

A Manual to Make Adopt a Crag a Success

Your wise decision to participate in this landmark initiative is certain to introduce a spirit of volunteerism and natural resource stewardship to your community. To assist event organizers in planning a well thought out and successful event, the Access Fund has developed this manual. These recommendations are based on the experiences of past organizers. Our goal is to make the organizer's job easier by building on those experiences. We recognize that some of these suggestions may not suit your particular needs. This manual is a work in progress, and we hope you will send us comments and suggestions to help us improve this guide. Thank you for your participation. If you would like another copy of this manual, you can either download it from www.accessfund.org or contact our office for a hard copy:

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Please be sure to read through the materials and **register your event as soon as you have a date.** Registering your event no less than 6 weeks out from the project date will ensure enough time for us to send you support materials.

I look forward to working with you this year. Let's continue to make Adopt-a-Crag a success for the entire climbing community. Please contact me with any questions or for additional information.

Thanks to all of you!
~Kristo

Who is the Access Fund?

The Access Fund is a national, non-profit organization dedicated to keeping climbing areas open and conserving the climbing environment. The organization works in cooperation with climbers, other recreational users, public land managers, and private landowners to promote the responsible use and sound management of climbing resources throughout the United States. The Access Fund encourages an ethic of personal responsibility, self-regulation, strong conservation values, and minimum impact practices among climbers.

What is Adopt a Crag?

Every year, nationwide, the Access Fund supports event organizers who lead trail restoration projects and clean-ups at their climbing areas as part of the largest climber volunteer effort in history. Adopt-a-Crag originated in 2000 as part of the Access Fund's Kickin' Access campaign which celebrated our 10th Anniversary. Originally incorporated as an event that took place in the month of September, Adopt-a-Crag has evolved into a year-round event to support stewardship projects at any crag and any time of year. September has become the "Adopt-a-Crag Celebration" month as the majority of events continue to occur during this time. Adopt-a-Crag is the climbing community's opportunity to foster a spirit of volunteerism and stewardship across the country. Joshua Tree to Rifle, Yosemite to Cathedral Ledge, climbers congregate at their favorite climbing areas to give back to the routes and rocks they've come to love. In recent years, Adopt-a-Crag has consistently hosted 100+ events in 30+ states, relying on the help of thousands of participating climbers who annually build and restore 100+ miles of trail, haul-out 1,000 bags of trash and complete thousands of conservation initiatives. This year, we hope to host over 120 Adopt-a-Crag celebrations. You can help us reach our goal by planning an Adopt-a-Crag event in your community!

Why Is Adopt a Crag Important?

Adopt-a-Crag is about giving back to the climbing areas we use on a regular basis. From the signs in the parking areas, to the established trail systems, to the rocks and boulders where we devote endless hours, climbers are frequent land-users, and it is important that we make an effort to maintain and care for that land. Adopt-a-Crag encourages climbing communities to engage local land managers, landowners, park service employees, and forest rangers in conversation about ways to preserve and protect their favorite climbing areas.

What Are the Goals of Adopt a Crag?

- Conserve climbing resources and maintain climbing areas.
- Unite the national climbing community.
- Promote public awareness and appreciation of America's diverse climbing resources.
- Encourage cooperative efforts and build partnerships between climbers and land managers.
- Provide a venue for thousands of individuals to give back to their local climbing areas through conservation.

What Will Happen at Your Local Adopt a Crag?

The Access Fund will sponsor over 120 Adopt-a-Crag events around the country. Events will differ based on their locations and specific needs, but each will feature an element of **conservation**, a sense of **giving back**, and a spirit of **celebration**. Planned activities include: visual impact mitigation, litter removal, erosion control, trail construction, and wildlife documentation.

Who Leads Adopt a Crag?

The Access Fund, with the help of dedicated corporate partners, sponsors Adopt-a-Crag. Title Sponsor **Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI)**, Presenting Sponsor **W.L. Gore**, and Contributing Sponsor **Clif Bar** provide key funding for Adopt-a-Crag, and allow the Access Fund to offer volunteer incentives to each event.

Access Fund Regional Coordinators, Affiliates, and Community Partners (climbing gyms, outdoor retailers, climbing clubs, university outdoor programs, guide services, etc) are key in planning and organization local events. If you do not fall into one of the above-mentioned categories, do not be deterred. **Anyone can organize an Adopt-a-Crag event.** Interested parties should contact Kristo at the Access Fund, their Regional Coordinator (http://www.accessfund.org/whoweare/who_regcoord.html), or check the Access Fund website (www.accessfund.org) to make sure that a local event is not already in the works.

The Need to Organize

Getting started on your Adopt-a-Crag event can be a daunting task. From the conception of an idea to the realization of your goal, being organized is the key to success. People, time, money, and resources need to be identified, and good planning and goal setting from the initial stages of your project increase the chances that your Adopt-a-Crag event will be successful.

