

Vertical Times



your climbing future

THE NATIONAL PUBLICATION OF THE ACCESS FUND
VOLUME 55, DECEMBER 2003

ACTIVIST TOOLBOX — A PRIMER ON LOBBYING

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The Access Fund is a national, nonprofit organization dedicated to keeping climbing areas open & conserving the climbing environment. Since its incorporation in 1990, the Access Fund has provided more than \$2 million for climbing conservation and education across the US. We've paid for land purchases, climbers' campgrounds, educational brochures, toilets, signs, and scientific research on climbers' impact on birds of prey and cliff-dwelling plants. For more information, please contact:

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Cover photo: Located in Washington's remote Alpine Lakes Wilderness Area, Prusik Peak exemplifies what's at stake when the federal land management agencies consider the legality of fixed anchors. Have an opinion about fixed anchors or other climbing issues? See page four to read Jason Keith's "Primer on Climbing, Politics and Climber Activism" to read how you can make a difference.

(Photo courtesy of Cliff Leight)

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Ice Season is at Hand

With snow flying and water freezing in the temperate regions of the country, we know the year is drawing to a close. Ice climbing stirs the imagination and passion of many, while others go indoors or further south to chase the rock. With the new year close at hand, we all tend to reflect on the past years doings and look forward to the challenges ahead. For us at the Access Fund, the year has been filled with numerous successes, a few disappointments and plenty of challenges yet to come.

In a very tough economic climate with all non-profits feeling the downturn, we have managed to continue our high level of services through diligent control of our expenses and great support from all of you in the climbing community. Volunteers continue to work hard and advocate at the grassroots level on behalf of our mission to keep climbing areas open and conserve the climbing environment.

Our Climbing Preservation Grants, while small in dollar amount (\$120,000 this year), go a long way to help provide seed money and proactively support the projects that mean so much to the local climbing communities around the country. Examples of grant recipients range from new local climber organizations to helping the BLM manage issues related to the explosive growth in bouldering in areas such as Bishop, California, to the purchase of land in Vermont, trail projects in new Hampshire, and work on climbing management plans in North Carolina.

Access and Policy work often involve long hours of meetings over the course of many months and years before results are shown, and 2003 is no exception. However, we are seeing the fruits of our labor from previous years. The opening of Castle Rocks State Park in Idaho, signing a national agreement with the USFS

that formalizes our representation of the climbing public on issues related to access and stewardship, and developing climbing management plans in the North Cascades are all successes we can be proud of.

We continued to lay the groundwork for future initiatives with events like Climbers for Political Action in Washington, DC this past May. This outreach to Congress strengthened our ties and opened doors with legislators whose districts include significant numbers of climbers or climbing areas.

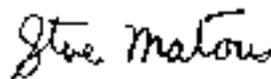
Our challenges for the year ahead include capturing the newer participants to our sport and making them aware of issues facing us: our access to climbing areas and responsibility for stewardship of the resource. The increase in use (due to the popularity of climbing) results in environmental impacts, which are often what lead to restrictions or closures by the land managers. Through our Adopt-A-Crag stewardship program and other

conservation efforts we are making progress, but we need your help to do more. Climbers have always had a strong conservation ethic and good relationship with the land. Indeed many of us climb because we love being out in the sun or on the ice.

In the end, like climbing itself, it is only through our individual responsibility for these issues that we can succeed and keep climbing free and a privilege we can all enjoy for many generations to come.

Best Wishes for a happy holiday season and a great new year!

Sincerely,



Steve Matous
Executive Director



**A Primer on
Climbing
Politics and
Climber Activism**

**by Jason Keith, Policy
Director**

Sealing the Deal at Castles

Despite over four years of negotiating, meeting, organizing, fund-raising, and lobbying, climbers were still waiting for access to Castle Rock Ranch. After all that heavy lifting by numerous volunteers and organizations, "Castles" was still sitting there in the summer of 2002 waiting to be climbed. It was time to light some fires.

