

VERTICAL **TIMES**

THE NATIONAL PUBLICATION OF THE ACCESS FUND



POWERED BY CLIMBERS



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SPRING 2008 • Volume 80

introduction



On behalf of everyone at the Access Fund and climbers across the nation, I want to thank you for your support in 2007. With your help, we accomplished some great things last year. We hosted a National Climbing Management Summit that attracted dozens of land managers from across the country to discuss and share “climbing management practices that work” and thus reduce the number of unreasonable climbing restrictions. We represented climber interests at the 2007 Federal Recreation Director Summit in Washington, DC, attended by high level land management officials from all five national agencies. We supported 129 Adopt-a-Crags and the formation of new Local Climbing Organizations, which now total 70. We supported local efforts across the country from San Diego, California to Erving, Massachusetts.

Looking ahead at the coming year, there is still plenty to do. Many important climbing areas require constant attention, such as Yosemite, the Red River Gorge, the Phoenix Arizona area and Hueco Tanks just to name a few. This past February, I visited Hueco Tanks in Texas and the Oak Flat/Queen Creek area in Arizona. By partnering with local climbers, working with land managers and engaging other parties (including billion dollar mining companies), we do our best to ensure a positive outcome for climbers. And we always need your help.

One of the best ways you can help is to keep yourself and your climbing partners informed. Aside from reading this publication, you can sign up for our monthly E-News by visiting www.accessfund.org/enews.

If you're already signed up, then please forward the link to your climbing friends. Anyone can receive E-News, members and non-members alike. We put a lot of effort into E-News; it's a tightly produced email packed with national and local information. Spending 10 minutes a month reading E-News will keep you informed about what is going on and will let you know when we need your help. Our recent letter writing campaign to support 1872 Mining Reform is just one example of the kind of activism E-News makes possible.

You will notice some changes in the *Vertical Times* this year. We're moving to four issues a year instead of six. This change will save us money, use less paper, and give us more time to produce an even better and more informative publication for our members. Each quarter we'll address a different access issue facing climbers. This issue we're featuring Laura Snider's excellent article on raptors. We hope you like the change. Since you'll be getting the *Vertical Times* less often this year, signing up for E-News is even more important.

Another feature we're adding is a letters to the editor section. We want the *Vertical Times* to be more interactive and address issues that are important to you, our members. Let us know what's on your mind by writing to media@accessfund.org. Even if we don't print your letter in the *Vertical Times*, we guarantee you'll get a personal response.

Thanks again for your support in 2007. Have a great spring.



Kevin Brown enjoys last light in El Cap Meadow | © Kevin Steele / Aurora

Help Preserve Climbing & Bouldering throughout the Desert and Mountains of the West

Reforming the 1872 Mining Law will finally give recreation values a voice in how our federal public lands are managed.

Imagine being camped out at your favorite desert climbing destination. Now picture yourself looking over the darkened mesas at the blinking lights of drilling rigs instead of the universe above. This may soon be a reality as there are over 32,000 new uranium claims within a stone's throw of legendary climbing venues such as Indian Creek, Paradox Valley, and Canyonlands National Park.

These outdated laws have no regard for modern day outdoor values or the economic and environmental future of the West.

Fueled by record-high metal prices, an additional 57,000 new claims have been staked throughout the mountains of the West. As climbers, we all need metal. Responsible hardrock mining remains an important activity.

The problem is that 19th century values and policies still govern 21st century high tech mining practices. The laws adopted in 1872 to govern prospecting with a pick and shovel, and to help settle the West before the invention of the light bulb, are the same laws in use today. These outdated laws have no regard for modern day outdoor values or the economic and environmental future of the West.

Late last year, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a bill to reform our nation's policy on hardrock mining. Right now the U.S. Senate is considering reform as well.

Please take action and let your Senators know what you think.

Follow this link: www.capwiz.com/outdooralliance to conveniently generate a unique letter that you can email directly to both of your Senators.

Looking for more information or motivation to write? The Access Fund, as a founding member of the Outdoor Alliance, recently premiered an excellent six and half-minute video that reminds us what is at stake and inspires us to take action.

www.youtube.com/user/outdooralliance



| © Celin Serbo

| Roadless Area Protection

outdoor alliance

Outdoor Alliance Takes Strong Stand on Colorado and Idaho Roadless Area Protection

Seven years ago, citizens from across the nation flooded the U.S. Forest Service with public comments in support of protecting at-risk backcountry roadless areas—the last pristine but unprotected lands in the National Forest System. With new plans for roadless area management in Colorado and Idaho up for review, a national coalition of climbers, hikers, paddlers, mountain bikers, and backcountry skiers is speaking out for systematic protection of roadless areas as a vital component of federal public lands policy.



Richard Leverage and Kevin Brown relax during a winter ascent of “Electric Ladyland”.
| © Kevin Steele / Aurora Photos

Representatives from the Outdoor Alliance (www.outdooralliance.net) a coalition of six national human-powered recreation groups, including the Access Fund, say that state and federal governments should not consider opening these pristine roadless areas to industrial special interests. The ancient forests, peaks, and wild rivers in roadless areas contain some of the best outdoor recreation in the nation—climbing in Idaho’s—Selkirk Mountains, hiking the Centennial Trail, skiing the Payette River Valley, mountain biking Colorado’s Rabbit Ears Pass outside Steamboat Springs, and paddling the Animas and its tributaries around Durango.

“These wild areas provide unmatched hiking, climbing, biking, skiing, paddling, and other recreational opportunities for millions of Americans.”

