

VERTICAL TIMES

The National Publication of the Access Fund
Summer 14/Volume 100
www.accessfund.org

Living the Dream: Q&A with the Access Fund- Jeep Conservation Team

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“Good habits formed at youth make all the difference.”

— Aristotle

It was the late 80s, and I bought *Basic Rockcraft* and *Advanced Rockcraft* from Royal Robbins. My buddy and I started by rappelling out of trees. We threaded the rope through our devices from the end—the concept of a bight of rope was still foreign. Eventually we started top roping and even leading, but the path to becoming a real climber was slow and treacherous. We lived in Southern Minnesota. We didn’t have proper Lycra—all the vogue back then—so we wore running tights. We looked ridiculous and we loved it.

In 1996, the summer after my freshman year of college, I got a job as a climbing instructor at a camp. I later found out that they had hired me because I had listed “model rocketry” on my application, but somehow I dodged that and instructed climbing for the whole season. That’s where I met Roland Rincon, a “real” climber with a trad rack and experience. That summer I followed Roland around the Gunks, did my first multi-pitch with him (MF), and climbed my first true handcrack in the Adirondacks. It was a 5.11a and I was so spent that I threw up at the anchor. Later in the year I hooked up with him in Boulder and he taught me how to ice climb. We climbed in Boulder Canyon and Rocky Mountain National Park, and had a misadventure in the Black Canyon of the Gunnison, searching for the elusive “Gandalf’s Beard” ice climb.

All of this set the stage for my life as a climber. Roland was my first mentor. He taught me so many things I never could have learned from a book, from how to keep my cool on the lead to how to just have an amazing time and be good to the land and other people. I see him every once in a while, and every time I feel an enormous sense of gratitude for our friendship and his great gift of mentorship.

The gift of mentorship is invaluable, and I encourage all of you to be open to mentoring new climbers when the opportunity arises. Check out page 5 for some tips and tricks. And I hope you enjoy this issue of the *Vertical Times*—it’s our 100th issue!

See you out there,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brady Robinson". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Brady Robinson
Executive Director

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GENERAL COUNSEL

Chris Archer



LCO 101: **Optimizing Online Donations**

In today's digital world, online donations are standard. Potential donors who visit your website expect an easy donation process. Here are a few tips to optimize your online giving experience.

- 1. Make the donation path obvious.** Studies have shown that prominently featuring a brightly colored (red or orange) "Donate" button on your homepage increases donations. Put this button "above the fold" so that users don't have to scroll to find it.
- 2. Create one clean, simple landing page with giving options.** If you have multiple giving options (e.g., join or donate), organize them clearly and give each its own button.
- 3. Keep donation pages simple.** Your donation page should include minimal text and an image that helps donors make an emotional connection with your organization.
- 4. Include only required information on donation forms.** It's tempting to use the form to collect information from your donors (e.g., What's your preferred style of climbing? Are you interested in volunteering?), but studies have shown that even a few extra fields can make the difference between a donor completing a transaction or bailing.

Red River Gorge Climbers Coalition Teams with Access Fund on Joint Membership

We are excited to welcome Red River Gorge Climbers Coalition (RRGCC) to our joint membership program. Climbers can now join Access Fund and RRGCC with a single membership. Since 1996, RRGCC has worked with public and private landowners to preserve and expand climbing in Kentucky's Red River Gorge. They own and manage two climbing preserves, the Pendergrass-Murray Recreational Preserve and the Miller Fork Recreational Preserve, which total over 1,000 acres and nearly as many routes. "We are a proud partner with RRGCC," says Brady Robinson, Access Fund Executive Director. "Joint membership will grow and strengthen our work together in one of the country's most important climbing areas." You can join RRGCC and Access Fund at www.accessfund.org/joinrrgcc.



Major Improvements for Farley Access



Western Mass Climbers Coalition (WMCC) has wrapped up major improvements to their Farley Ledge lot, paving the steep driveway and parking area. In 2007, WMCC purchased property at the base of Farley Ledge to prevent private development and to protect hiking and climbing access. Since then, the area's popularity has grown dramatically. Improvements to the lot address increased use and prevent erosion, rutting, and occasional inaccessibility.