As most folks that climb at the City of Rocks know, Castles was a virtually untouched climbing resource located just one valley north of the "City." Although a climbing competition had been held at Castles back in the 1980s, this wonderland of rocks was still private property and off limits until climbers began efforts in 1998 to acquire Castle Rock Ranch and put it into public ownership. A plan materialized: a group of interested parties consisting of The Conservation Fund, the Access Fund and the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation (IDPR) would buy the ranch with the understanding that the Conservation Fund would temporarily hold title. The Conservation Fund would then sell the property to the National Park Service (NPS) who would then exchange Castles with the state of Idaho for some in-holdings within a national monument a few hundred miles away. For the climbing community, the whole point of this convoluted series of property transfers

was to eventually establish a state park with climbing as a primary purpose. However, climbers needed confront several challenges before they could actually get on the rock and playing politics was needed to grease the necessary wheels.

In 1999 Sam Davidson, former Access Fund's policy analyst, testified on Capitol Hill in support of the Castle Rocks Ranch Acquisition Act. Passed the following year, this piece of legislation, sponsored by U.S. Senator Larry Craig, authorized the release of funds to the NPS to purchase Castles from the Conservation Fund. The Act also directed the transfer of Castles to the state of Idaho in exchange for property within the Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument. By 2000, things were looking good for opening Castles to climbing, but there were still more challenges: before the state received Castles, the NPS would have to finish the requisite environmental assessments and the agency was currently preoccupied with other "high priority" projects and had little money to devote to the Castles project. Once again, calling on Congress would get things moving.

On previous trips to Washington I had worked with Senator Craig's office on a variety of issues, most recently seeking support on fixed anchors in wilderness issue. So I called Senator Craig's office and talked with Calli Daly, his legislative assistant for public lands. I urged her to make some phone calls to Idaho and the regional NPS office to see if we couldn't somehow prioritize the environmental analyses and get Castles transfer to IDPR and open the area to climbing. After all, the Access Fund donated a lot of money towards buying Castles, and Craig had sponsored the legislation authorizing its purchase. Convincing Calli to help wasn't a hard sell, as she was just as interested in getting something done because many of Senator Craig's constituents supported the deal and were anxious to see the state park open.

The call paid off. Shortly after my lobbying effort and Calli's calls out to Idaho, the NPS completed its work, and in early 2003 several organizations and individuals met at Castles to hammer out the details of a climbing management plan. By mid May, climbers were establishing



Jason Keith

Climbers reaping the benefits of activism and "talking politics" at the newly reopened Castles State Park, Idaho.

new routes at Castles and over Memorial Day weekend the new Castle Rocks State Park opened to the general public.

The point? While the vision of the climbing and conservation community planted the seed for opening Castles to climbing, it was political advocacy – both through Congressional testimony and direct staff contact – that sealed the deal and facilitated getting climbers on the rock at Castles. This lobbying success is not limited to Castles.

You Can Make a Difference: Every voting taxpayer should feel entitled to voice their concerns to their elected representatives and make their opinions known on anything from the defense budget to recreation fees. Moreover, you can make a difference concerning specific initiatives that may affect your local crag, whether it's a recreation management plan, funding for the BLM, or a proposed recreational use statute that would limit landowner liability for climbing on private land. Lobbying is not rocket science, but a few key points should be noted when pressing your case with Congress.

While working directly with the land agencies can assist you in achieving your goal, formal agency planning schedules often limit your opportunities to make a difference. Congress, on the other hand, should listen to you anytime they're not in recess. Politics is an interesting but sometimes confusing and frustrating process. Often it's difficult to figure out who can help you and sometimes you have to work with folks who you disagree with politically. At times, you agree with them entirely, but political affiliation is irrelevant when you want elected officials to assist you. Politicians can help you if you convince them that doing so is in their interest. The key is finding areas of commonality and using a few effective lobbying techniques.