Doing an Adopt a Crag event

- Step One: Assess Crag for Amount of Work
- Step Two: Get Permission from Land Managers or Property Owners
- Step Three: Develop a Plan
- Step Four: Form Partnerships
- Step Five: Advertise & Promote
- Step Six: Day of Event! Give Back and Have Fun
- Step Seven: Congratulations! Follow-up and Evaluate

Step One: Assess Crag for Amount of Work

A crag assessment is the first step in an Adopt-a-Crag event. Find out what projects are needed and feasible for your area. Together, you and local climbers can identify the needs in your climbing community and determine which project should, and can, be done. Events will differ based on their locations and specific needs. Planned activities could include: visual impact mitigation, litter removal, erosion control,

trail construction, and wildlife documentation. Based on your group's interests and the needs of the community you should be ready to develop a list of potential Adopt-a-Crag events.

Choosing a Priority

Now that you have a list of areas and activities, deciding which project you'll choose is a matter

of evaluating or assessing your priorities. Items to consider include:

- Value to climbing area
- Outreach opportunity
- Level of interest
- Feasibility (cost, sponsorship, technical capabilities, resources – number of volunteers, number of hours)

To select a priority project, consider questions such as

1. Which idea might be the most feasible?
2. Which idea has the potential to improve the environment the most?
 - What will those benefits be?
 - What types of resources do we need?
 - Can we afford it?
3. After you find out what projects are needed and feasible for your area, consider the following:
 - Is adequate parking nearby?
 - Can the press reach the site?
 - How is the weather in September, and are there alternative locations for bad weather?
 - Is there a building nearby, which could be used for exhibits, information, rain shelter, etc.?
 - Are there restroom facilities?

Step Two: Get Permission from Land Managers or Property Owners

As with any work on public or private land, get permission first. If you go in with all the above information, you stand a good chance of having a successful project. By talking to your land manager or property owner first, you are ensuring that the project is approved and the necessary permits, insurance, and liability issues are complete. The more prepared you are, the easier it is for land managers and property owners to help you. Give them time to review your list. Make sure that there are at least two phone contacts for them if they have questions. Ask

them for their thoughts or ideas on any of your suggestions. You may want to suggest a date to sit down with them for a review, or to visit the area. Make your package short, maybe 2 to 4 pages, try to include a map with the highlighted trails and areas, and don't go over board on detail.

For projects on public land it may be helpful to look at some of the guidelines agencies use to identify sites for participation in an Adopt-a-Crag event. A public land manager might consider the following questions in determining whether an Adopt-a-Crag will work for a site:

YES NO

- _____ _____ Is there a valid need for a volunteer work day?
- _____ _____ Is there support for a volunteer day at the local level (site personnel and/or community organizations)?
- _____ _____ Does the site have ability to get volunteers?
- _____ _____ Are there projects where volunteers can make a significant contribution in one day?

- Examples include:
- Trail maintenance
 - Building new trails
 - Chalk Clean-up
 - Installing signs
 - Planting trees and shrubs
 - Trash and Litter Clean-up

What is the maximum number of volunteers that can be accommodated at the site?
What resources (tools, materials, equipment, and preliminary work) must be provided site for implementation of the project?

Step Three: Develop a Plan

Now that you have selected where and what your Adopt-a-Crag event is going to be and you have gotten the land manager/owner's permission, it's time to develop an Adopt-a-Crag event plan. It is essential to involve as many people as possible in the planning process. You will need to work together to set goals and decide who's going to do what. As a result, from the start of the project to its conclusion, everyone will have a sense of shared responsibility and ownership in

accomplishing their Adopt-a-Crag event. In developing an action plan, your group should discuss and record plans for carrying out the project. The use of a planning worksheet will help you to be organized and stay focused on your goals and objectives while formalizing a thorough plan of action. Your action plan should:

Set Goals

Your goal may be to spend an afternoon removing litter from your local crag, or it could involve a complex strategy that includes fundraising, building public support, or even organizing an on-going project of monitoring. Whatever the goal(s), be explicit, and make sure everyone agrees.

Pick a Day

Although any day is a good day for an Adopt-a-Crag, weekends are your best bet for a big turn-out. There may be factors in your community that make other days more suitable for your event. Set your dates so they have minimum conflict that could reduce your volunteer base. Check with other volunteer groups and see if you can combine events, or if you can advertise your projects through them, and that you will return the favor. Provide alternate or rain dates in case of weather related problems. Most important of all, select the day and time that works best for you.

Establish Timelines and Delegate Tasks.

List the tasks that need to be accomplished to meet each objective. Next, work to identify a tentative completion date for each task and decide who is going to do what.