“These wild areas provide unparalleled hiking, climbing, biking, skiing, paddling and, other recreational opportunities for millions of Americans,” notes Thomas O’Keefe, Pacific Northwest Stewardship Director for American Whitewater and leader of the Outdoor Alliance’s roadless protection campaign. “Attempts to open pristine backcountry to industrial development underscore the need for reliable, nationally consistent protections for all of America’s last roadless areas. These national forests are an important part of the nation’s heritage and way of life.”

In addition to recreational opportunities, roadless areas provide clean drinking water for millions of people and contain intact ecosystems where everything from aquatic insects to grizzly bears thrive in habitats undisturbed by centuries of western expansion and development.

“The Forest Service heeded overwhelming public opinion seven years ago and rightly decided to protect pristine lands, intact ecosystems, and world-class human-powered outdoor recreation,” explains Adam Cramer, Outdoor Alliance’s Policy Architect. “The Outdoor Alliance is confident that the American people, particularly those who know these places first-hand, will deliver the same answer about how to treat our roadless areas in Colorado and Idaho—leave them the way they are—perfect.”

For more information on the Access Fund’s role in the Outdoor Alliance, email: jason@accessfund.org.



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*Please help strengthen our voice by encouraging your climbing partners to join the Access Fund.
Visit: www.accessfund.org/support*

Roy Smith and Paul Hewitt on pitch
29 of the Triple Direct, El Cap.
| © Kevin Steele / Aurora Photos

Cranking Up and Diving Down

Turf Sharing Between Climbers and Raptors



By Laura Snider
Photographs by Gary Hartley

Hints of spring's inevitable arrival are beginning to erode winter's icy rule. The days are stretching longer leaving more time to squeeze in an after-work bouldering session, warm breezes are beginning to tease off fluffy belay jackets, and the snow seems to be at least considering the idea of melting. But the renewed spring fever for climbing on sunny stone is always tempered by the closure of some of the country's most sought-after climbs.

This time of year, male peregrine and prairie falcons have picked out a nest site and performed mind-bending aerial acrobatics—which would surely make Project Bandaloop swoon with envy—to attract their mates. Falcons prefer to scrape their nests out of gravel on cliff ledges, and they know how to pick a good cliff.

One pair likes to nest on the stunning arête of the Naked Edge (5.11b) in Colorado's Eldorado Canyon, for example, while another pair frequently perches near the Original Route (5.11a) on the runout bulges of Whitesides in North Carolina. When raptors and climbers have the same taste in rock, the birds usually win. If a falcon—or a golden eagle or other bird of prey for that matter—chooses your “proj” for its nest, chances are you'll have to wait until the fall to tick it off your list.

Peregrine Falcon photographs were featured courtesy of Gary Hartley. Taken in conjunction with the New River Gorge Peregrine Falcon Program. www.garyhartley.com

THE EASIEST CHOICE

No climber who is lucky enough to see a peregrine dive for prey at speeds of over 200 mph will forget the experience. But lately, the Access Fund has found itself stuck between a bird and a hard place, battling blanket cliff closures that are based neither on sound science nor confirmed nesting sites.

“The problem is, a lot of times, land managers are trying to balance many different priorities at once,” says Access Fund's Executive Director, Brady Robinson. “When there are birds around, the easiest thing to do is just close the place.”

Lately, the Access Fund has found itself stuck between a bird and a hard place, battling blanket cliff closures that are based neither on sound science nor confirmed nesting sites.

Climbers and the Access Fund have a rich history of supporting efforts to protect peregrines and other raptors. At the New River Gorge, for example, climbers helped place baby peregrines on cliff ledges to bring them back to the West Virginia sandstone; and in Wyoming, climbers have provided the Forest Service with valuable data about where the birds are nesting. But, land managers, who are often understaffed and under-funded, sometimes close entire areas at the first squawk of a falcon.

“The Access Fund supports reasonable bird closures,” Robinson says. “Our job is to help land managers make sound decisions.”

POPULATION BOOM

Raptor closures impact crags from the Sierras to the Adirondacks and most places in between. The birds aren't finicky about the rock; granite, sandstone, limestone, and even skyscrapers and Interstate highway bridges can make equally appealing homes.

Peregrine-climber interactions have grown over the last couple of decades as populations of both have exploded. While Warren Harding was busy drilling his way up El Cap's Dawn Wall in 1970, peregrine falcons were being added to the first incarnation of what is now called the Endangered Species Act. Harding likely wouldn't have seen the crow-sized falcons diving off the top of El Cap because peregrine populations had steeply declined at that time, with only 10 to 20 percent of their original numbers still living in the West.

"The Access Fund supports reasonable bird closures," Robinson says. "Our job is to help land managers make sound decisions."

The Eastern U.S. was worse off, having lost all of its peregrines by the mid 1970s. The culprit was not loss of habitat, as is the case with many animals on the endangered species list. Instead, many birds of prey fell victim to DDT, one of the most effective and damaging pesticides ever created. Swiss chemist Paul Muller discovered the "miracle" pesticide in 1939, and won a Nobel Prize for his invention in 1948. As it turned out, the "miracle" was equally adept at killing birds—by weakening their already fragile egg shells—as killing mosquitoes.



After DDT was banned in 1972, peregrines made a complete recovery and were removed from protection under the Endangered Species Act in 1999. Now, between 2,000 and 3,000 nesting pairs of peregrines live in North America, up from just over 300 in the mid 1970s. So, with 10 times the birds, and likely much more than 10 times the climbers, raptor closures have spread as climbers and birds both fight for a finite amount of vertical estate

PLUNGING TO THEIR DEATH

The presence of nearby climbers can negatively affect nesting birds. Severely agitated birds may abandon their nests before the eggs hatch. And once the fledglings have broken out of their shells, the added threat of climbers could tempt a baby bird to try and fly before it's ready, potentially plunging to its death.



