

Vertical Times



THE NATIONAL PUBLICATION OF THE ACCESS FUND
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**COPPER MINING PROPOSED AT
QUEEN CREEK, ARIZONA**

ADOPT-A-CRAG SEASON APPROACHES

Queen Creek, AZ: A Call to Action

Arizona has been at the forefront of modern rock climbing for many years. Its mild climate attracts climbers from all over the world. Unfortunately, Arizona has also been at the forefront of restrictions and closures significant to the climbing community. In the late 1980's, Tonto National Forest closed the Superstition Wilderness to fixed anchors and climbers began negotiations that continue today—to define what is and what's not okay while climbing in federal designated wilderness areas.

Now another Arizona area, Queen Creek, home to the Phoenix Boulder Blast, is at the center of what could be the largest loss of climbing in history. Resolution Copper wants to mine the area for copper deposits, reputedly the richest deposits in North America. Although the mining would be done entirely underground, it could require closing the entire 760-acre Oak Flat parcel and may result in as much as 300 feet of subsidence. This prime climbing territory—thousands of bouldering problems and hundreds of roped routes—could be lost forever!

While Resolution Copper has been appealing to the local population and elected officials through promises of jobs/\$ and a better life, they've also been pushing for a legislated land swap with the US Congress. This type of exchange—subject to much less public review and comment—would make the climbing at Oak

Flat private and no longer subject to public review.

We at the Access Fund have not been idle. We've worked closely with the local climbing community to create "Friends of Queen Creek" (FOQC), a local climbers' organization whose mission is retaining public access to Oak Flat and the larger Queen Creek area. We've actively engaged Resolution Copper, the US Forest Service, and have organized meetings with local climbers and other interested parties. We're currently working to meet with Arizona's Congressional delegation about the proposed land swap, with the Governor of Arizona, and other officials who have a stake in this matter.

Inside this issue you will read updates from Jason Keith, Access Fund policy director, about what has been done and how you can become involved on the local and national level .

We need your help to show our elected officials that climbers are united in the mission to protect Oak Flat access, and we need your membership support to fund the resources needed in what might be the single largest challenge ever faced by American climbers.

Call, email, or JOIN today: (303) 545-6672, info@accessfund.org, www.accessfund.org

Steve Matous

Access Fund Executive Director

On the cover: Bouldering/sport climbing mecca or potential copper mine? Queen Creek, Arizona—an oasis for climbers and recreationists. *Photo by John Heisel.*

POLICY REPORT

Arizona's Oak Flat Threatened by Mining Proposal

Access to portions of Arizona's Queen Creek/Oak Flat area – home to the Phoenix BoulderBlast (formerly, the Phoenix Bouldering Contest) – may be lost forever if a mining proposal to extract billions of dollars worth of high-grade copper is approved. Resolution Copper's proposed mine – believed to be the largest copper ore body in North America, and located thousands of feet beneath the US Forest Service-managed Oak Flat area – could



John Heisel

Queen Creek, Arizona—home to the Phoenix Bouldering Blast and a winter destination for climbers worldwide. If Resolution Copper's plans proceed, 760 acres of public land will be closed.

cause substantial ground subsidence requiring the area to be closed to public entry. The mine could affect hundreds of bouldering problems and roped routes, resulting in the largest ever loss of climbing resources in the US.

The Access Fund continues to work with the newly-formed Friends of Queen Creek (FOQC) to advocate for continue public access to the Oak Flat area, and identify possible outcomes and strategies to maintain climbing and bouldering access at Oak Flat. The FOQC and AF Policy Director Jason Keith have met with officials from Resolution Copper to explore alternatives whereby mining activity and climbing opportunities in the Queen Creek area can coexist.

At this stage Resolution Copper has completed initial feasibility studies and begun "informal discussions" with the US Forest Service's Tonto National Forest concerning the proposal. For more information call the Tonto National Forest in Phoenix, AZ at (602) 255-5200, log on to their website at www.fs.fed.us/r3/tonto/indexy.html, or email the Tonto's Deputy of Public Affairs Vincent Picard at vpicard@fs.fed.us. The loss of Oak Flat access could also result from a proposed legislated land exchange, which could effectively take the public's voice out of the approval process unless Congress is convinced otherwise. If you would like to help FOQC work for continued public access to Oak Flat, log onto www.accessfund.org/programs/oakflat.htm. For more local information, check out www.friendsofqueencreek.com or email info@friendsofqueencreek.com.

NPS Releases Report Analyzing Cost Recovery for High Altitude Rescues on Mt. McKinley, Denali National Park and Preserve

The National Park Service (NPS) recently released a report ordered by Congress to complete a mountain climber rescue cost recovery study describing the role of the NPS in search and rescue activities. The study, which analyzes the suitability and feasibility of recovering costs of high altitude rescues on Mt. McKinley, recommends the following: (1) the cur-



A recent mountain climber rescue cost recovery study by the National Park Service could lead to increased climber registration fees and force climbers to pay for rescues.

rent policy of not charging for search and rescue activities be continued; (2) to reduce costs related to evacuating injured climbers, the NPS will work with a hospital in Anchorage regarding use of its Lifeguard helicopter to transport injured climbers from the 7,200-foot basecamp (the hospital would bill the patient directly for this service); (3) that proof of medical insurance should not be required (although the NPS will encourage climbers to carry medical insurance and provide information about access to providers specializing in climbing insurance); (4) registration should be required for all climbers within Denali National Park and Preserve; and (5) in order to help recover costs for human waste management studies, an additional \$50 fee should be added to the current \$150 climber registration fee. The total fee for climbing Mt. McKinley or Mt. Foraker would then be \$200.

