

Aiguilles de Baulmes HB/VD-038

February 17, 2014
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Summary: Strenuous, long but not technically difficult

Last weekend was a "work weekend," so I took my weekend on Monday and its great weather. With the temperatures this winter being so warm, I didn't know if I needed my snowshoes or not. I packed them anyway, and good thing -- they came in very handy. (I put them on at Point 1215; prior to that I used my YakTrax.)

The hike to the summit was somewhat long at 6.5 km, and it took me more than 3 hours; although the absolute delta elevation is 549 meters, with all the up and down on the ridge path I actually climbed 603 meters. Boy, was I ever glad to finally get to the summit! There are no terribly difficult technical parts, and this could be done in most snow conditions. The toughest part was the ascent at Point 1029, which is a summer trail; given the little amount of snow, I decided to take it. The normal trail would be to follow a logging road through La Sagne, but that adds distance -- but it would be feasible under any snow conditions. Except for the ascent at Point 1029, there were good snowshoe tracks throughout, and at some points the snow was about 40 cm deep -- not enough for any avalanche danger; in fact, the avalanche rating for all of the Juras on this day was 0.

It was very peaceful on the summit. All day, I ran into only into one couple, coming down from the summit as I was going up. Again, the weather was fantastic: I was above the fog line and had sun the entire day with little wind (unlike the high winds of the past several days). I operated my rig (ATS-4/EndFedz antenna) primarily on 40 meters, where I had a good run of 46 QSOs (only a handful of those were on 30 meters). I would have stayed longer -- it was quite comfortable on the summit -- but trains from Ste-Croix run only once an hour, and I didn't want to wait after dusk for the next one.



My destination for the day from just outside Ste-Croix -- VD-038 is the high point at the center-right, just to the left of the signpost. You start on the ridge path on the far left (not visible) and walk across for several kilometers.



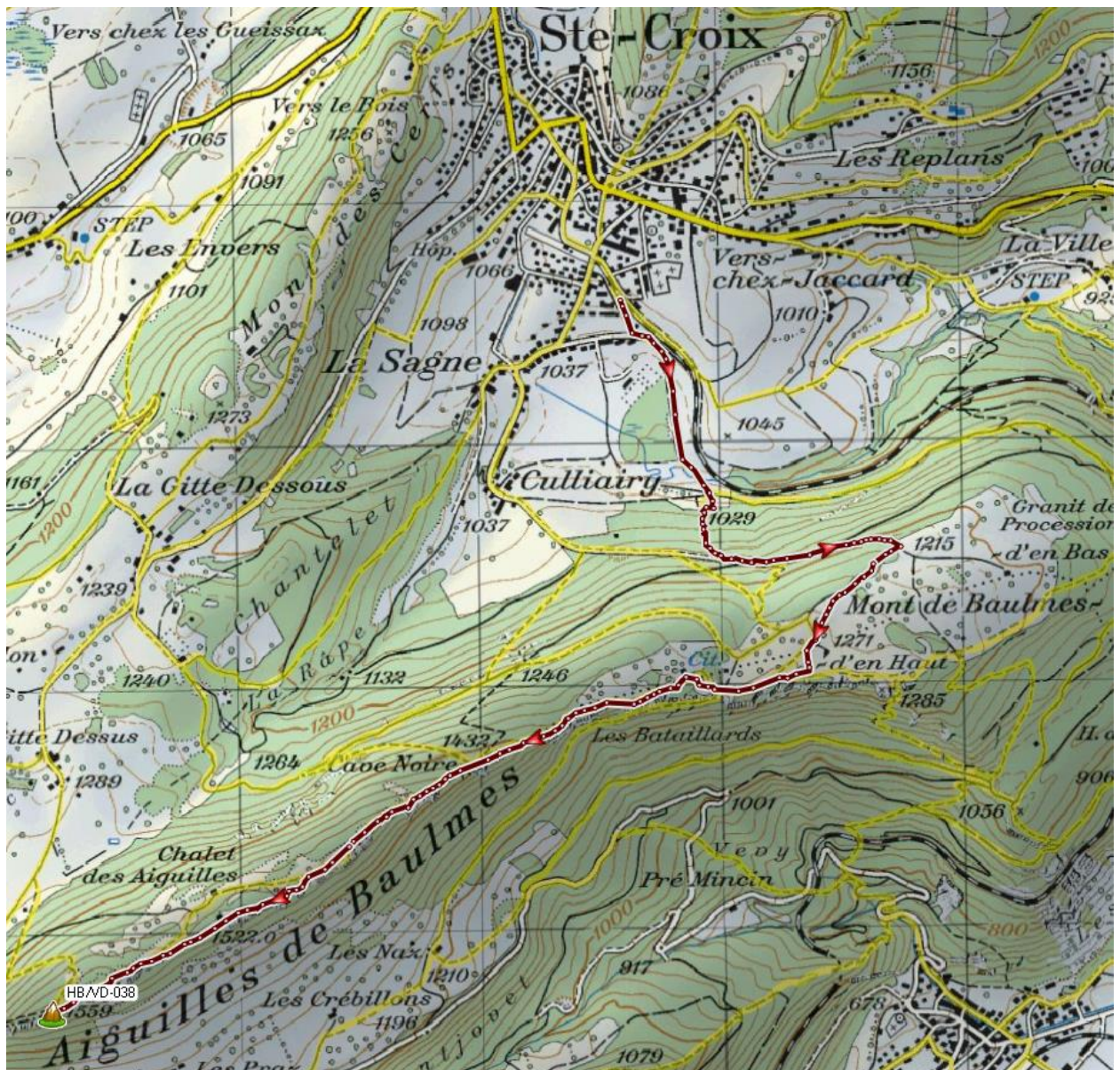
Although the ridge trail runs right along an extremely steep drop-off to one side, it is not at all dangerous; the trail is very wide in almost all spots.