A 2004 study by a team of Italian scientists found that the breeding success of nesting peregrines at cliffs also used by climbers was only 40 percent, compared to 79 percent at undisturbed sites. But it's less clear how close the climbers have to be before the birds are affected.

Peregrines are known for their tolerance of loud, busy places. The birds frequently nest in urban areas on skyscrapers and bridges. Before the recovery project in the New River Gorge, more than 20 pairs of peregrines lived in Virginia and West Virginia—with nearly every single one nesting on a manmade—structure.

But nesting on a skyscraper—with the bustle of human life far below—is different from coming face to beak with a climber on the second pitch of a classic route. Bill Heinrich, species restoration manager at the Peregrine Fund, which was responsible for breeding thousands of peregrines and releasing them into the wild during the 1970s and 1980s, says while there isn't a set distance that managers can mark off around nesting sites to keep birds safe, he still doesn't advocate wholesale closures.

"The best thing would be to leave (cliff closures) to the judgment of the climbers," says Heinrich. "For example, if a climber in Rocky Mountain National Park finds a pair of peregrines on a cliff face and he seems to be disturbing them, he should climb down and leave them alone."

Heinrich says that, ideally, climbers would alert land managers about specific climbs to close. That approach, of course, assumes all climbers are responsible. But it also reflects the reality of most human-animal interactions in the wild. Most folks who see a black bear on the trail back away or hike around—and the trail is rarely closed.

THE LEGAL AUTHORITY

Black bears, of course, aren't endangered. But then, neither are peregrines, and that is one of the cruxes of the situation. What is the legal authority today for protecting nesting birds? Jason Keith, the Access Fund's policy director, is wrestling with that question right now as he works with San Diego climbers to keep crags in Cleveland National Forest—home to El Cajon Mountain—open.

The Forest Service is proposing widespread closures to protect prairie falcons and golden eagles, despite the fact that neither are on any federal or state listing that requires management intervention.

According to Keith, the MBTA was designed as authority to prosecute hunters and falconers that kill migratory birds, and does not give land managers the legal authority to close climbing areas to protect non-endangered birds.

Golden eagles and prairie falcons are not on the endangered species list, but they are still protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, or MBTA, which was passed in 1918 to "put an end to commercial trade in birds and their feathers." The act is still leveraged by federal agencies to keep those iconic birds thriving.

The MBTA, however, also applies to the raptor's less famous bird brothers, including blue-footed boobies, black-capped chickadees, American crows, wood ducks and—Yosemite's most mischievous critters—Steller's jays.

According to Keith, the MBTA was designed as authority to prosecute hunters and falconers that kill migratory birds and does not give land managers the legal authority to close climbing areas to protect non-endangered birds.

"They could use this law to close any climbing area in the country," he said. "When there are bogus closures, what they're doing is losing the support of the public users that would otherwise be sensitive to nesting raptors. Climbers could be their best allies."



The Access Fund is concerned land managers lose credibility when personal opinion replaces the best available science and established management practices with regard to wildlife protection.

SAVED BY CLIMBERS

In the 1980s, climbers were birds' best friends, if you ask Rob Roy Ramey, who has a PhD in ecology and frequently comments on the Endangered Species Act. Ramey worked for the Peregrine Fund from 1981 to 1985, climbing rocks to place captive-bred peregrine fledglings in new nests.

"They were saved by climbers like me," said Ramey, whose comments on other endangered species have occasionally kicked up controversy among other ecologists. "You don't want to have an active nest site on a climbing route, but it might be that closing a couple routes on either side is enough."

Ramey can tell tales of climbing into peregrine nests on the flanks of Half Dome with the likes of Yvon Chouinard and John "Yabo" Yablonski to deliver chicks to nests or pick up eggs that could be incubated with a higher success rate elsewhere.

The Access Fund is concerned land managers lose credibility when personal opinion replaces the best available science and established management practices with regard to wildlife protection.

"Yabo and I spent six days on the face of Half Dome to get to a peregrine nest," he said. "There we were on this nightmare mission—two mad men on this outrageous climb."

Ramey's take on saving falcons 20 years later is more laid back than the land managers that once allowed him to scale walls with baby birds.

"Having invaded their territory to save them, I'd say the whole thing is overblown and that closures are much more extensive than necessary," he said.

ACCESS FUND VIEWPOINT

Not all wildlife closures are created equal. The Access Fund works hard to strike a balance between keeping climbing areas open and helping to protect cliff-nesting birds by respecting appropriate and reasonable closures based on sound science.

There are many examples of cliff-nesting birds and climbers coexisting and respecting each others' territory. Adhering to closures is paramount to maintaining climbing opportunities now and in the future. If a closure is questionable, the Access Fund has the necessary resources to start you down the path to resolution.

Visit the Access Fund's closures and restrictions database for a list of the known closures and restrictions affecting your climbing: www.accessfund.org/access. If you have updates or need more information contact Charlie Boas, Access Fund Grassroots Coordinator charlie@accessfund.org or 303-545-6772 x 105.

If you're interested in obtaining a copy of the Access Fund's *Raptors and Climbers: Guidance for Managing Technical Climbing to Protect Raptor Nest Sites* handbook visit our website at: www.accessfund.org/pubs/index.php, or contact Diana Vernazza, Access Fund Access Director, diana@accessfund.org or 303-545-6772 x 112.

