Access not "Endless" at the New River Gorge

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JUNE #46

Climbing Saved at Pinnacle Peak



your climbing future

Nside

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EVENTS PINNACLE AND THANK YOUS

The Access Fund is a national, nonprofit organization dedicated to keeping climbing areas open & conserving the climbing environment. Since its incorporation in 1990, the Access Fund has provided more than \$1 million for climbing conservation and education across the US. We've paid for land purchases, climbers' campgrounds, educational brochures,

toilets, signs, and scientific research on climbers' impact on birds of prey and cliffdwelling plants. For more information, please contact us.

www.accessfund.org phone: 303-545-6772 address: P.O. Box 17010 Boulder, C0 80308

Vertical Times is the membership newsletter of the Access Fund published six times a year in January, March, May, July, September, and November. Authorizing organization: the Access Fund, 2475 Broadway, Boulder, C0 80304. This issue date: June 1, 2002. Volume #46. Price: \$30/year. Editorial Director: Sam Davidson Editor: John Heisel

Cover: At the New River Gorge, the National Park Service is preparing a climbing management plan. The Endless Wall could be closed from February through April each year for peregrine falcon nesting. Little evidence exists to support this restriction. The Access Fund is working with the New River Alliance of Climbers to encourage a more progressive management approach.

(photo by Carl Samples)

Exceeds 50 percent recycled content

Note from Sam Davidson, Executive Director

There is truly something magical about climbing in the deserts of Southern Utah. Places like Castle Valley, Canyonlands, the Fisher Towers and Indian Creek are important to all climbers — they inspire us, and remind us of what make climbing so essential: freedom, adventure, and intimacy with nature.

The AF is actively working to protect your interests at all climbing areas. But some of our toughest battles are being fought at canyons and vistas of the "Soft Rock Country."

The AF is working with Utah Open Lands to preserve climbing access and save Castleton Tower from development, yet it will cost thousands of dollars to achieve this goal.

The AF has built a good relationship with the Bureau of Land Management at Indian Creek, but we must defend climbers' interests in the new recreation management plan, which could restrict access.

The Bush administration's new energy policy could reduce climbing access in southern Utah. The AF has staff, consultants and volunteers working both in Washington and in Utah on the issue of drilling in the Utah deserts.

But our initiatives to save climbing in southern Utah cost money – lots of money. The AF has already ponied up \$20,000 for the Castleton Tower effort — our biggest single grant ever (see "Resource Update" p.6) Also, we've spent thousands of dollars in recent years improving trails and reducing impacts at Indian Creek.

The AF's members are the foundation of our effectiveness, and "extra" donations make a real difference. Please help by sending a special contribution today.



Sam Davidson, Executive Director

The Access Fund Lobbies Congress and Federal Agencies

Polic In February, Jason Keith, Access Fund policy analyst, met in Washington DC with members of Congress and highranking officials from the land management agencies regarding recreational use fees and the management of fixed anchors in Wilderness. The Forest Service is

developing a proposal for legislation that would make the Recreation Fee Demonstration Program ("Fee Demo") permanent, but which would include some critical improvements. Keith met with Representative Scott McInnis (R-CO), and other congressional members on the Interior Appropriations Subcommittee to advocate for an exemption for backcountry and wilderness area access.

Keith also met with agency officials in the US Forest Service and BLM to push for a final policy on the use and placement of fixed anchors in Wilderness. The Access Fund's proposal would allow climbers to continue to use existing fixed anchors without restriction, but would require some form of authorization for placing new bolts in designated wilderness areas. We are hopeful the agencies will approve management guidance for this issue later this year. The AF will continue to work actively to ensure that climbers' ability to enjoy wilderness is not compromised or curtailed. For more information, e-mail Jason Keith at jason@accessfund.org.

Educational presentation to Wilderness agency officials

In early March, the Access Fund made a presentation to officials from the federal wilderness management agencies at the National Wilderness Stewardship Training Center. Jason Keith, AF policy analyst, joined a panel discussion providing perspectives from various advocacy groups. Jason's PowerPoint presentation illustrated why Wilderness climbing is so important to climbers, how fixed anchors have been used in Wilderness, and the pros and cons of the Negotiated Rulemaking process that failed to produce a unanimous policy recommendation to the Forest Service in 2002 (the Access Fund was one of the participants on this committee, which was stymied by two wilderness "purists").