New LCOs in Idaho, Michigan, and Colorado

New local climbing organizations (LCOs) continue to sprout up in all corners of the country. In Idaho, the North Idaho Climbers Alliance is taking root, doing trail days and bolt replacement work at local crags. On the northern border of the U.S., Michigan's Upper Peninsula Climbers Coalition has formed to protect access to Triple A wall. And in Colorado, the Pike's Peak Climbers Coalition has organized to support stewardship and protection of climbing areas in the Pike's Peak region—Garden of the Gods, Shelf Road, South Platte, and other areas.

New Rhode Island Regional Coordinator

We are excited to welcome James Re as the new Regional Coordinator in Rhode Island, home to the famous urban granite boulder field, Lincoln Woods, along with numerous outlying areas on both public and private land. Last year, James worked with local climbers and Access Fund to ensure that the state would allow climbing at the newly acquired Rocky Point. An avid climber and boulderer, James replaces Dana Seaton who served as a volunteer RC for many years.



BE A MENTOR. SAVE A CLIMBING AREA.

There's been a lot of talk in the climbing media and online forums about irresponsible behavior at the crag, what role climbing gyms play, and how the traditional mentorship paradigm seems to be a thing of the past. No matter what your perspective, it's undeniable that climbing is exploding in popularity and so are the impacts of our sport. In order to maintain sustainable access to our climbing areas, we all must take responsibility for these impacts and help educate new climbers. We encourage you to mentor new climbers whenever possible.

Here are some tips to get you started:

- **Be approachable to create a mentorship opportunity.** Don't perpetuate an "us and them" attitude with new climbers. We're all climbers and we all started somewhere. Create a mentoring opportunity by being approachable. When you have an inclusive posture, new climbers are more likely to listen and follow your example.
- **Invite a new climber to go outside with you.** Don't underestimate the power of modeling good behavior. Social norms are transmitted subtly, and a new climber can learn a lot just from witnessing how you interact with your environment.
- **Recruit new climbers to your LCO.** Bring the newbies into the fold! Exposing new climbers to a group of access-conscious peers is a great way to raise their awareness about local climbing management issues.
- **Take a new climber to an Adopt a Crag.** Adopt a Crag can be a wakeup call to new climbers who might never have considered the impacts of climbing. It's also a great way for them to meet and interact with environmentally conscious peers.
- **Introduce new climbers to a land manager.** Know a land manager or ranger at your local climbing area? Find a way to introduce him or her to new climbers in a casual setting, and be sure to express your own appreciation.
- **Don't preach, participate.** Climbing culture has never been more diverse. Get out with climbers who are new or who like a different style. Climb on their terms. Appreciate their perspective so they'll appreciate



Courtesy of Colorado Mountain School | © Russell Hunter

yours. This is the best way to build a bridge and start a conversation about behaviors and practices that keep climbing areas open.

- **Speak up when you see behavior that jeopardizes access.** Most people don't intentionally act inappropriately—they just don't know better. Try explaining the consequence of their action in a friendly, non-confrontational way and ask for their help. "Hey man, nice send on that problem. I just wanted to let you know that the landowner is super sensitive to seeing tick marks. We're trying to spread the word to have folks rub off tick marks. Will you help?" ■

THE INSIDE SCOOP: RED RIVER GORGE

If you're like most climbers, you pore over guidebooks for weeks or even months when planning a climbing trip. You educate yourself on routes, descents, gear, and camping. But what about the local ethics, issues, and challenges at your destination crag? Part of being a responsible climber is knowing how to tread lightly—both socially and environmentally. In this new *Inside Scoop* series, we'll

connect you with local climbing access leaders at some of the country's top climbing destinations for valuable insight into local ethics and issues.