Lobbying can be an effective tool for climber activists to maintain access or open up a new climbing area. Congressional assistance comes in many forms:

- Putting pressure on land management

agencies to pursue a course of action;

- Limiting funding for a bad development project or an official's harmful and unprecedented interpretation of a rule or statute;
- Increasing funding in support of a particular recreation initiative;
- Passing a statute to open up a state park, establish wilderness, or limit industrial activity near your favorite climbing area;
- Directing land agencies to establish a regulation favorable to recreational activity;
- Passing a recreational use statute limiting landowner liability when they let climbers on to their private property.
- Target the Right People. The main thing about lobbying is to know your specific elected representatives because Congress is most responsive to those whose votes they need (this applies to both the federal and state levels). If you don't know who your representatives are, you can



Jason Keith talks to local climbers about issues at Hueco Tanks.

uncover all kinds of valuable information on www.congress.org where you'll locate your representative and senators, what committees they sit on, and their particular pet projects. For public lands issues, the

most important members are those that sit on the committees with jurisdiction over public lands: the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, and the House Resources Committee. Both of these "full" committees have subcommittees with more specific authority, such as over national parks, recreation, or national forests. Equally important are the appropriation committees for both houses who control the funding for the land agencies. If your elected representatives serve on these committees and you've got an issue pertaining to their jurisdiction, then they should listen to you and even provide direct assistance.

- Another key lobbying tactic is to know who to talk to and then make your request to that individual an easy job. Although it may be interesting to talk to the actual senator, mostly you really want to talk to their lead staffer that works on your particular issue. The senator is typically

•continued on next page

too busy to know everything, but it's the staffer's job to be informed on the minutiae of constituent concerns and convince their boss to either take a course of action or advise against it. In other words, most of the time Congressional staffers are the real players that you want to be dealing with. Either look up the "Environmental LA" (legislative assistant) at www.congress.org or call the office directly and ask who the staff person is that works on the specific issue. When you find out who to talk to, call them directly and succinctly tell them who you are, that you vote (or that you represent their constituents), what your issue is, what you want from them, and ask for a couple minutes of their time for a brief meeting. Most of the time you'll get a meeting, but it might take a while. Alternatively, if you can't meet them in person, write a letter and follow-up with a phone call. It's also a good idea to do a little homework and know the particular issues that the Congressman has been working on so you can mention them and show you value their work.

When you ask for assistance (for example, opposition to fee demo legislation or a letter of support for the establishment of a local public park), make it easy for the staffer — have a draft letter for them to review (electronic or hard copy) or a one page summary with the name and contact information for the agency official you'd like them to call on your behalf. Provide the staffer with these materials (via email or in person), then follow up on your request the following week. Even if your Congressional member does not sit on one of the relevant committees, call and ask for help. It's their job.

Know the Angles. Hone your message, know your issue and who the issue affects, and research what opposing perspectives might say. Tell them in plain terms how the particular bill or regulation affects that legislator's community and be aware if others have already floated a solution. Personalize your story instead of performing an extensive PowerPoint complete with charts and dense studies. Always be polite, avoid an overly strident patronizing tone and defuse emerging confrontational arguments. In addition to the short-term specific response

you're hoping to get out of the meeting, also view the meeting as a chance to build a long-term relationship with the representative and their staff. Accordingly, never threaten revenge for their opposition or disinterest to your cause, and avoid stretching the truth to make your issue sound more compelling. You will gain more credibility admitting you don't know the answer to a question than if you obviously make something up to save face. Identify what your opponents would say and have a counter-argument, but steer from being critical of them or their party affiliation. If you are polite and friendly you're more likely to get help and an audience for future meetings.

Maximize Your Influence

Be Informed. When lobbying, whether in direct meetings or through letter communication, you can maximize your influence if you are up to speed on knowing which other legislators support your position and why. If you are meeting with several offices, target your champions first so you can have a show of support in subsequent meetings. Make sure to tell your supporters that you'll inform their constituents of the assistance. Identify allies who may not champion your cause but will readily support it. Some offices will remain uncommitted no matter how compelling your story because they have no time for your issue or it's too hot politically. You may be able to sway these "fence sitters" eventually, but your biggest challenge will be convincing your opponents to come on-board. Some of these may be more disinterested fence sitters than hard-core opponents, but if they serve on controlling committees you'll need to work with them. Even if you can't get their support, be polite and tell them (with a smile) that you'll continue to try and convince them to come over to your side.