Step Four: Form Partnerships

Consider Adopt-a-Crag an avenue for building alliances and partnerships and to plan for the future. As your event begins to take shape, keep in mind that Adopt-a-Crag aims to raise awareness about the Access Fund and the issues affecting local climbing areas. Partnerships are the key to any successful event. Be sure to include the following groups in your event:

- Public land management agencies
- Local climbing organizations, local land trusts, and conservation organizations

- Climbing gyms, outdoor retailers, and local manufacturers
- University outdoor programs and clubs
- Members of the local junior climbing club (inquire at your climbing gym)
- Local media
- Local businesses such as restaurants, coffee shops, etc.

Partnerships work best when responsibilities are assigned according to interests and abilities. For example, trail managers are well versed in logistical matters and outdoor retailers are experts at promotions and advertising.

Step Five: Advertise & Promote

People in your community will be interested in learning about your project and may want to help you in your efforts. Television, radio, and newspaper reporters love to cover stories of citizens taking action in the community, and an Adopt-a-Crag event has all the elements of attracting interest, because people are enhancing and improving their surroundings. Here are some ideas for expanding your reach.

- News releases in local newspapers
- Public Service Announcements (PSAs)
- Donated or sponsored advertising space in local newspapers and magazines
- Media coverage by newspapers, radio, and television stations
- Media sponsorship by a radio station, television, or cable station
- Posters and/or flyers distributed around town to local businesses
- Mayor's Proclamation

How to get press coverage for Adopt-a-Crag events

- Include the news media and local public officials such as the mayor and city council members in your Adopt-a-Crag event.
- Invite state conservation and/or environmental officials to meet and speak with your group, including your partners, and get their endorsement of your project.

- If you would like to encourage community-wide participation, you may find that PSAs, news releases, posters, flyers, and media coverage are your most effective methods of promotion.

Step Six: Day of Event! Give Back and Have Fun

Structure the day. A successful Adopt-a-Crag has these 3 ingredients:

- **Enjoyment.** Don't take it too seriously, use a little humor, provide food, encourage friendly competition, and a fun element afterwards (BBQ, climb, regroup at the local café, pub, or gym).
- **Education.** Offer to teach some new skills, demo new tools, or ask the ranger to provide an interpretive talk at the lunch break.
- **Accomplishment.** Match crew leaders and their groups to tasks that are within their capacity and the time available. Avoid leaving a job half-finished or rushing at the end.

Day of event checklist

- Notify of the police if necessary. Place signs, orange cones, or flagging to notify others.
- Ensure that proper insurance, permits, and liability waivers have been obtained.
- Pack first aid kit(s) with pain relievers, sun block, etc., along with **plenty of water**.

Orientation

Communication is the key, so start with introductions of the agency staff, the crew leaders, and the individuals (unless the group is huge).

- Pick a "staging area" and keep it staffed at all times. Keep first aid supplies, water, and, if possible, provide rest room facilities.
- Have the volunteers sign in and complete waiver forms if required as they arrive. Get names, addresses and emails.
- Make everyone aware of safety issues, such as: work in pairs, wear rubber gloves, don't pick up hazardous wastes, lift with your legs not your back, etc.
- Make a map of where people will be working and keep track of everyone involved in the clean up.

- Count heads and assign crew leaders, leaving one person to bring up the late arrivals.

Step Seven: CONGRATULATIONS!

Follow up and Evaluate

Did your Adopt-a-Crag event plan work? Have you met your goals? How have your efforts improved the climbing environment? Take the time to evaluate effectiveness of your Adopt-a-Crag event and thank all the people who have worked to make your project a success.

Thanking Sponsors, Supporters, and Partners

Be sure to send letters of thanks and certificates of appreciation to all of your sponsors, supporters, and partners. It took many hands to make your Adopt-a-Crag event a success, and you'll want to thank everyone who donated time, resources, money, manpower or moral encouragement.

- Provide this information to the media in a press release. This step will likely result

in a well deserved pat on the back for the people who helped in the project and make the public more aware of climber's commitment to stewardship.

Keep Good Record.

It is very important to keep good records of the time you put into the project preparation, the events' day itself, and the number of volunteers/hours generated. This information will help in planning the next event, and can be used to show your team's commitment. Please share this information with Access Fund (www.accessfund.org/adopt) which tallies the volunteer work hours and miles opened to build credibility for all climbers.

Reporting Back to the Access Fund

Let the Access Fund know how your project turned out. The Access Fund wants to hear about how your efforts have paid off and which activities were useful in making your Adopt-a-Crag event a success. Sharing what worked and didn't work helps others who are interested in doing an Adopt-a-Crag event.

Timeline

This timeline is based on a three-month plan. It is possible to organize an event in less time. Please don't be intimidated by this plan, which is based on an event more complex than a typical Adopt-a-Crag. Please use this only as a reference.