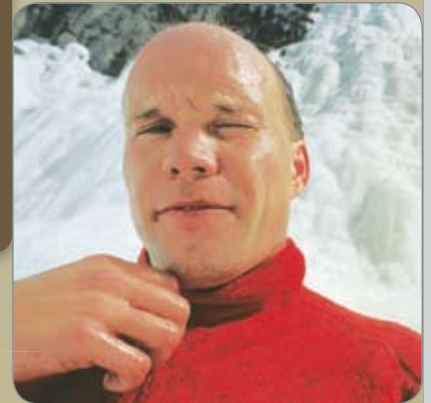
For more information on the closures in Cleveland National Forest visit Access Fund Affiliate, Allied Climbers of San Diego's website, www.alliedclimbers.org.



Logan Talbott greeting the sunrise on Dolt Tower, El Capitan. | © Kevin Steele / Aurora Photos

Local Climbing Organizations (LCOs) and Access Fund Regional Coordinators (RCs) are the heart and soul of the Access Fund's grassroots network. The 70+ affiliated LCOs and 30+ RCs around the country are the first line of defense when access issues emerge, demonstrating how acting locally moves climbers closer to realizing a shared vision of success.

The profiles on the following pages highlight the importance of acting locally and supporting nationally. We hope they inspire you in your work to keep climbing areas open and conserve the climbing environment at your local crag and across the country.



An Interview with Joe Josephson, Access Fund's 2007 Reese Martin Memorial Award Recipient

Joe Josephson is the Access Fund's RC for Southwest Montana and is a fixture in American climbing. Here's a recent interview with Joe that "breaks the ice" with this hard working advocate.

AF: What do you do for a living?

Joe: I do a combination of things, the primary being owner of First Ascent Press which publishes guidebooks and other outdoor related books and maps. I still do a variety of freelance writing and guiding for Montana Alpine Guides. It is your typical hand to mouth existence most dirtbag climbers can relate to.

AF: What do you do for the Access Fund?

Joe: I'm the Regional Coordinator (RC) for Southwest Montana but am also working quite a bit with the Western Montana RC, Steve Porcella, to prevent one of the state's best crags, Lost Horse Canyon, from getting quarried.

I'm also currently working with the Access Fund and the Outdoor Alliance to reform the 1872 Mining Laws. We've all seen the effect of mining out there. But those days of digging minerals up with a pick and shovel are over. It is frightening how modern methods of mining like acid in-situ leaching are going to completely transform treasured places like Indian Creek, Paradox Valley and the entire Colorado Plateau. Combined with the preferential treatment afforded the mining industry under 1872 Law, climbers need to be VERY concerned.

AF: You also work with the Southwest Montana Climbers Coalition. What do you do there?

Joe: I am the Secretary for the Southwest Montana Climbers Coalition (SMCC), an all volunteer group which does a wide variety of climbing related advocacy and work including numerous trail projects and access issues. Primarily my work with the SMCC has revolved around protecting winter access to Hyalite Canyon near Bozeman. With over 150 routes in two-square miles, this is the most concentrated, naturally formed ice climbing in North America. Last year the Forest Service proposed to close the road in winter which would effectively eliminate access to the ice. Since then I've been working hundreds of hours building a coalition with other users like skiers, getting the media and local government involved, and meeting with and educating the USFS about ice climbing and the importance of Hyalite to the recreational community and quality of life in Bozeman.

AF: How did SMCC get started?

Joe: There was always a core group of local climbers, including Tom Kalakay and Bill Dockins, who had worked on a few small things here and there. But SMCC really coalesced as a group four or five years ago when we negotiated an easement and built a trail around private property to provide access to Allenspur, a nice limestone crag near Livingston on BLM land.

AF: What are the current issues in SW Montana?

Joe: Hyalite continues to be an ongoing effort, although we currently have a great relationship with the Gallatin National Forest and they are committed to working with us to accomplish a number of mutually beneficial goals, including getting the road improved and plowed all winter long.

There are still some issues surrounding Allenspur. As it turns out, part of the cliff is privately owned and the new owner wants to subdivide it and basically keep climbers out.

The SMCC is working closely with a local land trust, the USFS, the Montana Department of Transportation, Burlington Northern Railroad, and private land owners to help sort out a land swap that will save important wildlife corridors from potential development and eventually give climbers legal parking and access to a series of limestone towers with hundreds of potential routes.

And we are trying to gain access to one of the best bouldering areas in the Northern Rockies by working with the land owner, considering conservation easements, and perhaps establishing some sort of county or community park. This would be a major *coup d'état*.

AF: What can someone do to help with climbing access in Southwest Montana?

Joe: Come climbing here, particularly the ice climbing in Hyalite. We need climbers using the road and being good stewards and neighbors to other users. Come and check out the great Bozeman Ice Festival—one of the longest running in the country—the first weekend in December. All the proceeds go to improving Hyalite access and building trails to the crags.

AF: What's your favorite place for *après*-climbing food? Where is it located?

Joe: As much as I love a burger and a beer, there are a ton of places to get that. If I had to pick one stand out it would be The Night Spot. This vegetarian, hole-in-the-wall, bohemian joint in Livingston is open late and has awesome, flavorful, home cooked dishes.

AF: When you have a day off, what do you do? What is your non-climbing guilty pleasure?