Destination: RED RIVER GORGE, KY

Local expert: BENTLEY BRACKETT, PRESIDENT OF RED RIVER GORGE CLIMBERS' COALITION

What challenges does the Red River Gorge climbing community face right now?

The Red River Gorge is unique in that there are so many different land owners that all have different rules and expectations. And the climbing at the Red is some of the best on the planet, so we see a tremendous amount of use—many areas are “loved to death”. We encourage everyone to work as a team to mitigate overuse and abuse of our precious climbing resources.

What are your most pressing access issues?

We face many of the same issues that other climbing communities face, but two that are super prominent in the Red are human waste and overcrowding.

What is the best option for human waste disposal in the Red?

With the Red's climate and soil, if human waste is buried properly (in an 8" deep cathole), nature can take its course in a reasonable amount of time. But nothing beats packing it out.

And how do you address the overcrowding issue?

We try to educate climbers—if a crag is crowded, consider going to another one. There are many to choose from!

How is the relationship between climbers and local land owners and community members?

We've put a significant amount of effort into being seen as a respectful user group, so the relationships are generally very good. The locals have realized that rock climbers are in the area to stay, and they see that we contribute a lot to the local economy. We encourage climbers—visitors and locals—to express their appreciation to landowners and to tread lightly.

What would you describe as the local ethics at the Red?

The ethic is to respect your elders and run it to the chains. No, seriously, it's simple: treat it like it's your own. Take pride in our climbing areas, and treat them like your own property. If you need guidance, check the rules in our land use waiver at rrgcc.org.

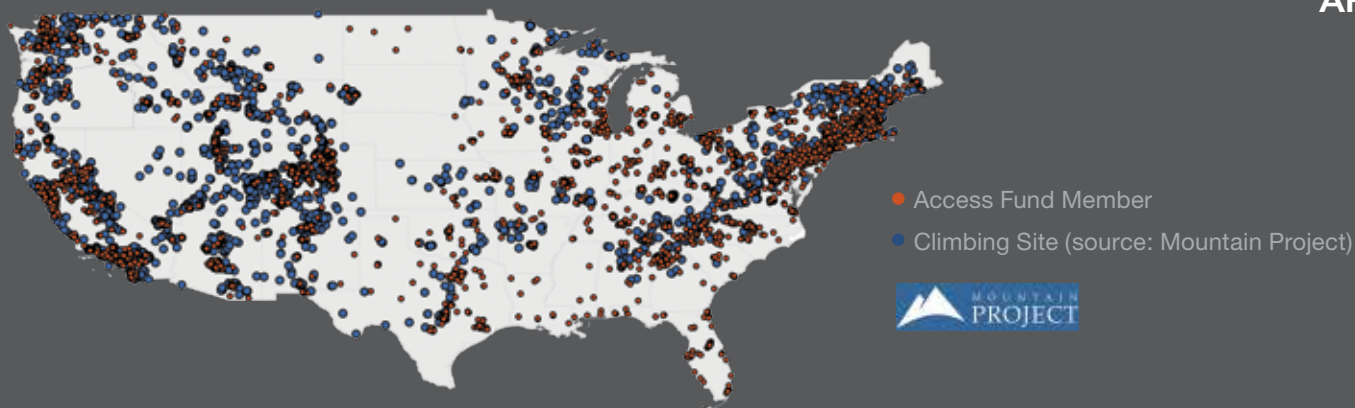
Any recent victories in the Red?

We just acquired the Miller Fork Recreational Preserve (MFRP), with help from the Access Fund, which was a big milestone for us and an interesting model for other LCOs. There was very little route development and zero trail, parking, or other infrastructure—we essentially purchased a “future” climbing area. This gives us the opportunity to build things correctly from the beginning. We are also announcing joint membership with the Access Fund, which is an exciting opportunity for climbers to support both national access work and Red River Gorge access work with a single membership.

Any words of wisdom for folks visiting the Red for the first time?