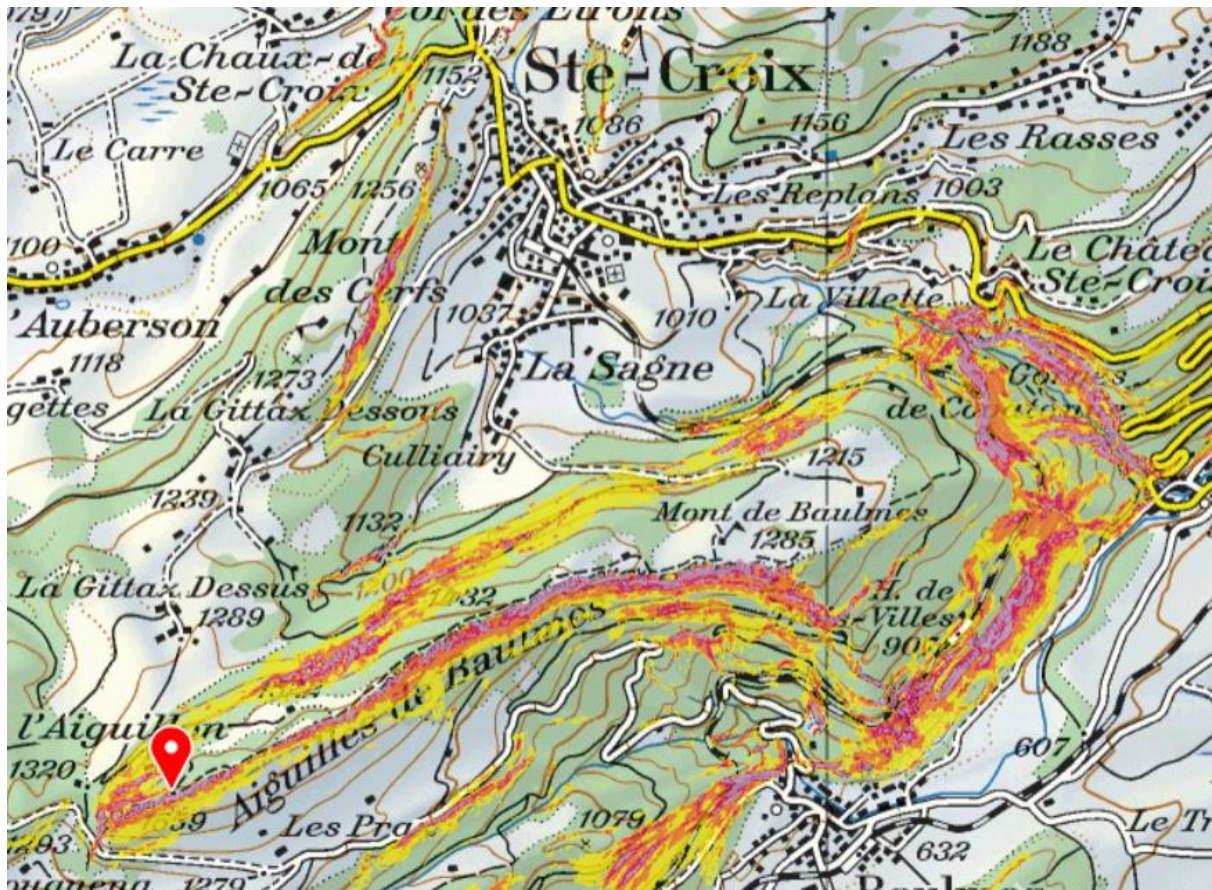


In the distance is Ste-Croix, my point of origination, photo taken from the ridge path.



The arms of the summit cross were on the ground. Lightning? Vandalism? Who knows. But they make handy benches for an operating position. Here I have my antenna mast lashed to the remains of the summit cross.





Colors showing slopes > 30 degrees. As you can see, the trail has steep drop-offs on both sides and hence the need to pass through Mont de Baulmes, but the ridge is quite wide and there is never any danger.