Access Fund Policy Analyst Jason Keith gives presentation about fixed anchors at Wilderness conference in Arizona.

Draft Climbing Management Plan for the **Obed Wild and Scenic River, TN**

The National Park Service has completed an Environmental Assessment and Draft Climbing Management Plan for the Obed Wild and Scenic River. The Obed has become a very popular climbing area with climbers from the Southeast and Midwest, offering high quality sport and trad routes on excellent sandstone. The Access Fund has been working with local climbers and the NPS to prepare this draft plan. The AF supports the Preferred Alternative, with conditions allowing sport climbing within established climbing zones at Lilly Bridge Area and continuing the moratorium on new sport routes until a comprehensive resource study can be completed.



The Obed Wild and Scenic River, Tennessee

WEST Pinnacle Peak Park, AZ



opened to climbing

(report submitted by Paul Diefenderfer, former Access Fund Board Member) After being closed for seven

years, Pinnacle Peak (North Scottsdale, Arizona) was opened to the public on April 20. The park had been Arizona State Trust land. 640 adjacent acres were sold to a developer in 1995 with the provision that the developer donate 150 acres, including the peak, to the City of Scottsdale to become a public park. In the spring of 1995 the area was closed "for a year" so the developer could build roads and a golf course. The roads, golf course and homes were built but the developer decided to keep the park as private property. Climbers, led by AF representative Paul Diefenderfer, wrote letters, attended meeting and generally kept the pressure on Scottsdale to return the park to the public. Finally in November of 1999 the land was dedicated to the City after local climber and AF member Anna Marsolo researched the original sales agreement and found a clause that forced the developer to give the land to Scottsdale. Climbers have built and stabilized spur trails to access the

climbing areas from the new main trail. The City of Scottsdale purchased 3 acres of land for a trailhead and visitors center with parking for 50+ cars.

Sadly, the Lower East Wall is privately owned and remains closed to climbing. The fantastic granite of the main peak area, Y-Crack, and the Cactus Flower wall will be open to climbing during daylight hours.

Access Fund Launches Activists' Forum

The Access Fund recently announced that its new, secure online communication forum is up and running. The Activists' Forum is for the exclusive use of Access Fund partners and field representatives, including regional coordinators, local climbing organizations, and members of the board of directors.

"Good communication between all facets of the Access Fund team is critical to our ability to address critical issues in a timely manner," said Sam Davidson, executive director. "The very purpose of this new communication tool is to facilitate the exchange of knowledge, information and resources among the Regional Coordinator network, board of directors, staff and key volunteers."

The concept of having a secure discussion board on the website was identified at last year's Activists' Summit-the AF-sponsored training for local climber activists—as a useful service the Access Fund could provide to its volunteers.

The Activists' Forum will help build awareness and expertise among people who are





Climbing access preserved at Pinnacle Peak, Arizona thanks to the hard work of Paul Diefenderfer, local climbers and the Access Fund.

The Access Fund Activists' Forum has launched and will serve AF regional coordinators, board members, staff, and local climbing organizations.

working closely with or for the Access Fund and who occasionally share privileged information about legal issues, land transactions, and other sensitive subjects. We expect to expand the capabilities of the Activists' Forum in the near future to also provide an online communication tool for Access Fund members.

2002 Wilderness Permit/Reservation System Begins at Mount Rainier, WA

(report by Jon Jarvis, Mount Rainier National Park Superintendent)

Effective April 1, advance reservations are being accepted by FAX or letter only for any time during the period of May 1 through September 30. The Wilderness Office FAX number is (360) 569-3131. The mailing address is: Wilderness Information Center, Mount Rainier National Park, Tahoma Woods, Star Route, Ashford, WA 98304. Climbers will be required to pay the \$15 climbing fee at the time of an advanced reservation. Cancellation refunds for the climbing fee only, will be made up to 14 days in advance of the start date. Annual Climbing Pass holders will need to provide the climber name and pass number with their reservation request form.

Modifications to the reservation and permit system were made to respond to visitor suggestions and the heavy demand for climbing reservations and Wonderland Trail itineraries. These adjustments will provide for a more efficient reservation service, reduce hoarding of available space through manipulation of the reservation system, and prevent the misuse of fragile cross-country zones as overflow for designated camps along the Wonderland Trail. Additional information and reservation request forms may be found on the park web site at www.nps.gov/mora/.