Three months out

- *Talk to the local land manager/owner and obtain approval for your event*
- Check to see if permits and/or liability and insurance waivers are necessary
- Hold initial organizing meeting and organize a planning committee
- Select the date, time and duration of the event, and secure the site
- Design the overall event plan (What time will your event begin? etc.)
- Once you have finalized the details, **register your event with the Access Fund**. Registering your event no less than 6 weeks out ensures that we can get support materials to you on time and advertise your event in our Enews and on our webpage.
- Secure commitments from participating organizations
- Write a detailed budget and begin fundraising (if necessary)
- Send press releases to your local media, including public radio stations

Two months out

- If you have not already done so, **register your event** in order to insure that you receive Adopt-a-Crag Posters, Nalgene water bottles, CLIF bars, and clean-up materials to help bolster your community's support.
- Advertise the Adopt-a-Crag to your community. Use local ranger stations, climbing shops and gyms, gas stations, and trail head signboards to place notices of the event. The club event calendar, community or agency web sites, and local newspapers should be used to get the word out. Set up a phone tree and call a week in advance to remind people.
- Follow-up with the press, in an effort to publicize your Adopt-a-Crag event

One month out

- Double check plans with those involved
- Follow-up with media
- Arrange for garbage cans, bins, and trail building/maintenance equipment at the clean up site. Also ask people to bring trucks and wheelbarrows to haul trash and debris.
- Arrange in advance for the ultimate destination of the debris collected and the means to get it there. (Your friends' and neighbors' pick-up trucks generally work quite well.)

Day of Event

- Notify of the police if necessary. Place signs, orange cones, or flagging to notify others.
- Ensure that proper insurance, permits, and liability waivers have been obtained.
- Display your organization's newsletter, event calendar, and membership applications, along with Access Fund *Vertical Times*, membership brochures, and stickers.
- Pack first aid kit(s) with pain relievers, sun block, etc., along with **plenty of water**.

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- **Accomplishment.** Match crew leaders and their groups to tasks that are within their capacity and the time available. Avoid leaving a job half-finished or rushing at the end.

Post-Event

- **Provide Recognition.** The sign-up sheets and notes you took will help you give credit where credit is due. Send thank you notes to your volunteers.
- **Keep Good Records.** It is very important to keep good records of the time you put into the project preparation, the events of the day itself, and the number of volunteers/hours generated. This information will help in planning the next event, and can be used to show the club's commitment. Please share this information with Access Fund, which tallies the volunteer work hours and miles opened to build credibility for all climbers.
- **Provide this information to the media in a press release.** This step will likely result in a well deserved pat on the back for the people who helped in the project and make the public more aware of climber's commitment to stewardship.

Access Fund Regional Coordinator Network

Find an Access Fund Representative in Your Area

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Adopt a Crag 2006 Post Event Evaluation

IF POSSIBLE, WE PREFER YOU SUBMIT THE ELECTRONIC VERSION OF THIS EVALUATION,
AVAILABLE AT www.accessfund.org/cons/aacpost.php

Name of Event* _____
Date of Event* _____
Location of Event* _____

Host Organization Information

Host _____
Organization _____
Contact: Name* _____
Phone Number* _____
Email* _____
Total Number of Volunteers* _____

Volunteer Hours (Number of volunteers x Number of hours of work performed by each person)*

	Total Hours
Trail building: New trail construction, trail maintenance, leadership training, etc. Number of volunteers _____ x Number of hours _____ =	<input type="text"/>
Crag Clean-up: Non-trail building stewardship projects Number of volunteers _____ x Number of hours _____ =	<input type="text"/>
Preparation: club administration, communications, advocacy meetings, fundraisers Number of volunteers _____ x Number of hours _____ =	<input type="text"/>

Do you feel that you achieved your event goals? Please explain

How can the Access Fund improve Adopt-a-Crag?

Will you host an Adopt-a-Crag Next Year? Yes ___ No ___ If no, why not?

What kind of media coverage did your event receive and how many stories per media?

Newspapers, # _____ TV stations, #: _____ Radio stations, #: _____ Cable stations, #: _____
 Assoc. Press wire service, #: _____ Local "freebee" papers, #: _____ Magazines, #: _____

What did you like most about participating in Adopt-a-Crag 2006?

- Volunteerism Accomplishing a significant amount of work in a day
 Restoring/Enhancing the area Working with members of the climbing community
 Creating awareness about the site Building community support for the site
 Other (please specify)

To finalize the results from Adopt-a-Crag 2006 and to share your good ideas with other organizers, please send any additional information you may have regarding your event. You may include items such as **local news releases, press clippings, and pictures** of your volunteers. You can also email these items to Kristo@accessfund.org (jpg preferred).

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