Form Coalitions. Another way to increase your effectiveness is to join forces with other interested constituents (for example, signing onto a letter asking for help). Saddle up with an organization in your area that shares your concerns, but remember that personal letters are much better than form letters or petitions and mass emails are almost

always discounted. There are dozens of local climbing organizations across the country, with one likely in your area. See www.accessfund.org/whoweare/who_lco.htm for a list of LCOs across the country that you might be able to work with to achieve your goal. Sometimes, you can get more attention if you are aligned with a national climbing advocacy group such as the Access Fund who has regional coordinators or volunteers that can help articulate problems, solutions, and garner more voices in support of your cause. The American Alpine Club is also a worthy organization with chapters nationwide. See the following websites to find local and regional activists:

- www.accessfund.org/whoweare/who_regcoord.html
- www.americanalpineclub.org/about/committees.asp

If you are interested in commercial climbing issues, the American Mountain Guides Association (www.amga.com) represents the interests of American mountain guides by providing support, education, and standards. The American Safe Climbing Association (www.safeclimbing.org) is also an effective group that works to make climbing safer by replacing unsafe bolts and anchors and by educating climbers, land managers, and the public about climbing and anchor safety.

Get Involved. If you want to protect your local crag or open up a new one, you need to become involved. For public land issues, land managers should be your first contact when advocating a position. If you feel you're not getting the desired response and you've got an opinion regarding how a specific area should be managed, call Congress and let them know. But remember, if you're against something, you've got to also be for a solution. If you have a specific position concerning fixed anchors in wilderness or recreation fees, for example, get involved and contact those with the authority to make the changes you want. Anybody can complain and point out problems, but if you really want to achieve positive change (or even maintain the status quo) about the climbing areas that you love, join forces with like-minded folks and jump into the fray. As climbers, we should use our strong-headedness to preserve climbing access and conserve the climbing environment.

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adjustment to most
sizes.
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climbing!
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women. (canary)
Sizes S, M, L, XL.*



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T-shirt with Access
Fund logo on the
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Sizes S, M, L, XL.
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Indian Creek Update

The Monticello Field
Office of the Bureau
of Land Management

(BLM) is preparing an
Environmental Assessment (EA)
for the Indian Creek Corridor
Plan. The Indian Creek corridor
is located 50 miles southwest of
Moab, and 30 miles northwest

of Monticello. Bear West, a consulting
firm based in Salt Lake City, is preparing
this EA for the BLM. Preliminary issues
that have been identified include camping,
climbing, cultural issues, parking, and
several others. The BLM received public
comments during the scoping phase of the
project, which ended October 24.

Climbers are increasingly seen as
indifferent funhogs that just want free
camping without the hassles of agency
management. In fact, the BLM extended
its initial scoping period because, in part, it
received so few climber comments.

The next opportunity for climbers to
make known how they feel about Indian
Creek will be after the BLM publishes its
Draft EA later this fall which will specify
the various alternatives to the plan which
the BLM assembled through the scoping
process. Following publication of the
Draft EA there will be public meetings
providing another opportunity for climbers
to participate in the planning process for
Indian Creek. The BLM's Monticello Field
Office is willing to listen to climbers but
we have to speak up and get involved.
Either way, a plan will be written, and your
input is important!

Issues at stake under the recreation
plan: camping fees, camping restrictions
(your favorite campsite could be closed
or restricted), trail access, climbing route
closures to protect cultural and natural
resources, conflicts with other use groups,
and human waste issues.

OHV and oil/gas issues will not be
addressed in this EA because they will
be addressed in the upcoming Resource
Management Planning effort by the
Monticello Field Office. See the Access
Fund website for updates or write or email
Bear West and asked to be placed on their
mailing lists for updates about the next
comment period.

Ralph Becker or Laura Hanson
Bear West/BLM

RE: Indian Creek Corridor Recreation Plan
145 South 400 East
Salt Lake City, Utah 84111
Rbecker@bearwest.com or
lhanson@bearwest.com
Phone: 801-355-8816
Fax: 801-355-2090

Download a PDF of the "BLM
Scoping Newsletter" with some general
information regarding the scope of the
Indian Creek Plan at
www.blm.gov/utah/monticello/

Access to numerous cliffs at Indian
Creek is not secure. Approaches to
the following crags cross The Nature
Conservancy's private Dugout Ranch and
have only remained open up until now
because of the generosity of former owner
and current lessee Heidi Redd: Battle of
the Bulge Buttress, Supercrack Buttress,
Donnelly Canyon, Tricks Wall, Paragon
Prow, New Wall, New Wave Wall,
Scarface Wall, Love Wall, and Power Wall.