Joe: Day off. What's that?



allied climbers of san diego

The Allied Climbers of San Diego (ACSD) is an LCO that emerged in response to the threatened closure of one of Southern California's most valued local crags. While that crag remains threatened, the formation of ACSD is a proactive step that gives climbers a voice in important land management decisions

Todd Smith, Volunteer Chair, ACSD

Hometown: San Diego

Favorite Climbing Spot: Indian Creek, Utah

Regular stomping ground: Corte Madera (in San Diego)

AF: What's the brief history of the Allied Climbers of San Diego?

ACSD: In March of 2007, Jeff Brown organized a select group of individuals from a broad spectrum of the climbing community, including representatives of San Diego's three major crags, to help form a non-profit that would specifically address unnecessary raptor nesting closures proposed by the Cleveland National Forest (CNF). These closures threatened to shut down 70% of San Diego's climbing during its only climbing season. San Diego did not have an existing climbing advocacy group representing the climbing community at the time, so ACSD emerged out of these circumstances. However, we also quickly recognized a need to educate the general public on what rock climbing is and to establish meaningful stewardship projects in order to positively engage the climbing community and reach out to new climbers.

AF: What are the current access issues going on in San Diego?

ACSD: Currently we are still working with CNF to come up with a reasonable solution to the proposed closures. Two of San Diego's premier crags are being threatened with closure for unjustified reasons, which could result in the loss of access to 70% of San Diego's established routes. Eagle Peak and Corte Madera host multi-pitch sport climbing in a backcountry setting, on south facing, high quality rock. This makes these crags one of the few areas in the country where you can climb multi-pitch sport routes in the middle of the winter and still be warm. They truly are national climbing resources that are relatively unknown in the climbing community.

AF: Are there recent developments with those issues?

ACSD: Right now we are patiently waiting on the release of documents from the CNF after our initial FOIA



James Adamson makes contact with the Stove Legs on The Nose. | © Kevin Steele / Aurora Photos

(Freedom of Information Act) request. The CNF is in the process of doing an Environmental Assessment of the climbing areas under review, which ACSD will then assess and comment on. We have been working closely with the Access Fund to ensure that all relevant documents are released and reviewed and that the ACSD is properly represented and supported during this tedious process.

AF: What sort of events and projects does ACSD host?

ACSD: This past year we had our Grand Opening, using it as a fundraiser and membership drive. We had an amazing dinner (compliments of a founding member's restaurant), a great slideshow, and awesome prizes. It went really well, so we plan on hosting an Annual ACSD celebration that will include a fundraiser and membership drive to gain new members, raise much needed funds, and thank our current members for their hard work. We plan on expanding things a bit by having additional gatherings at more informal settings as well, such as an annual Valley of The Moon climbing event to introduce people to climbing and have a good time. We also try to coordinate four service projects each year at local crags. Last year we did three, and we have already hosted a successful Adopt-A-Crag in Mission Gorge this last January.

AF: What can someone do to help climbing access in San Diego?

ACSD: I would encourage everyone to go to the ACSD website and check us out. You can fill out a membership form and sign up for our e-mail list as well. We also always accept individual donations. If you are a corporation and would like to help support our fundraiser or provide a grant, please contact Jeff Brown through the website. If you have a special interest in being involved in one of ACSD's committees, please contact us through the website. We can always use extra volunteers! Check out: www.alliedclimbers.org.

AF: Parting thoughts?

ACSD: If your local community does not have a climbing club or organization, help form one! The more that climbers come together to address access issues as a whole, the more weight we will carry in public land management decisions, specifically around recreational use. It's our job to help educate the public about what climbing is and to help advocate for the climbing community. If your community does have a LCO, join it! Volunteer for them and get involved. And most importantly, join the Access Fund!



Approaching El Cap
| © Kevin Steele / Aurora Photos

mid-atlantic climbers



The Mid-Atlantic Climbers (MAC) is a newly formed LCO started by two Access Fund Regional Coordinators. MAC was formed to provide a platform for local climbers to play a more proactive role in addressing issues that affect all climbers in the greater DC area.

Thomson Ling and Ocean Eiler

Hometown: Washington, DC

Favorite Climbing Spot: Great Falls, VA & Northwest Branch, MD

Regular stomping ground: The many climbing areas in Greater Washington, DC

AF: What's the brief history of your LCO?

MAC: Established in the Fall of 2007, Mid-Atlantic Climbers (MAC) is a grassroots organization dedicated to ensuring responsible climbing and access in Greater Washington, DC. To this end, MAC endeavors to create a climbing community that will foster responsible recreation through service projects, education and outreach. We are currently working on several Adopt-a-Crag events in the coming year, putting together a clean climbing presentation for the greater DC climbing community, and working with land managers to ensure local climbing areas stay open. MAC also supports the Access Fund by promoting the goals of the Access Fund locally.

AF: What are the current access issues confronted by the Mid-Atlantic Climbers?

MAC: We are working with land managers at Great Falls Park and Shenandoah National Park as they put together their management plans. We are maintaining connections between local climbers, climbing organizations, and park staff to ensure that climbing remains open at these locations.

AF: Are there recent developments with those issues?

MAC: We are planning a new Adopt-a-Crag event at Northwest Branch, MD, a first for this crag. While climbing at this bouldering area is open, this project will ensure climbing continues. This event is also centrally located near Washington, DC, providing exposure to legislators and media. These connections will help keep dialog open for any issues that may occur in the future.

AF: What sort of events and projects does your LCO host?

