



Josh Hattan on *The Blue Room* (right side) in December. Photo: Mark Keller.



Mark Keller on *The Blue Room* (center) in December. Photo: Mark Keller.



Laura Hattan climbing *The Blue Room*'s left side in February.



Wes Gooch on *The Blue Room* in February. Photo: Laura Hattan.

Fremont Lake Ice Climbing

Elevation: 7,670 feet

Approach Time: 45 minutes to 2 hours

Primary Aspect: Western

Number of Routes: 10+

The climbing opportunities in the foothills surrounding Pinedale, Wyoming are often overlooked, which could be the reason why Fremont Lake's ice has been a well-kept secret. In fact, it is safe to say that each winter Fremont Lake probably only sees a handful of climbers. Regardless, Fremont Lake's ice is deserving of more attention as the area is a great opportunity for local climbers. The lake has about 8-10 regularly forming icefalls that can be led or top roped (some are mixed). Routes range from WI 3 to M7 WI 6. There is still potential for some first ascents.

Ice Climbing Season

Good ice consistently forms by early December each year but access does not get good until the lake freezes over.

Recommended Equipment

If you intend to top rope, bring a long section of webbing to extend the top anchor, and extra webbing to build tree anchors. A 70-meter rope is required to top rope the Upper Icefall, otherwise, a 60-meter rope is plenty. Bring a small rack of ice screws if you intend to lead, and at least one screw for a top rope directional.

Driving Directions & Parking

From Pinedale, follow Skyline Drive north for about 3 miles. Turn left onto the Fremont Lake road and continue for another half mile to a fork in the road. The left fork leads to Lakeside Lodge and the Lower Boat Docks. The right fork is not plowed in winter and leads to the Upper Boat Docks & Campground. For the recommended approach, park in a pullout just before the previously mentioned fork. The approach follows the unplowed road.

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Approach & Logistics

There are two approach options. The recommended approach is to snowmobile (or ski) across a frozen Fremont Lake. Alternatively, if Fremont Lake hasn't frozen yet, one can painstakingly access the icefalls via scrambling down from Skyline Drive but this option requires some gnarly bushwhacking. The best option is to wait for Fremont Lake to freeze.

Location Overview

Despite a few scattered icefalls near the very head of the lake, the best ice is concentrated in a section of cliffs approximately four miles north of the lake's Upper Boat Docks, above the eastern shore. Gain your bearings from a large peninsula, less than a half-mile north of the ice climbing, called Moosehead Bay.





Main Wall

The lake's most ice-covered cliff has several flows and some mixed routes from which to choose. The Main Wall is about 15-18 meters (50-60 feet) high. Besides what is listed below, there is also some mixed climbing potential (via top rope) to the left of the wall's center. On a good year, several of the mixed routes will fully form to the ground (as they have in the facing page photos). If you are not up for leading, access the top rope anchors via the gully directly right (south) of the cliff. Bring a long section of webbing if you intend to rig a top rope.

① Gentlemen's Club ☆☆☆ WI 3

The far left (north) side of the Main Wall consistently forms each year and is a good option to practice leading.

② White Angel Wing ☆☆☆ M7 WI 6 or WI 5

The facing page photo of *White Angel Wing* is not representative of an average year. Generally, the ice curtain only partially forms to the ground, but when fully formed, the curtain is a WI 5 lead. If the ice curtain does not fully form to the ground, *White Angel Wing* is a mixed top rope that goes at M7 WI 6.

③ Swimming Upstream ☆ M7 to WI 5+

The facing page photo shows this line in fat conditions. On average, the line is mostly dry with 4-5 bolts and difficulties around 5.11+ (M7).

④ Dry Tool Route M6/7

The last few seasons this mixed route has been totally dry but it has been known to form some ice, making a mixed route. Protected by three bolts and a cam placement (#2 or #3 Camalot).

⑤ Mixed Pillar M6 WI 6

The *Mixed Pillar* consistently forms but the climbing is delicate. Supposedly, the line has been led but most people choose to top rope.

⑥ The Blue Room ☆☆☆ WI 3+ to WI 5

The Blue Room is the large icefall on the right (south) half of the Main Wall. This route consistently forms by early December each year and later in the year can continue to expand further right allowing for some harder variations. The left side is generally the easiest at WI 3+. Thirty feet above *The Blue Room* is a bolted anchor for top roping. Access the top rope anchors via a gully on the right (south) end of the cliff.

Other Icefalls

Depending on the year, there are a good six to twelve other good icefalls in the vicinity of the Main Wall. Of these, the most noteworthy is the *Upper Icefall*.

⑦ Upper Icefall ☆☆☆ WI 4+ to WI 5

A 30-meter (100-foot) icefall with a vertical first half. Generally, this ice climb consistently forms but in 2011 it was bone dry. Unfortunately, the spring may have shifted.

Northern Head of Fremont Lake

There are several other icefalls near the head of Fremont Lake, above the eastern shore. Of these, are a few that consistently form each year but they have yet to be explored.

New Mixed Route Potential

The Fortress (p. 161) often forms a few scary looking, yet unclimbed, mixed lines.



The Upper Icefall. Photo: Josh Hattan.