Over the years, Dugout Ranch owners
have allowed climbers to cross their
property to access the world class climbs
found on Supercrack and Battle of the
Bulge buttresses (the cliffs are on public
land but the approach trails are on Dugout
Ranch property). In particular, Heidi Redd
has for decades been friendly to climbers.
However, in recent years the number of
climbers at Indian Creek has increased
many times over and a few folks have
been outright rude to Heidi and her
cowboys. Moreover, dogs have run wild
harassing her cows and horses. If we
want to continue the privilege of access
across the Dugout Ranch, owned by The
Nature Conservancy since 1997, we need
to monitor ourselves, take care of the
land and be respectful to the BLM, local
landowners, and other user groups.

To return the favor to Heidi, please
consider the following: Do not trespass
to reach New Wall, New Wave Wall
and Paragon Prow. Keep a low profile
when parking below and hiking across to
Scarface and nearby walls. Be respectful
of Dugout Ranch employees, and keep
pets under control when cattle are
present. Strive to Leave No Trace during all
your activities at Indian Creek.

Access Fund 2003 Awards

FOR FULL REPORT VISIT:

www.accessfund.org/programs/AFawards.htm

At the October Access Fund board meeting, the following awards were given to volunteers who have devoted countless hours to preserving climbing access in America. Whether digging trails, attending meetings or rallying support, they were helping to keep climbing areas open and conserve the climbing environment during the past year. The Access Fund extends its highest praise to the following recipients:

Sharp End Award — For leadership and activism in preserving climbing access and the climbing environment.

Individual: — Jeff Sargeant (Connecticut) for his support of stewardship and his service on the board of the Ragged Mountain Foundation.

Businesses: Petzl (Utah) for supporting outreach and educational programs during the “Roc Trip” events, backing the Castleton Tower initiative land acquisition, working on Utah Wilderness issues, and its financial support of the Access Fund brochure series.

REI (Washington) for financial, volunteer and management support of Adopt-A-Crag and the Access Fund Grassroots Program. Also for assisting national policy initiatives such as lobbying work in Washington D.C., climbing management plan development and for co-signing a letter to the U.S. Forest Service regarding fixed anchors.

Land Manager of the Year: Given to a professional resource manager who has demonstrated a progressive approach to public land management and has been committed to preserving climbing opportunities. — Gary Hartley, (West Virginia) Chief Ranger at the New River Gorge for his outreach and cooperative negotiations in creating a balanced Climbing Management Plan.

Regional Coordinator of the Year: For leadership and activism in preserving climbing access and the climbing environment and specifically for volunteer work as an Access Fund representative — Frank Harvey (Tennessee).

The Mark Bebie Award: Presented to America’s outstanding activists for the

cause of preserving climbing access and the climbing environment. — Kurt Smith and Elaina Arenz Smith (“The Road”).

Menocal Lifetime Achievement Award: Periodically given to individuals who have demonstrated remarkable commitment to the cause of preserving climbing access and the climbing environment and contributed substantially to the Access Fund over many years. Paul Minault (California) for his 14+ years of service to the climbing community as a great leader and strong advocate for climbers.

Marion Hutchison (Oklahoma) for his 12+ years of service to the climbing community as a great leader and strong advocate for climbers.

Board Service Award: To exiting members of the Access Fund Board of Directors for their distinguished service — Andy Fitz (1997-2003), Chris McNamara (2000-2003) and Shannon Stuart-Smith (2000-2003).

Michael Kennedy Excellence Award: For outstanding leadership and commitment to our mission as Access Fund Board Member — Andy Fitz (Washington) for work on the State of Washington Recreation Use Statue, stewardship at Frenchman’s Coulee and Little Si and his commitment of time, expertise and leadership.

