



September 23, 2008

**VIA EMAIL**

Marika Kozachenko  
Niagara Parks Commission  
P.O.Box 150  
Niagara Falls, Ontario L2E 6T2  
[enviro@niagaraparks.com](mailto:enviro@niagaraparks.com)

**RE: DRAFT Environmental Land Management Plan**

Dear Marika Kozachenko:

I write today on behalf of the Access Fund to express opposition to the proposal by the Niagara Parks Commission (NPC) to ban bouldering at Niagara Glen.

**The Access Fund**

Since 1991, the Access Fund has been the only national advocacy organization in the United States that keeps climbing areas open and conserves the climbing environment. The Access Fund supports and represents over 1.6 million climbers nationwide in all forms of climbing: rock climbing, ice climbing, mountaineering, and bouldering. Five core programs support our mission on national and local levels: public policy, stewardship and conservation (including grants), grassroots activism, climber education, and land acquisition. Many of our members climb in Canada and the Niagara Glen in particular. For more information about us visit [www.accessfund.org](http://www.accessfund.org).

**Niagara Glen Draft Environmental Land Management Plan**

The Access Fund opposes the Niagara Park Commission's proposed "Recommendation 11: Eliminate bouldering activities in the Niagara Glen" outlined in the draft plan. Many boulderers cherish the unique beauty of Niagara Glen and we urge the NPC to implement a creative solution to decrease visitor impacts while maintaining the access to Niagara Glen that boulderers have enjoyed for more than forty years.

The NPC should not close the Niagara Glen to bouldering and instead consider adopting a bouldering management plan. For examples and suggestions for climbing and bouldering management, see the Access Fund's publication "Climbing Management: A Guide to Climbing Issues and the Production of a Climbing Management Plan"



(<http://accessfund.org/pdf/CM-web.pdf>). It should be noted that closing the area to bouldering is difficult because all visitors scramble to some degree on the hundreds of

rocks in the Glen and all visitors equally contribute to trail erosion. Furthermore, boulderers are excellent stewards of the environment. At a minimum, you should explore the less severe climbing management prescriptions that have built positive relationships between climbers and managers in other Ontario parks before you ban bouldering at Niagara Glen.

We understand that the NPC is reviewing the management of nature trails at Niagara Glen to minimize the environmental impact of visitors. Our experience shows that clearly marked trails and the removal of a few strategic unsanctioned trails can greatly reduce erosion. Access to boulders that are not on existing sanctioned trails should be clearly marked and restrictions to certain areas could be explored before total closure of these areas are considered. Boulderers, like many outdoor enthusiasts, strive to be excellent stewards of the environment. Most boulderers maintain Leave No Trace practices when visiting the Niagara Glen, and even pick up trash left by less conscientious visitors.

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The Access Fund opposes the proposed policy in Recommendation 11 that eliminates bouldering at Niagara Glen and encourages the NPC to develop creative solutions that prevent resource impacts yet allow continued bouldering access. In the United States hundreds of parks and forests have implemented policies that maintain this balance. For more information and examples of these management practices, see the climbing management policy surveys from 2007's National Climbing Management Summit (<http://accessfund.org/resources/ncms.php>).

Please contact me if you have any questions or comments at 303-545-6772 x102 or [Jason@accessfund.org](mailto:Jason@accessfund.org).

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jason Keith", is positioned above the typed name.

Jason Keith  
Access Fund Policy Director

Cc: Ontario Access Coalition