Before you go climbing, do your research on where you are going, who owns it, and what their expectations are. And remember rock climbing is not free, so please consider donating to the Red River Gorge Climbers' Coalition as well as the private landowners that pour their blood, sweat, and tears into their property so that you can climb there. ■

photo © Peter McDermott



GIS: GAME-CHANGING TECHNOLOGY FOR CLIMBING ADVOCACY

Imagine that with a click of a button, you could identify the land ownership of every climbing area in the country. Or see density of climbing areas compared to available volunteer resources. Or quickly visualize how a climbing area might be jeopardized by planned oil or coal extraction.

This type of information would revolutionize climbing advocacy. And it's happening now.

Last summer, Access Fund partnered with Mountain Project, the premier online climbing routes database, to develop a data set of all climbing areas in the country. And over the last year, Access Fund has been working to develop a sophisticated geographic information system (GIS) that compiles, stores, analyzes, visualizes, and shares this geographic data. "A GIS is a constant work in progress," says Access Fund Policy Director Erik Murdock. "But this summer, with the help of Mountain Project and Outdoor Alliance, the Access Fund will have a working system that includes custom scripts to automatically update climbing resource data."

But how will GIS really change climbing advocacy? When it comes to the management of our public lands, policy makers and land managers must maintain a delicate balance between protecting resources and allowing land use. This new system will allow us to (for example) display recreational resources, natural resources like coal and gas, and protected and endangered resources in one single view—helping land managers make smarter decisions about recreation management.

"If Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell wants to understand the relationship between the extraction industry and recreation, the Access Fund can quickly process this analysis and produce an accurate visualization of that issue," says Murdock. This would have taken a lot more work before GIS.

And it's not just the climbers who are benefitting from this system. Access Fund has also partnered with Outdoor Alliance—the coalition of human-powered outdoor recreationalists—to build an integrated GIS that includes mountain biking, paddling, canoeing, and backcountry skiing resources into one powerful system. "This GIS is a game changer," says Adam Cramer, Executive Director of the Outdoor Alliance. "It pulls all these recreational resources (crag, rivers, trail networks) into an integrated recreational landscape that carries a lot of weight with policy makers. It also helps us better prioritize our advocacy efforts to make sure we are focused on protecting the places and experiences that are most important to the human-powered recreation community."

The benefits of this system don't begin and end with climbing policy. The goal is to create a system that can be used across our program areas. For instance, we can map climbing resources together with local climbing organizations, allowing us to identify gaps in local advocacy and work to build the grassroots network in these areas. And we can easily identify private land ownership and property boundaries to settle access disputes.

GIS technology is changing the game for climbing advocacy, and we are excited to be building out this capability to protect America's climbing. ■

DID YOU KNOW...

- Approximately 7% of climbing sites are in a designated Wilderness area.
- Despite no outdoor climbing in Florida, the state has 55 Access Fund members!
- 54% of U.S. climbing sites are on federal land.

LIVING
THE
DREAM:

Q&A

with Access Fund–Jeep®
Conservation Team

They're on the road for over 10 months of the year, visiting America's best climbing areas and conserving climbing resources. Sounds like a dream job to many of us stuck behind desks five days a week. But what's it really like?

In early June, we held a live Q&A on Facebook and let the community ask their burning questions about life on the road. Keep reading to get an inside look at Mike and Amanda's never-ending road trip as the Access Fund–Jeep Conservation Team.



What is your favorite part about being on the Conversation Team?

Working as the Conservation Team has allowed us to indulge our wanderlust. Road-tripping is something we've always enjoyed, and we've had the chance to experience so many new and remarkable places together this year. We also love the work that we get to do, and the awesome people we get to meet along the way!



What are your biggest goals and challenges this year?

Our biggest goal is to reach as many volunteers as possible and pass along a passion for climbing area stewardship. We also strive to pass along some best trail building practices to the local community so that once we move on, the volunteers we have worked with can continue to do good work that will last. The biggest challenge we have is the limited time that we have at each location. Generally we're in a new area each week, which limits how much we can do in a given area. We always leave an area psyched with the work that was accomplished but wishing we could have done more.