MAC: We plan to host 4 Adopt-a-Crag events in 2008. We are also working on a presentation about "clean climbing practices" that we hope to present to local climbing schools, gyms, and climbing clubs to educate them about minimum impact climbing in Greater Washington, DC. Finally, we plan to support local climbing events such as HERA Climb for Life and local climbing competitions.

AF: What can someone do to help climbing access in the Greater Washington D.C. area?

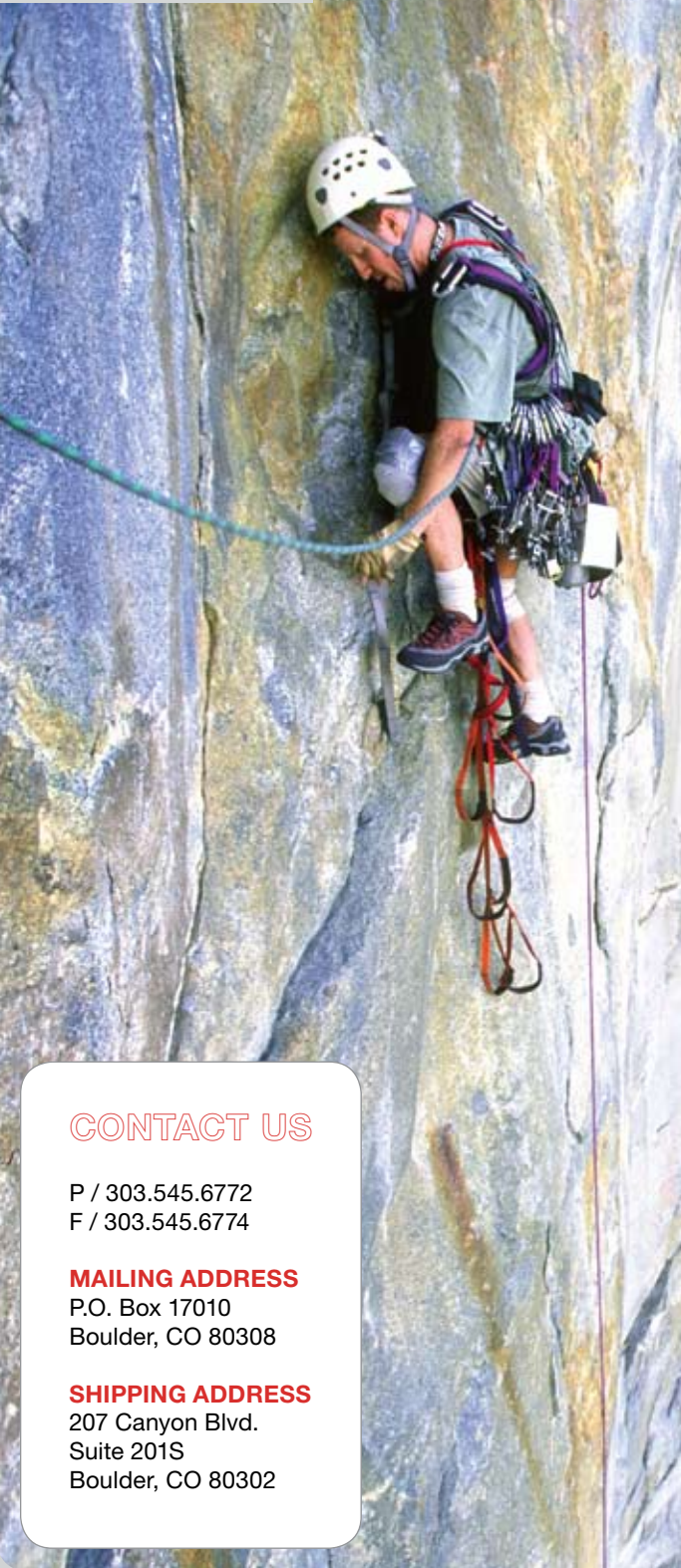
MAC: Visit our webpage at www.dcmetroclimbing.com and check out what we are doing. Attend one of our events or simply learn about the access issues in your area.

AF: Parting thoughts?

MAC: To anyone who is thinking about starting a LCO: embrace the impossible because otherwise you will never really find out what is possible. Oh yeah, and keep smiling.

kevin steele

Paul Hewitt on "Wet Denim Daydream" on Leaning Tower.
| © Kevin Steele / Aurora Photos



As you turn the pages of this month's *Vertical Times*, you will see a collection of amazing images donated by Access Fund media partner Kevin Steele.

Kevin Steele creates adventure and outdoor lifestyle images for commercial clients, magazines and stock. Steele started shooting in 10th grade and climbing shortly after that.

As a physics student in Upstate NY he frequented the Gunks, the rock and ice of the Adirondacks, and North Conway, followed by the Alps and Alaska. With his wife-to-be, he loaded up the Jeep CJ and headed west to California where he fell in love with big wall exposure. On his first trip to Yosemite, Steele arrived after dark and woke up pre-dawn to climb Astroman, not seeing the full bulk of El Capitan in the distance until after he had started climbing. His favorite experience has been the FA of the Crimson Wall on Keeler Needle with Kevin Brown and Mike Carville, although topping out on the Cassin with Rob Raker is a close second. Many expected he would not survive Raker's appetite once food became scarce.

Steele's primary artistic influences have been Jay Maisel, Galen Rowell, Rembrandt, David Burnett, and every issue of *National Geographic*. He tries to convey emotion in his images, working with light and capturing the gestures that communicate the experience. Steele's most interesting assignment was a recent commercial shoot roped up on the faces of the presidents at Mount Rushmore.