(report submitted by Joe McLoughlin, www.newenglandbouldering.com)

The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management has finalized their Parks and Management Area Regulations and have granted almost all the requests made by local climbers in response to the draft regulations. These requests included access to all state parks and management areas, and no liability waiver.

SOUTHEAST Horse Pens-40, AL



HP-40 near Birmingham, Alabama, was closed last fall when the company that owned the site encountered financial difficulties. Horse Pens-40 is one of the best bouldering areas in the southeast. Various parties claiming ownership of the 160-acre property have filed lawsuits. The Access Fund is actively working to restore and preserve access for climbers while ownership issues are resolved through the courts. Check our web site for regular updates as negotiations continue.

Obed, TN

(report submitted by Frank Harvey, Access Fund Regional Coordinator)

On a recent weekend a number of hikers reported to authorities that a vehicle was parked on the Obed cliff top far from the nearest legitimate parking area. It seems the owner of the vehicle or someone before him removed the cable from across the Bowater property to enter the area. Driving in beyond the gates is illegal and poses a serious threat to access to the Obed as a climbing resource. A possible solution to the lack of camping at the Obed is being discussed.

Please park appropriately. Ask at the Visitors Center if you are unsure where to park. On a related note, while the old dirt pull off leading to the Lilly Boulders is on NPS land, it naturally leads one to walk across Dr. Stone's property which is also a problem at the Obed. Please take the time to park up top and use the new trail built by your fellow climbers.

Red River Gorge, KY

Nearly 20 climber volunteers braved the rain and helped protect natural resources at the Sunshine/Moonbeam and Gung Ho areas of the Military Wall on March 9. Using shovels, wheel barrows, buckets, rakes, saws and hammers, Red River Gorge Climbers' Coalition volunteers covered exposed tree roots, installed log steps, marked access trails, and cleared brush as part of the first of three ambitious stewardship projects set for 2002.

According According According Clin Grave Than \$30K in it

Access Fund Awards Over \$30K in Climbing Preservation Grants

The Access Fund has awarded more

than \$30K in its first Climbing Preservation Grants cycle of 2002. Presented three times annually, these grants provide financial assistance for local climber activism and protection of the

climbing environment in the United States. Eight of nine applications were approved this cycle totaling \$33,980 in funds for trail improvements, preservation of private lands from development, conservation easements and solutions to waste disposal problems in the mountains.

"The Access Fund has budgeted \$120K in grants this year," said Shawn Tierney, access and acquisitions director. "We're proud to fund these important initiatives on behalf of our members, corporate partners, volunteers, and the entire climbing community." The following grants were awarded:

•Castleton Tower Preservation Initiative / Acquisition project, Utah \$20,000 awarded to Utah Open Lands to help pay for the acquisition of 221 acres of open space adjacent to the famous Castleton Tower, near Moab, Utah. This land includes the traditional climbers' campground and parking area for Castleton, the Priest, the Nuns, and the Rectory.

•East Animas Climbing Access Project, Colorado Up to \$11,000 to the Durango Climbers Coalition for preserving access to East Animas, the premiere local climbing resource in the Durango Area. The grant will pay for the purchase of an easement for parking and trail access to this area. The

project is a partnership between the BLM, La Plata County, private landowners and the local climbing community.

•Boat Rock Acquisition Project, Georgia \$10,000 to the Southeastern Climbers Coalition (SCC) to assist in the purchase of Boat Rock. This seven-acre site offers good climbing on granite boulders in the Metro Atlanta area, but access is threatened since this property is a target for developers.

•Denali Clean Mountain Can Project 2002, Alaska \$5,480 to Denali National Park to support an innovative project to reduce impacts and waste disposal problems at high altitude. The project will position 200 human waste containers known as "Clean Mountain

CLIMB UP TO THE NEXT L	EVEL!	
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Cans" at 14,000-feet on popular routes. Use of the cans above this height will reduce or eliminate the need for the current high altitude toilet.

•Rocky Mountain Field Institute Trails and Education Projects, Utah \$4,000 to Rocky Mountain Field Institute for trail building and erosion control work in Indian Creek on the approach to Scarface Wall and Broken Tooth.