Do you have a few tips or tricks for trail builders?

Trail building is all about water management. If a trail carries water, its life span will be significantly diminished compared to a trail that sheds water. Also, when you're building rock structures, bigger is better. The forces of nature and many feet are all working to move what has been built, so when selecting stones to work with, go big. If you can carry it by yourself, it's probably too small.

What's the hardest part of life on the road?

We are always in motion, working in a new location each week, so it's hard to find time to recharge when we're excited to get out and experience each new destination. We know that there's potential to get burned out at the pace we go, so sometimes we have to take rest days, even on splitter days.

Do you get to climb much while you're on the road?

We do get to climb at least a little in the places where we are working. The amount we climb seems to be inversely proportionate to the number of rocks we moved on our previous project. We love to climb, and the Conservation

Team experience takes us to so many awesome places, so we try to get out as much as we can.

That's a LOT of together time. Do you two get sick of each other?

We really enjoy each other's company, but there are times when we do need space, so we'll run separate errands or just do different things for a while. We've become pretty quick at resolving disagreements on the road—being together 24/7 doesn't leave room to let conflict simmer!

What is the longest you've gone without a shower?

We've gone up to a week without showering so far. There's definitely a correlation between the length of time you go without a shower and how refreshing a shower feels.

Is there a correlation between the number of days without a shower and productivity?

Ha! I think it's a bit of a bell curve ... at first, productivity goes up because of all the time you save by not showering. But, if you go too long, B.O. would probably become distracting and people would stop wanting to interact, so productivity would diminish. Two weeks is a good goal.

Are you sleeping in a tent every night?

We are occasionally hosted by a climber in the area where we are working, but the rest of our time we do sleep cozily in our awesome Mountain Hardwear Optic 3.5 tent.

What's been the most awkward moment on the road for you?

There have certainly been situations that could have been awkward, like staying at the house of someone we've never met for a week, but everyone we've met has been super cool and every stay has been great.

Feature Story

How have you been received by the locals when you pull into town?

We have been blown away by the welcome we've received in each of our destinations. It's not uncommon to have people approach us thanking us for the work we do. It's gratifying to be a part of a community that shares the same love of the outdoors and passion for climbing that we do.

Is there anything that an LCO is doing that the rest of us should incorporate? Any access silver bullet?

Every area we have visited has its own nuances, but being engaged and giving back to the areas that you care about is one of the best ways to develop and maintain positive relationships with land managers. We have worked on several trail projects that not only benefited climbers, but

also improved access for other trail users. Volunteering and establishing relationships early on, preferably before an access issue occurs, is a great way to make sure your voice is heard.

How's that new Jeep Cherokee treating you?

The Jeep Cherokee is awesome! It's a pretty sweet ride for traveling the country and doing what we do. It gets good gas mileage, even with the extra weight of the trailer. We have the Trailhawk model with an extra inch of clearance, and it has charged through some pretty burly terrain. We've even towed a few cars out of the mud. The interior is posh, with heated leather seats AND steering wheel (Amanda's favorite feature on cold mornings). There's a nifty hidden storage space (which we will not disclose the location of), as well as lots of options for plugging in and charging our devices. We love driving it, and it's been the perfect ride for our work and life on the road.

What percentage of time would you say you have been "off the grid"?

We're probably off the grid or with limited connection about 20% of the time, which we enjoy personally, but it also posed a few logistical challenges in terms of working. Over the past few months, we've learned how to work more effectively when we have connection and savor our disconnected time, so it's a good balance.

What's the tastiest meal you've eaten on the road?

We eat pretty well on the road. Our favorite meal to make at camp is tofu with veggies, coconut milk, and curry. Before we left the Wichita Mountains, a couple we met there gave us some local bison meat, which was remarkable. And the pizza we had at High Rocks in PA was incredible.

Will we see the return of Mike's beard in the winter?

Mike's beard will likely reappear this winter, though its timing has yet to be determined.

What has been your favorite place so far?