Arriving in California, Steele worked at Chouinard/Black Diamond—breaking things (as QA Manager)—before joining a small automation company (until it got too big). Steele lives in Santa Barbara with his wife, Linda, and sons Nico and Aidan. Steele and Steve Tucker co-authored and published the *Climbers Guide to Santa Barbara, Ventura and San Luis Obispo*. His stock images are distributed by Aurora's Outdoor Collection and Getty Images. His work can be seen at www.kevsteele.com.

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The Access Fund Announces a New Program for Youth Climbing Teams

The Access Fund is pleased to announce the launch of a new program, the boulderProject TeamWorks competition.

BoulderProject TeamWorks educates young indoor climbers on the transition from inside to outside environments by focusing on Leave No Trace ethics and responsible rock climbing habits. The program seeks to foster a sense of stewardship encouraging climbers to conserve climbing areas and keep them open.

With the cooperation of team coaches, indoor youth climbing gym teams will amass points by hosting or participating in Access Fund Adopt-a-Crag events. As a reward for their stewardship efforts, **the top 10 teams will win a cash grant between \$250 and \$2000 for their youth program.**

“In addition to the \$2000 top prize, the first place team will also receive the “Golden Toothbrush” award presented by REI and a full page write-up in Urban Climber Magazine. Our partners in this project have really stepped up.” says Charlie Boas, the Access Fund’s Grassroots Coordinator who heads the boulderProject TeamWorks and Adopt-a-Crag programs.

BoulderProject TeamWorks would not be possible without the generous support of REI, The North Face, USA Climbing, and Skram Media. Additional support provided by CLIF Bar, Nalgene, Leave No Trace, and Routsetter.com

For more information or to sign your team up, **visit www.boulderproject.org/teamworks**. The TeamWorks resource package includes Adopt-a-Crag information, Access Fund route setting tape, and Access Fund logo posters.



Lynne Siodmak entertains on the banjo in JTree.
| © Kevin Steele / Aurora Photos

The Access Fund
ways to give

Each year 15,000+ Access Fund members, friends, corporate partners, and volunteers give their time and financial support to keep climbing areas open and to conserve the climbing environment. The impact of each of these individuals and groups can be seen at climbing areas throughout the country. We want to thank you for your support.

As you're planning your support for 2008, listed below are three ways you can help make a difference today.

- Become a monthly donor. Give a little each month to make a bigger impact.
- Give a memorial gift in memory of a friend or family member. Memorialize that person's love for climbing and their interest in keeping climbing areas open.
- Check with your employer to see if you are eligible for your company's matching gift program. Many companies will match your charitable contributions to select organizations.

Support in any capacity is greatly appreciated. For more information on ways to support the work of the Access Fund, visit our website at: www.accessfund.org or contact our Development Director, Jason Smith at: smith@accessfund.org or (303) 545-6772 x113.

HAS YOUR ADDRESS CHANGED?

Let us know—email us at
addresschange@accessfund.org

YOU DON'T GET E-NEWS?

Sign up for the monthly email that keeps you up to date on issues that affect your climbing future.
www.accessfund.org/enews

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Access Fund Corporate Partners 2008

These partners are businesses that put their money where their mouth is to support the Future of Climbing. Please consider the important contribution these partners make to your climbing future. They support the Access Fund and you. We encourage you to support them.

TITANIUM — \$50,000+

Haynes and Boone LLP - 2003

DIAMOND PLUS — \$20,000+

Black Diamond Equipment - 1991
Eastern Mountain Sports - 1993
REI - 1991

DIAMOND MEDIA — \$20,000+

Alpinist - 2003
Backpacker Magazine - 2004
Climbing - 1991
Rock & Ice - 1993
Urban Climber Magazine - 2004

PLATINUM PLUS — \$15,000+

Mountain Gear - 1995
Petzl/Charlet Moser - 1991
prAna - 1995

PLATINUM — \$10,000+

CLIF Bar - 1995
Patagonia - 1992
The North Face - 1995

GOLD PLUS — \$7,500+

Amadeus Consulting Group - 2004
Archer Law Offices P.C. - 2003
ASHA Carpets - 2007
Boulder Rock Club &
Colorado Mountain School - 1996
GORE-TEX® products - 1991
Mountain Khakis - 2006
Nalgene - 1992
Outdoor Research - 1999
Touchstone Climbing Inc. - 1998
Trango USA &
Stonewear Designs - 1992

GOLD — \$5,000+

American Bouldering Series - 2000
Big Up Productions - 2003
Campmor - 1991
La Sportiva - 1994
New England Ropes/Maxim - 1992
Patagonia - 1992
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SILVER — \$2,500+

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Mountain Hardwear - 1996
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New Belgium Brewing Co. - 2000
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MAJOR — \$1,000+

bluetrope consulting - 2003
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Advanced Base Camp - 1992
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MOUNTAIN GEAR

Mountain Gear Presents: Red Rock Rendezvous

Join the Access Fund March 28-30 at the Rock Canyon National Conservation Area near Las Vegas, NV for the Red Rock Rendezvous.

Presented by Mountain Gear and sponsored by The North Face, the festival features an all-star line-up of expert climbing guides to lead the event's scheduled clinics. Clinic guides include Access Fund Ambassadors. Majka Burhardt, Tommy Caldwell, Malcolm Daly, Mica Dash, Beth Rodden, and Matt Segal among many other internationally renowned athletes.

The Red Rock Rendezvous benefits the Access Fund and other local and national non-profit organizations, including the American Safe Climbing Association, the American Alpine Club, Friends of Red Rocks, and the Las Vegas Climbers Liaison Council.