•Pennsylvania Alliance of Climbers Inc. Startup Grant, Pennsylvania \$1,500 to the new grassroots climbers group, Pennsylvania Alliance of Climbers (PAC). The group will focus on access, education and land acquisition issues. PAC's first project is the lease of a central PA bouldering area known as Governor Stable.

•Lower West Bolton Trail and Erosion Control Project, Vermont \$1,000 to the climbers group, Crag Vermont, for erosion

control and trail construction work at Lower West Bolton Cliffs. This crag is privately owned, but the initiative demonstrated by Crag Vermont in offering to help take care of the property has encouraged the landowner's support for continued climbing access.

•Looking Glass Rock Trail and Education Project, North Carolina \$1,000 to Pisgah Climbers Association (PCA) for construction of a climbers' education kiosk at Looking Glass Rock, NC. The project is one of a series planned by PCA in partnership with Pisgah National Forest to improve the condition of trailheads, trails and the base of climbs at Looking Glass.

Department of Corrections

•Vertical Times mislabeled #45 as the "May" issue on the cover, when it was actually the March issue. To clarify this mistake, we have labeled this as the "June 2002" issue, #46. VT will continue to be mailed every two months. •The Access Fund gave a \$9,750 grant to the Bishop field office of the BLM to help manage bouldering on the Volcanic Tableland, not the Buttermilks as reported in the photo caption of Vertical Times #45 on page 5.

•Vertical Times regrets reporting the Mississippi Palisades State Park, Illinois, as part of the Southeast on page 7 of issue #46.

•The Granite Gripper is an outdoor trad competition held yearly at Enchanted Rock State Natural Area. It was not an event at the Austin Rock Gym as listed in issue #44.

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(Hey Community Partners! You can now order great Access Fund Gear at wholesale prices online on our website!) Here at the Access Fund we are committed to learning what climbers think, their values , and what they expect of us. We provide our members with opportunities to communicate with us through the Climber Survey included in the Access Fund Member Handbook. For 2002 we are redesigning our survey and will soon post it on our website, to make it easier for you communicate your expectations to us.

In the last issue of Vertical Times, we published an editorial by Armando Menocal proposing the Access Fund change its name to American Climbing. The response from our members was very gratifying — surprising in its volume, highly intelligent and diverse in its recommendations. We have excerpted samples from some members' feedback below. In summary of the numerous e-mails and letters, our members oppose changing our name, by a margin of 6-1.

This is exactly the kind of guidance we hoped for, reminding us that we need to stay focused on climbing access and stewardship while building our established brand identity, and representing climbers in dealings with government and the public. In the future we will continue to ask our members' opinion of important issues, and will continue to listen closely to what you tell us. On behalf of our dedicated staff and board of directors, I offer heartfelt thanks to all of you, especially those responded to the name-change idea. I promise that we will remain a lean and effective advocacy group as the climbing community clearly expects of us.

> Sam Davidson Executive Director

I'd like to register my objection to Armando Menocal's idea, although I thank him for posing it, as it's given me an opportunity to reflect on what the organization is about and why I send it money. The name "Access Fund" is brilliantly understated. It... remind[s] us of the places, without which we'd all just be pulling plastic. The emphasis on access drives home the importance of stewardship and our responsibility to the community at large. Please, keep the name, and keep the mission limited and clear.

> Jamie Kellogg Harvard University

Access Fund says it all – the organization's goal is to protect and promote access (to climbing). If you want to be more specific, start using the term "climbers" Access Fund in [writing], but leave the official name the same.

> Dorcas Miller Chelsea, Maine

As a non-climbing member of Access Fund, I don't find the argument the [organization] needs name recognition to the general public... persuasive. I think that "Access Fund" is well recognized where it counts, with climbers, and those who have policy and management responsibilities. I joined you because you put your money where your mouths are. Let your good works define your name, and don't worry about the rest of the world.

> Iris Baird New Hampshire

There are only two reasons for an organization that has spent more than a decade promoting its name to suddenly change the name: [it] has been the subject of bad publicity or it has changed its focus. Neither applies here. The Access Fund is a known brand name. Also, though the Access Fund currently focuses on America, it is possible the Fund will want to expand its mission in the future to include other countries.