It's hard to pick a favorite place, but Chattanooga is definitely near the top of the list, both for the incredible climbing and friendly community there. ■

Follow the Conservation Team on Facebook at www.facebook.com/conservationteam.



The Conservation Team's work is made possible by the generous support of our sponsors:





Eagle Bluff | © RW Estela

Protecting the Crown Jewel of Maine Climbing

Climbers have been enjoying the granite cracks of Eagle Bluff outside Clifton, Maine, since the late 1960s. Today, Eagle Bluff is a cherished recreational area, with over 130 established climbing routes, bouldering below the bluff, and a popular summit trail to take in its expansive views. In the mid-1990s, climbing access was threatened when the property was listed for sale. Local climber Donald Nelligan stepped up to purchase the property.

Sadly, Donald passed away in the summer of 2013 and left no will to outline the future of Eagle Bluff. The Nelligan family closed public access due to liability concerns and immediately sought to sell the property.

With a narrow window of opportunity to protect Eagle Bluff, representatives from the local climbing community, town of Clifton, and land trust community reached out to the landowners to determine a plan for permanent conservation. After meeting with these local advocates, the Nelligan family agreed to sell the property to climbers and continue Donald's legacy.

Working alongside the locals, Access Fund secured an Option Agreement on Eagle Bluff, giving us the exclusive right to purchase the property for permanent conservation and climbing access. Then the real job began—

raising \$150,000 for the purchase and stewardship of this unique area. Local climbers formed Clifton Climbers Alliance to help in this charge and take on long-term ownership of the 165-acre property.

After kicking off a fundraising campaign, Access Fund worked with the landowners to secure a recreational lease on the property during the fundraising period. The lease was signed in March of this year, addressing the landowner's liability concerns and allowing them to restore temporary climbing access while we raise the funds to purchase the property.

After six months of fundraising, we are on target to meet our goal. Local climbers raised an impressive \$97,000 to date, with key support from the first annual Bluff Fest, a successful anonymous donor matching campaign, the Mountaineering Committee of the Boston Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club, and a Black Diamond Equipment fundraiser. Although there are grant requests still outstanding, Access Fund is committed to securing the property with a short-term loan through the Access Fund Land Conservation Campaign to bridge the gap between the dollars raised to date and pending grant requests.

Access Fund is working with Clifton Climbers Alliance to secure the property, and will assign the Option Agreement to the local climbing organization to make the final purchase and hold the property for long-term stewardship.

Without the collaboration and combined strengths and assets of multiple partners, Eagle Bluff may not have been saved.

“Eagle Bluff is a key climbing resource for climbers of Bangor and central Maine,” says Jayson Nissen of Clifton Climbers Alliance. “We re-formed Clifton Climbers Alliance to help protect, fundraise, and

steward the property.” Access Fund and Clifton Climbers Alliance are on track to close on the purchase at the end of August.

Successful land protection projects rely on climbers stepping up to protect their local climbing area. Donald's unfortunate passing and the subsequent closure of Eagle Bluff made the local community realize just how quickly we can lose access to one of the most cherished bluffs in Maine. Without the collaboration and combined strengths and assets of multiple partners, Eagle Bluff may not have been saved. The grassroots effort to protect Eagle Bluff is an example for climbers to model around the country and something the Access Fund hopes to replicate in future years. ■



DAVID TODD MEETS THE MOMENT

Every year, CLIF Bar encourages people to get outside, get moving, and celebrate all of the awesome moments we experience along the way through its Meet the Moment campaign. Thousands of people all over the world have participated by sharing photos on meetthemoment.com. For every photo shared, CLIF Bar donates \$5 to an organization of the submitter's choice. And at the end of the year, CLIF Bar chooses a "defining moment" and allows the winner to give \$10,000 to his or her favorite charity.

Last year, David Todd shared his moment with CLIF Bar and was chosen as the "defining moment"

winner. He generously selected the Access Fund as his favorite nonprofit and awarded us with \$10,000.