Mohonk Preserve Presents Stewardship Award to Access Fund

The Fifth Annual Thom Scheuer Land Stewardship Award was presented in October to the Access Fund during the annual Climbing Film Festival in New Paltz, New York. “This is the first time an organization, rather than an individual, has received the award,” said Glenn Hoagland, the Preserve’s Executive Director.

“The Access Fund has an outstanding track record of funding projects in the Shawangunks that protect the cliffs while ensuring low-impact, climber access.” The Access Fund has financially supported several projects in the Gunks. The award is named for Thom Scheuer, one of the Preserve’s first rangers and the first Director of Stewardship. He worked at the

Interview by John Heisel

JH: What type of climbing do you prefer?

DB: I mostly like to go into the Park [Rocky Mountain National Park] for a day and alpine

climb. Recently went to the Wind River Range, which I like because it is remote. It was a test of self-sufficiency. We hiked nine miles in then camped and climbed for four days in the Cirque of the Towers.

JH: How long have you been climbing?

DB: Nine years. I began climbing in the Blue Mounds, Minnesota near Omaha, Nebraska, where I was living at the time.

JH: What are your favorite climbing areas?

DB: Eldo [Eldorado Canyon], Joshua Tree and the Park.

JH: What is your background prior to working for the AF?

DB: I have worked as an attorney, congressional aide in Nebraska, worked at a climbing gym in Los Angeles. Recently, I was the Marketing and Events Director at Mountain Sports here in Boulder.

JH: Tell us about your job as GRC?

DB: Right now it is in the planning stages. My hope is that the Access Fund can be more responsive to the needs of local climbing organizations (LCOs) and regional coordinators (RCs). I hope to help LCOs be more efficient organizationally and with access. I want to help prevent burnout from volunteers while trying to capture their knowledge so there is continuity in organizations. Right now one person gets burned out then leaves without passing on the information. I would like to expand the umbrella of what is grassroots and tap into the strengths of shops and gyms around the country.

JH: Do you have any ideas or projects you would like to develop as GRC?

DB: I would like to create a clearinghouse and resource center for LCOs, activists and RCs on our website.

JH: What can people do to help climbing access in their area?

DB: People can work on spreading awareness of potential access issues at their favorite areas. Also, they can educate each other on Leave No Trace ethics and potential environmental effects of their actions. The biggest challenge is



Deanne and her dog, Sequoia in Eldorado Canyon, Colorado.

to meet people where they are as far as volunteerism goes.

JH: Why should climbers join the AF?

DB: I guess the real question is why shouldn't climbers join the Access Fund?

Activists Summit a Success

The Access Fund held a national conference for climber-activists from September 11-14, 2003 at the Estes Park Center in Colorado. The event united the organization's national network of regional coordinators with activists from local climber organizations (LCOs) and land managers for two days of workshops, discussion and networking.

The Summit epitomized the Access Fund's commitment to preserving access and provided an excellent forum for volunteer activists nationwide to share their ideas, experience, resources and knowledge.

"This meeting contained the highest concentration I've ever seen of dedicated people working on climbing access issues," reported John Peterson, Ragged Mountain Foundation president. "Every climber should be glad that these people work so hard on their behalf. The AF people are just as dedicated to the cause and as the conference went on it became obvious that they had made a tremendous difference to the LCOs." For a comprehensive personal report of the summit by John Peterson, see <http://raggedmtn.org/phpBB2/viewtopic.php?t=137>



Access Fund
ADOPT A CRAG



2003

- 1000+ VOLUNTEERS
- 29 STATES
- STEWARDSHIP
- VOLUNTEERISM
- GIVING BACK



**THANK YOU
VOLUNTEERS AND SPONSORS!**

(See Vertical Times #56, February issue for winners of the Photo Contest and Adopt-a-Crag Event of the Year)

"Thanks to Adopt-a-Crag, we now have a list of climbers who want to continue being active to mitigate access issues with more volunteer efforts, events, and by attending meetings with local tribes and government agencies on behalf of the climbing community."
— Bennett Barthelemy, CA



Letters

We Ought Not to Demonize Climbers

After reading Robyn

Morrison's article "Invasion

of the Rock Jocks" (*High Country News*, 7/7/03),

one might conclude that rock climbing impacts the environment on the scale of coal mining or desert off-road races. The article does highlight some real issues, but the generalizations are a little too sweeping, the values and motivations of climbers are a little short-sighted, and the slice of the climbing world the article looks at is a little too thin. The reality is that climbers are willing partners in land protection – environmentalists would be well advised not to squander that opportunity.