> Anne Watson and Tom Isaacson Boulder, Colorado

My concern is that our name communicate our highest priorities. [The AF] is the only national climbers organization I am a member of, and it is because of the commitment to access and protection. Access Fund identifies the organization's purpose with unusual clarity. The name is memorable and when people discover our mission, they are unlikely to forget. Lelan Harris

St. Paul, Minnesota

I think it is an idea to change the name. I have spoken to many young climbers who have heard of the Access Fund and did not know what it was all about.

Amos Whiting AMGA quide

Certainly "American Climbing" invokes patriotism, nationalism, and the immediate vision of the climber — the paragon of rugged individualism, but... the "Access Fund" is a powerful nod at the more universal desire for equal access to civil liberties and the rights of a global citizenship. "Access" reminds us both that we enjoy a liberty, and that we must be ever working to maintain that privilege.

> Kara Wittman Stanford, California

Access Fund Corporate Partners

For companies that care about climbing, Access Fund corporate partnerships are dedicated to the environment, access, conservation, adventure, and the diversity of the climbing experience, nationwide. The Access Fund thanks corporate partners and like minded businesses for their support in 2002. Please endorse these companies that support the Access Fund and

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Reduce Anchor Wear

by Rick Thompson We've all finished a route to find the top anchors showing dangerous signs of wear: grooves cut deeply into the steel, the result of friction created by the rope as it is d forth through the anchors

pulled back and forth through the anchors.

Since threading and lowering is the principal method of getting back to terra firma, the more ascents a route sees, the more quickly this condition will develop. However, many climbers now toprope directly through the anchors, a practice which measurably accelerates the rate at which the wear grooves develop. The anchor in this photo was in place less than four years and nearly half the steel was worn away, resulting in a significant reduction in their strength. If not replaced they would eventually have become worn to the point of potential failure. These simple tips will help reduce anchor wear: 1. Never toprope directly through anchors. Instead, toprope through guickdraws that are clipped into the anchors. This will spare the anchors unnecessary wear and tear, and extend the length of their usefulness. 2. When you're finished with the route, rather than having your partner lower you through the anchors, thread the rope as normal and pull it so that both ends make it to the ground, then rappel.

WARNING: The suggestions offered in this essay are not the recommendation of the Access Fund, only those of a concerned climber. The AF has no special knowledge or expertise in the placement and use of fixed anchors, and makes no representations or warranties regarding the reliability or suitability of these recommendations forthis activity. The placement and replacement of bolts and other types of fixed anchors requires proper instruction to be done safely-no written guidance can replace handson instruction from a professional climbing instructor. Contact the American Safe Climbing Association for more information on this topic.



This anchor is less than four years old. Half of the steel was worn away, resulting in a safety hazard.

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Events

•5/15 Denver, CO-Robbie Williams Slide Show, The North Face (303)758-6366

•5/18 Boulder, CO—Clean Up Flaqstaff!, Mountain Sports (303)443-6770

•5/18 Mead, WA—Minnehaha Clean Up Day, Spokane Mountaineers (509)466-3004

•5/25 Slade, KY—Kurt Smith Kickin Access Tour 2002, Miguel's Pizza (606)663-1975

•6/1 Asheville, NC—Kurt Smith Kickin Access Tour 2002, CLIMBMAX, INC. (828)252-9996

•6/22 Obed, TN—Kurt Smith Kickin Access Tour 2002, Scruggs Ranch (423)319-9243

•6/27 St. Louis, MO-Kurt Smith Kickin Access Tour 2002 Upper Limits (314)241-7625

•7/2 Colorado Springs, CO—Kurt Smith Kickin Access Tour 2002, Mountain Chalet (719)633-0732

•7/9 Denver, CO—Kurt Smith Kickin Access Tour 2002, Paradise Rock Gym, Inc. (303) 286-8168

•7/11 Boulder, CO—Kurt Smith Kickin Access Tour 2002, Neptune Mountaineering (303) 499-8866

Events Pinnacle

• \$810 Mike Libecki "Year of the Snake Slide Show," Arizona Mountaineering Club-

Phoenix, AZ

• \$644 Jimmy Chin Slide Show at Skinny Skis-Jackson, WY

 \$620 Mike Libecki Year of the Snake Slide Show at Skinny Skis-Jackson, WY

• \$588 Mike Libecki Year of the Snake slide show at Alta Sports-Alta, UT

• \$515 Outdoor Festival, Hampshire College Outdoor Program-Amherst, MA

• \$492 Robbie Williams slide show at EMS with the CU Alpine Club-Boulder, CO

• \$480 Michigan Ice Climbing Festival with Down Wind Sports-Marquette, MI

• \$455 Mike Libecki Year of the Snake Slide Show at California Outfitters-Fresno, CA