"Moments like these are ones you hear about in stories, but never expect to live yourself," says David. "Seventeen months earlier, I lay in the hospital wondering if I would ever climb again. The doctors had just removed a walnut-sized tumor from inside my spine, taking the back half of three vertebrae with it. I had a choice to make, and I chose to climb. With the unyielding support of family and friends, I put one foot in front of the other, all the way to the Himalaya."

David continues, "The Access Fund has always been a part of climbing for me. I wanted to say thank you for

protecting the places we play, and to help ensure that others could have the same opportunity to fall in love with climbing as I did."

Thank you, David. And thank you, CLIF Bar!

This October, share your climbing photos on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter with the #meetthemoment tag, and CLIF Bar will donate \$1 to the Access Fund to protect your climbing areas. It's an easy way to give back to the places you love. ■



DON'T MAKE RESCUE AN ACCESS ISSUE

Consider this: You're sport climbing at a popular crag in a very rural area. A few routes over, someone misses a clip, takes a fall, and decks. His legs are broken. You manage to get cell service and call 911. The dispatcher asks where you are and you tell her the name of the crag. She doesn't know where that is, so she asks for nearby roads. But you're from out of town and don't know. Precious time is wasted as you and the 911 operator try to figure out where you are. When rescue does arrive, emotions run high and rescuers ask you to step aside, but you want to help. Later there's criticism that climbers didn't help the rescue go smoothly.

Search and rescue isn't typically thought of as an access issue, but it can be. For those rare and unfortunate instances when climbers get in trouble, rescue is a critical part of overall climbing management. When climbers understand how rescue operations work and support their local rescue squad, rescues can go much more smoothly. But if climbers get in the way or don't build a supportive relationship with their rescue squad, things can go sideways. This can cause negative attention from the land manager and have serious consequences for access.

Here are ways that you can support successful rescues:

- **Be proactive with your LCO and share information.** LCOs should reach out to help local rescue authorities improve response times by providing maps and information on where climbers are—names of crags, routes, access trails, and nearby roads.
- **Follow instructions.** When a rescue is called in, a legally regulated response is set in motion. Climbers should recognize that a rescue squad has authority and final say on all rescue actions. Follow instructions and respect their decisions.
- **Don't create another rescue situation.** We all want to help, but if you're at the site of an accident and decide to intervene, you may create another unsafe situation for rescue personnel. Know your limitations and be conservative. It can be a tough decision, but standing



Members of the Yosemite Helicopter Rescue Team prepare in El Capitan Meadow for a short haul mission to rescue an injured climber that is stranded mid face I © David Pope

by might be the safest choice and the best way for the rescue to proceed quickly and safely.

- **Ask first if you want to help.** If you want to help, tell the rescue personnel what you can offer, including any relevant first aid, rescue, or guiding certifications you may have. They may welcome another helping hand, but you should ask first.
- **Be sensitive with helicopter rescues.** Helicopter rescues are especially high risk. If strict protocol isn't followed, the pilot may abandon the rescue, which places everyone at greater risk. Follow rescue squad instructions and do not interfere.
- **Join your local rescue squad.** Many rescue teams may benefit from a climber's experience and expertise. Some of the best mountain rescue teams in the world are composed of highly experienced climbers.
- **Support your local rescue squad.** Many rescue teams are under-funded or run entirely by volunteers. Make a donation or hold a fundraising event with your LCO that benefits the local squad.

It's critical to respect the rules and protocol for rescue operations and to build partnerships with rescue teams so they can benefit from climbers' experience and knowledge of climbing areas. Working together, we can save lives and keep our climbing areas open. ■

Corporate Partners

Planet Granite owns and operates four climbing gyms in the Bay Area in California and became an Access Fund partner in 2011 when it gave over \$10,000 to help save Jailhouse Rock in Sonora, CA, from development. Since then, the organization has also supported the Access Fund's work to protect Summit Rock and Auburn Quarry in northern California. This year, Planet Granite has generously helped the Access Fund launch an education program. We thank Planet Granite for its commitment to protecting climbing access and stewarding our climbing areas.