For more information visit www.mgear.com/rrr.

The Access Fund has grown with prAna over the years and we would like to recognize their commitment to doing "good" business.

Recently, prAna opened a flagship store in Boulder, CO. While you can find the latest and greatest they have to offer, you will also see a model in sustainability. The store's interior is constructed using reclaimed materials from the floor and walls to the fixtures and art. About the only thing that isn't recycled is the forward thinking that it takes to pull off a project like this.

We're proud to have prAna backing the mission of the Access Fund and playing an active role in keeping climbing areas open and conserving the climbing environment.

www.pрана.com



Eastern Mountain Sports Tips the Scales on Support

The Access Fund would like to recognize Eastern Mountain Sports for their significant contribution to the American climbing community in 2007.

The Access Fund received a total of \$36,000 from Eastern Mountain Sports that was generated by two sales where 1% of the proceeds were split between the Access Fund and the Conservation Alliance. This represents the Access Fund's largest cash contribution of 2007.

This action helped provide crucial funds to allow the Access Fund to carry out its work on behalf of the climbing community. "The Eastern Mountain Sports sales underscore why we ask members to consider supporting our corporate partners. Our partners support our mission because they understand the important role that we play in assuring there are places to climb. By partnering with the Access Fund, they are giving back to their customers." Says Robb Shurr, Access Fund Director of Marketing and Business Development.

Please consider our Corporate Partners when you're looking to make your next climbing or outdoor related purchase.



Log on to our membership at
www.accessfund.org/membership
Have your ID# handy and get special member only discounts!

ROCK&ICE
GET 30% OFF

Climbing
MAGAZINE
GET 20% OFF

URBANCLIMBER
MAGAZINE
GET 15% OFF

Alpinist
GET 15% OFF

local climbing organizations and affiliates

A local climbing organization (LCO) is an organization, association, or access committee working primarily or exclusively to keep climbing areas open, conserve the climbing environment, and promote responsible climbing. LCOs are the liaison between the climbing community and their local landmanagers and landowners. Affiliates (*) are LCOs who have joined the Access Fund Affiliate Program. If you are an LCO listed below and not an Access Fund Affiliate, please contact Charlie Boas, Grassroots Coordinator, at 303.545.6772 x105 or charlie@accessfund.org.

Alabama

Southeastern Climbers Coalition*

Arkansas

Arkansas Climbers' Coalition*
Southeastern Climbers Coalition*

Arizona

Arizona Mountaineering Club*
Friends of Queen Creek*
Northern Arizona Climbers Coalition*
Prescott Climbers Coalition*

California

Allied Climbers of San Diego*
Cragmont Climbing Club
Eastern Sierra Climbers Coalition*
Friends of Joshua Tree*
Friends of Pinnacles
Friends of Williamson Rock*
Southern Sierra Climbers Association*
Yosemite Climbing Association*

Colorado

4 Corners Climbing Coalition*
Access Colorado*
Action Committee for Eldorado*
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Roaring Fork Climbers Coalition*

Connecticut

Ragged Mountain Foundation*

DC

Mid-Atlantic Climbers*

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Kootenai Climbers*

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Illinois Climbers Association*

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Southeastern Climbers Coalition*

Massachusetts

Appalachian Mountain Club
Boston Chapter*
Western Massachusetts Climbers Coalition*

Michigan

Grand Ledges Climbers Coalition

Minnesota

Minnesota Climbers Association*

Missouri

Climbers Alliance of Mid-Missouri*
Kansas City Climbing Club*

Montana

Bitterroot Climbers' Coalition*
Southwest Montana Climbers Coalition

North Carolina

Boone Climbers Coalition*
Carolina Climbers Coalition*
Pisgah Climbers Association*
Southeastern Climbers Coalition*

New Hampshire

Rumney Climbers Association*

New Jersey

Access NJ*

New Mexico

CRAG-New Mexico*

Nevada

Las Vegas Climbers Liaison Council*

New York

Adirondack Mountaineering Coalition*
Gunks Climbers Coalition*

Ohio

Ohio Climbers Association*

Oklahoma

Chandler Park Climbers Coalition*
Wichita Mountains Climbers Coalition*

Oregon

AAC - Oregon Section, Access Committee*
Mazamas
Smith Rock Group*

Pennsylvania

Climbing Conservancy of Central Pennsylvania*
Lancaster Climbing Club - Access Project*

South Carolina

Carolina Climbers Coalition*
Pisgah Climbers Association*
Southeastern Climbers Coalition*

South Dakota

Black Hills Climbers Coalition*

Tennessee

Southeastern Climbers Coalition*

Texas

Central Texas Mountaineers*
Climbers of Hueco Tanks*
Concho Valley Climbers Association*
Texas Mountaineers

Utah

Friends of Indian Creek*
Moab Area Climbers' Alliance
Salt Lake Climbers Alliance*
Southern Utah Climbers' Coalition

Virginia

Friends of Great Falls Coalition*
Shenandoah National Park Climbers Alliance

Vermont

CRAG-VT*
Northeastern Vermont Climber's Alliance

Washington

Washington Climbers Coalition*

Wisconsin

Wisconsin Outdoor Access*

West Virginia

Coopers Rock Regional Climbing Coalition*
New River Alliance of Climbers*
Southeastern Climbers Coalition*

Canada

Climbers Access Society of British Columbia*

» To contact your local LCO or to view a LCO website go to: www.accessfund.org/partners/affiliates.php

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Full Moonlight on El Capitan
| © Kevin Steele



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