• \$385 Mike Libecki Year of the Snake Slide Show at Neptune Mountaineering-Boulder, CO • \$381 Mike Libecki "Year of the Snake Slide Show" at Black Diamond Equipment, Ltd — Salt Lake City, UT

• \$355 Mike Libecki Year of the Snake Show at Mammoth Mountaineering Supply -Mammoth Lakes, CA

Thank You

For putting on climbing and bouldering comps:

Scott Rennak and the ABS, Mike Moelter, Anne-Worley Bauknight, and the Boulder Rock Club: Dave Schlosser and Rocknasium, Bryan Pletta and Stone Age Climbing Gym, Patrick Hayes and Rock of Ages Climbery, the Miami University Climbing Wall, Julie Versteeg, and Jessica Brown; Christopher Botkins and the University of Northern Colorado, WSU Rec Center and Jenn Mueller, Aspen Rec. Center and Jeremy Graham, St. Lawrence University and Sara Huenekin, Neal Baggett and the Missoula Rock Garden, Boulders Rock Gym, James Madison Recreation and Eric Pories, Upper Limits and Katie Hoffman

For hosting or presenting a slide show:

Phil Leeds and the gang at Skinny Skis, Jimmy Chin, Mark Newcombe, Jim Donini, Brian Clarke and the entire CU Alpine Club; Holly Scerbo, Jordan Campbell, and the Mountain Sports crew, Robbie Williams and the A-Team, Mike Libecki, and Kurt "the General" Smith, Mountain Chalet, Redpoint Climber's Supply, Ashland Outdoor Store, Cross Country Connection, Neptune Mountaineering, Dave Talsky and the good folks at Mammoth Mountaineering Supply, California Outfitters, Real Cheap Sports, the Stronghold Athletic Club, Mountain Sports in Chico

For sponsoring festivals, demos, membership promotions, or fundraisers:

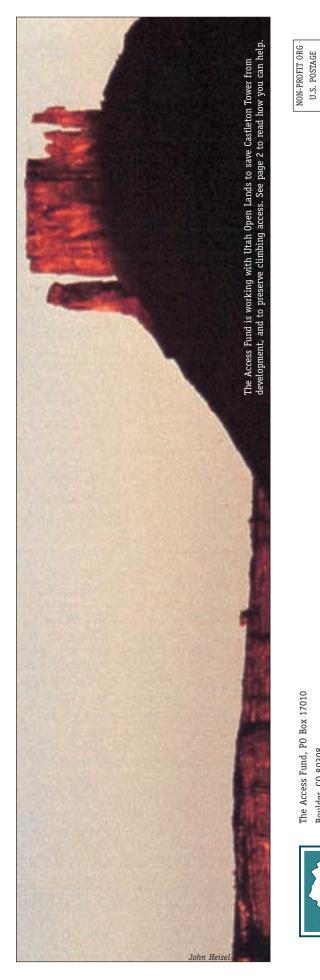
Vinny McClelland, the Mountaineer, and everyone involved with Mountainfest; Maury McKinney and all who participated in the Mount Washington Valley Ice Climbing Festival; Brett Davis, Dave Thompson, and the Hampshire College Outdoor Program; everyone who made the Valdez Ice Festival a success; the Pennsylvania Climbers Coalition, the Lancaster Climbing Club For just being great friends of the AF!

Wayne Fuller, Heather Hibbard, Richard Doucette, Robert Parish, Al Rubin, Shannon Stuart-Smith, Armando Menocal, Conrad Anker, Lonny Whitcomb, Bob Myers, David Cooper, Gene Kistler, Pete Cassam, Beth Wald, Jorge Visser, Mike Ousley Special thanks to Jeanne Niemer and the USCCA Climbers! Together they raised \$945 for the Access Fund! Keep Crankin' Kids!

Thanks to End of Year Appeal and Direct Mail Contributers

\$500+ Steven Butensky Deirdre Byers Pascal Dornier John Sharp Monty Smith Allen Steck Gary Steube John Taladay Nancy Zahmiser

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Vertical Times #46 June 2002