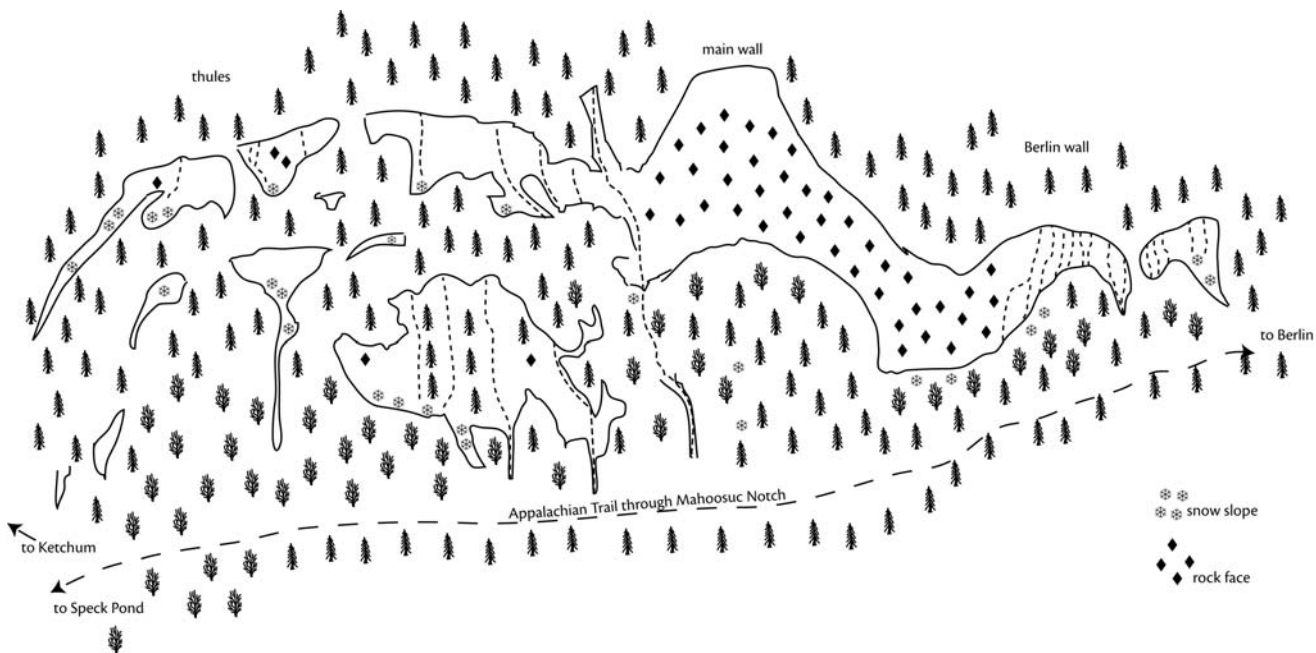
seracs, New England style



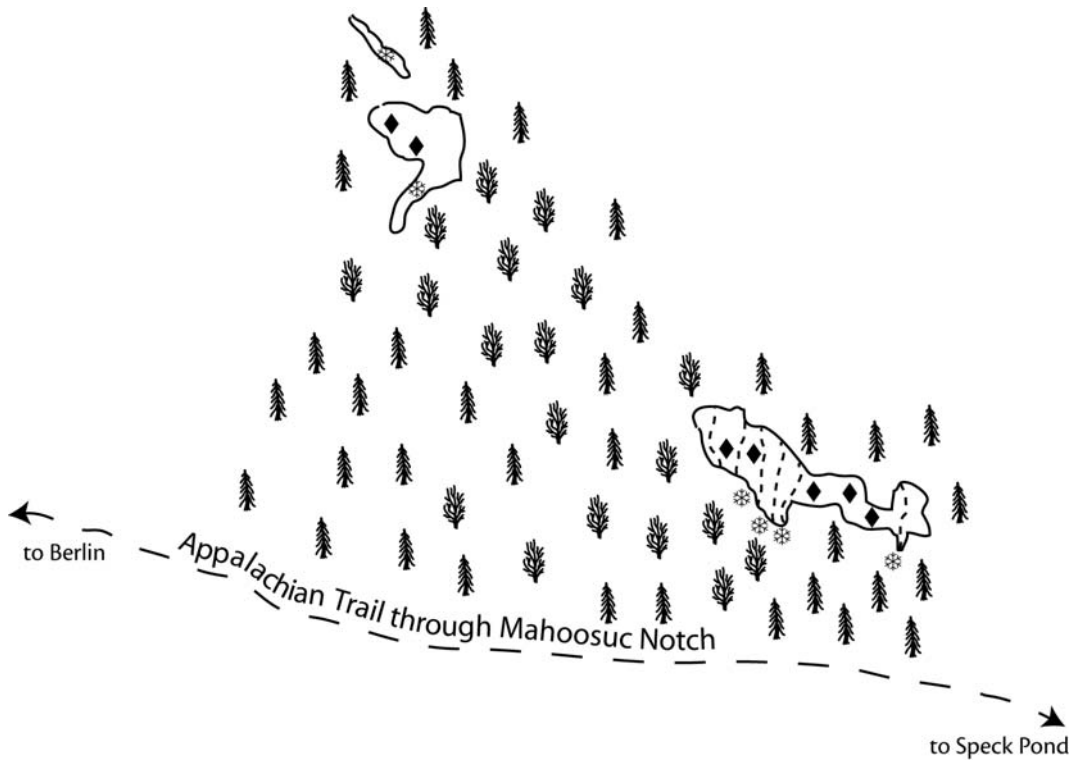
crevasses & snow bridges, New England style

MAJOR AREAS

- *The Berlin Wall* A discontinuous line of ~30 meter high ice flows, grades 2-5.
- *The Main Wall* Up to ~800 ft. The ice is unreliable.
- *The Thules* This upper band of north facing cliffs presents the greatest approach challenge; grades 2-5. A lower band of thinly iced slabs provides access to the upper climbs.
- *Sunnyside* lower, middle, & upper: ~30 m climbs, grade 3 to 4+. Reliable & pleasant—a good bet for a chilly day.



north face ice in Mahoosuc notch
dots indicate climbed lines



Mahoosuc Notch ice, sunnyside (faces south)



Susan at middle sunnyside



Jim rappeling the long climb at the left end of the main wall; lower sunnyside is just visible in the trees at the right; the 100 foot cliffs of center sunnyside are prominent on the right, and upper sunnyside is the white patch on the left.



Jim approaching the yellow cave in the center of the upper thules



Dan leading the class act flow at the left end of the Berlin Wall



the left end of the Berlin Wall from the AT



thules, left half; thin slabs visible in the trees lead to the upper cliff band



thules, right half, and the main wall



Dave on the center thules wall



the long climb at the left of the main wall