As a climber of over 30 years, and a professional wilderness advocate since 1987, I have seen rock climbing and its impacts from several angles. Climbing does have impacts, as does any recreational activity, but we have much bigger problems on public lands. Unlike more damaging activities, climbing is perfectly suited to site-specific, tailored solutions; sweeping prohibitions and restrictions simply aren't needed to address the impacts.

It would be folly to claim that rock climbing has no effect on public land, but to speak of climbing's impacts in the same context as those of off-road vehicles or mining is to overreach in the extreme. Does this mean climbers should be let off the hook? Of course not. It's simply a matter of addressing the issues fairly, and crafting appropriate solutions. Morrison's article (and one subsequent letter to HCN) also lumps climber's tactics with those of industrial lobbies – a ridiculous comparison. Industry uses armies of lawyers, campaign dollars, and manipulated reports to get their way. Climbers know they are not nearly so much in the driver's seat, and so use tools like cooperation, negotiation, and advocacy as best they can. The article also paints as negative the demand by climbers that restrictions be based on good science. Yet environmental groups do this every day – demand good science for public land decisions – and rightly so.

The climbing community is more active than ever before to mitigate its impacts. Consider these examples of climbing restrictions supported by the Access Fund, the principal climbing advocacy group in the country: In Boulder Mountain Parks, the Access Fund helped craft a seasonal climbing closure for crags that raptors use for mating and nesting. In West Virginia's New River Gorge, the National Park Service was about to close a long stretch of cliff to climbing, although there was no evidence of use by peregrine falcons. The Access Fund worked with the NPS to institute a voluntary seasonal closure for the area and a monitoring program to identify falcon activity. Devils Tower, Wyoming is considered sacred to several northern plains tribes. In cooperation with the tribes, climbers put a voluntary closure into effect each June. The following is an excerpt from a July 7, 2003 NPS press release:

"The climbing community should be applauded for recognizing that recreational use may conflict with cultural values and for their willingness to make accommodations when choosing to climb at these sites," said climbing ranger Chuck Lindsay. "Additionally, the Access Fund - a nonprofit climbing advocacy group - and several climbing magazines have been instrumental in educating climbers and supporting the voluntary closure."

Furthermore, the Access Fund is on record supporting wilderness initiatives including the Colorado Citizens Wilderness Proposal, Nevada's recently enacted Clark County bill, Washington's Wild Sky Wilderness bill, and Utah's Red Rock Wilderness Act. The organization promotes conservation more than ever before – that is why I serve on its board, and why I see great benefit in working together.

The point is this: climbers as a group are largely conservation-minded, and respect the need for appropriate levels of restriction on their use of public lands. Contrary to being an "environmental menace," climbers represent a much-needed ally in the struggle against those who value our public lands for nothing other than their commodity production.

This begs a disturbing question – why the focus on climbers? Right now, the Bush Administration and its allies in Congress are working with unprecedented intensity to dismantle our environmental protections in every way possible. Relaxing pollution standards, limiting citizen's ability to challenge land management decisions, dismantling the wilderness system piece by piece, imposing a retrograde energy policy that relies only on more drilling and digging – this is the Administration's agenda for our public lands. So why now are we shining a spotlight on rock climbing? We have way bigger problems that those caused by a bunch of boulderers.

Morrison asks: Will the climbing community produce more David Browsers? On a percentage basis, perhaps not as many as in Brower's day. Back then, many environmental leaders came from the ranks of hunters, anglers, climbers, and other outdoor-focused people. But just as climbing is mainstream now, so is conservation – activists come from all walks of life. Just because a teenager bouldering in a gravel pit doesn't know who David Brower is, doesn't mean that many environmental activists don't come from the ranks of climbers (and river runners, backpackers, and other outdoor-types).