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!

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eGrips Climbing Holds
GORE-TEX® Products
Jason Keith Consulting
La Sportiva
Mountain Project
prAna
SCARPA North America
Stanley
Stonewear Designs
Trango

GOLD PLUS - \$7,500+

Mountain Gear
Rock/Creek
Sterling Rope Company

GOLD - \$5,000+

Sender Films
The Spot Bouldering Gym

SILVER - \$2,500+

Adidas Outdoor
Arc'teryx
Avery Brewing Company
BlueWater Ropes
Falcon Guides
Liberty Mountain Climbing
Mad Rock
Mammut
Marmot
Metolius
Outdoor Retailer
Portland Rock Gym
Rock'n Jam'n
SuperTopo.com

MAJOR - \$1,000+

Backwoods
CAMP USA
Call of the Wild Adventures
Climb Max Mountaineering
Drive Current
Evolve Sports
Fixed Pin Publishing
High Point Climbing and Fitness
Louder Than 11
Mountain Khakis
Moosejaw
New Belgium Brewing Company
Pacific Edge Climbing Gym
SMAC Climbing, LLC
The Crash Pad
Thermarest
Treasure Mountain Inn
Upslope Brewing Company
Wildland Trekking Company

CONTRIBUTING - \$500+

Aiguille Rock Climbing Center
Alpine Ascents International
Alpine Endeavors
Armaid
DMM Excalibur
Desert Rock Sports
Earth Treks Climbing Centers

Eldorado Climbing Walls
Green Peak Promotions
Gregory Packs
TRUBLUE Auto Belays
International Alpine Guides
Julbo
KNS Reps, Inc.
Mountain Tools
Red Chili
Rocks and Ropes of Tucson
Stone Age Climbing Gym
Tahoe Oral Surgery & Implant Center
Tom K. Michael, DDS, PS
Trailspace.com
Travel Country Outdoors
Verde PR & Consulting
Vertical Dreams
Vertical Endeavors
Wes & Gold
Xcellence

SUPPORTING - \$250+

Amarillo Rock Climbing House
Cadillac Mountain Sports
Climb Nashville
Dry ICE Tools
Forest Oil Corporation
Forte Creative Media
Law Firm for Non-Profits
Mesa Rim Climbing and Fitness
Center
Redefining Balance
Rock Fitness
Schneider Management Group, Inc.
SealGrinder PT
Sunrift Adventures
The Gravity Vault Indoor Rock Gyms
The Mountaineer
Ute Mountaineer
Wahl Clipper Corporation

IN-KIND PARTNERS

Alpinist Magazine
Belagles
Climbing Magazine
ClimbingWeather.com
Dead Point Magazine
Omega Pacific
Rakkup
Rock & Ice Magazine
Schoeller



Clockwise: Ethan Pringle on Jabberwocky, Red Rocks, Las Vegas, NV | Ann Raber on Eckstein at Hueco Tanks State Park, El Paso, TX | Simon Benkert on Free at Last in Mt Charleston, Las Vegas, NV | Nick Duttler on I, Me, Mine, Austin, TX | © Merrick Ales

Merrick Ales

Whether it's photographing climbers in the mountains or deserts, capturing intricate architectural details, or working in the photo pit of the latest show in his home base of Austin, Texas, Merrick Ales combines passion with precision to produce unforgettable images for clients and audiences across the country.

Merrick enjoys the challenge of working with light and calculating how it affects imagery. He lives for those moments when the composition is perfect, the lighting is magic, and every frame is gold. He approaches every job as a challenge and an opportunity to tell a story or share an experience of that moment he's capturing. His photography has taken him to new places, on adventures, and out of comfort zones into the places less traveled.

Merrick is also deeply emboldened by his beautiful wife Christen and wonderfully inspired by his two-year-old son Micah. And as you might expect, he also enjoys long walks on the beach under the moonlight. To view more of his work, please visit www.merrickales.com. ■



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