Are climbers out just for fun, at the expense of the environment? A few are, sure. But my experience in 32 years of climbing is that most folks I run into climb for the whole package – physical challenge, absorbing wild landscapes, escaping from the pressures of city life, and accepting nature's challenges on nature's terms. Doesn't look like just a bunch of "rock jocks" to me. Climbers are holding out a hand to enviros – whether we will take it or slap it away remains to be seen.

–Jeff Widen, Durango, CO

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Featured Partner—PETZL

Petzl is proud of our 13 year relationship with the Access Fund. The importance of supporting THE national climber advocacy group cannot be understated. The AF has a proven track record that we are reminded of every time we climb in areas like Indian Creek, the New River Gorge, Castle Rocks State Park, and the Red River Gorge.

—John Evans, Petzl Marketing Director

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Thanks

For supporting The Access Fund Board Meeting and Climbers' Meeting at the Gunks, New York:

Mohonk Preserve, Inc, Glenn Hoagland, Hank Alicandri, Liz Bartlett, Christopher Lawrence, The Gunks Climbers Coalition, Rich Gottlieb and Rock & Snow, Inc.

Kurt Smith & Elaina Arenz-Smith All of the gyms and shops who are supporting the Friction Addiction- The 3rd annual Kickin Access Tour!

Peter Joyce and the Pocatello Pump
Skagit Alpine Club
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Welcome to our newest corporate partners: Rock & Snow, Inc. and Kristin Carpenter Public Relations.

Special Thanks to Special Appeal Contributors

On behalf of the Access Fund, a special thank you goes out to all members who donated toward our 2003 "special appeal" mailings that focused on specific issues pertaining to Access Fund's ongoing work and projects. They bring in funds above and beyond annual membership dues. Over \$16,000 was raised through October. 116 members donated toward the Climbing Preservation Grants appeal this spring, and nearly \$9,800 was raised. Access Fund Climbing Preservation Grants provide financial assistance for local climber activism and protection of the climbing environment across the country. Funding for such projects would not be possible without your support.

This summer, the appeal for Endangered Climbing Areas raised over \$6,000 from 113 contributors. The Endangered Climbing Areas campaign is an initiative designed to educate the climbing community on threatened climbing areas around the country.

Coming soon—the 2003 End of Year appeal will be mailed in mid-November. Your end of year contribution will add crucial financial resources to the Access Fund, lay the foundation for a successful 2004, and give you the opportunity to invest in the future of American climbing.

Friction Addiction Tour

In 2003 and 2004, Kurt Elaina will again hit the road for the Kickin Access Tour. The events feature "Friction Addiction" by Kurt Smith, dyno and pull-up comps, live music by DJ Highball, gear auctions, and raffles.

November 2003:

- 11/13 Asheville, NC @ Asheville Pizza and Brewing W/ Black Dome 828-251-2001
- 11/15 Boone, NC W/ Misty Mt. (Location TBA) 828-963-6688
- 11/22 Charlotte, NC @ Inner Peaks 704-844-6677

December 2003:

- 12/6 Horse Pens 40 @ HP 40 Triple Crown Finals
- 12/12 Tampa, FL @ Vertical Ventures 813-884-7625
- 12/16 Orlando, FL @ Aiguille 407-332-1430
- 12/18 Lafayette, LA @ Rokhaus 337-981-8116



The Access Fund
PO Box 17010
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your climbing future

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

LOCAL CLIMBING ORGANIZATIONS

LCO's are volunteer-based climber organizations working in collaboration with the Access Fund to preserve access and conserve the climbing environment at the local or regional level. The Access Fund has provided organizational start-up assistance, project grants, and resources to many of these groups. LCO's also support the Access Fund through events and membership drives. To add your LCO to this list, email deanne@accessfund.org.

For links to websites of these LCOs, visit www.accessfund.org/whoweare/who_lco.html

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CRAG-VT
Carolina Climbers Coalition
Gunks Climbers Coalition
Kentucky Rock and Sports Trust
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Ohio Climbers Association
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Ragged Mountain Foundation
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Southeastern Climbers Coalition
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