NPS To Reconsider the Twin Sisters Climbing Ban at the City of Rocks, ID

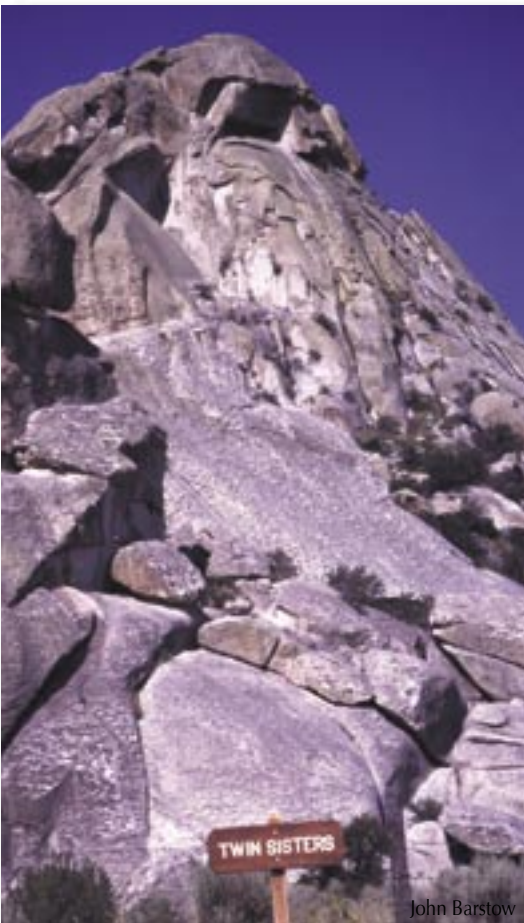
In February the Access Fund's Policy Director Jason Keith traveled to Washington DC to lobby on several issues, in particular to seek support for reversing the climbing ban at Twin Sisters at the City of Rocks National Reserve. As a result of this advocacy work, all members of the

Idaho congressional delegation (Senators Craig and Crapo; Congressmen Simpson and Otter) signed onto a letter urging the National Park Service (NPS) to revise the climbing management plan (CMP) at the City of Rocks in Idaho and ease the absolute climbing ban on the Twin Sisters formation.

The Twin Sisters (closed to climbing since 1993) are the most prominent and recognizable rock formations at the City of Rocks and provide unparalleled opportunities for rock climbers from around the country. The Twin Sisters formation is also a National Historic Landmark due to its association with the California Trail. In 1993 the NPS initiated a Twin Sisters Resource Study to evaluate the effects of rock climbing on the formations' historic values. Despite the NPS conclusion that rock climbing had no significant measurable effect on the geologic, natural or visual integrity of the historic resource at Twin Sisters, the 1998 CMP for the City of Rocks prohibited climbing on the Twin Sisters to protect its historic "feeling and association." It is also worthwhile to note that power lines and a house are clearly visible from the California Trail, while climbers on Twin Sisters are not visible from the Trail, even to the trained eye. The 1998 CMP for the City of

Rocks is currently up for revision.

The March 23, 2004 letter from Congress encouraged the NPS to implement a multiple-use management plan providing for low-impact climbing activities consistent with NPS policies, and consider a balanced management approach for Twin Sisters in a revised CMP that provides climbing opportunities while ensuring that appropriate historic values are protected. On April 19, 2004 the NPS responded to Congress by stating that unrelated pressing management issues have caused them to also reconsider their policies on the Twin Sisters closure. Accordingly, the NPS hopes to begin the process of amending the Comprehensive Management Plan for the City of Rocks and to assess "if the decision to ban climbing on the Twin Sisters remains valid from a recreational and resource stewardship perspective."



John Barstow

As a result of recent Access Fund advocacy work, members of congress signed a letter urging the National Park Service to reverse the climbing management plan at the City of Rocks and ease the absolute climbing ban on the Twin Sisters in Idaho.

Vertical Times, April 2004, volume 57.

The Access Fund is a national non-profit organization dedicated to keeping climbing areas open and conserving the climbing environment.

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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 \$2 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 cliff-dwelling plants.

Vertical Times is the membership newsletter of the Access Fund published six times a year in February, April, June, August, October, and December.

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AREA REPORTS

Climbing Access Preserved in Arizona's McDowell Mountains

(Report by Erik Filsinger)

The McDowell Mountains north of Scottsdale, Arizona have long provided outstanding granite cragging for Arizona climbers. Although difficult access issues were resolved at Pinnacle Peak a few years back (see www.phoenixrockgym.com/pphist.htm), access to many other quality McDowell Mountains climbing spots remained uncertain due to sprawling golf courses and housing developments.

In May Scottsdale voters approved a sales tax to fund land purchases in the McDowell Mountain Sonoran Preserve that will help pay for the construction of access points and facilities to several longstanding and popular climbing areas. Thanks to the hard work of the Arizona Mountaineering Club and the McDowell Sonoran Land Trust, access is now ensured to hundreds of climbing routes in the McDowells at places such as Tom's Thumb, Gardiner's Wall, and Morrell's Wall. For more information, contact Carla at the McDowell Sonoran Land Trust Preserve: preserve@mslt.org.

Rappel Ropes Fixed in Black Canyon's Cruise Gully

(report by Jeff Achey)

Climbing rangers at Black Canyon National Park, Colorado, upgraded several heavily used technical passages in the

Inner Canyon this spring. Brent Mims and others of the NPS installed seasonal fixed lines on the two Cruise Gully rappels and the South Chasm View access Tyrolean, and upgraded the old hardware on the Tyrolean. No new anchor stations were created, but existing stations were improved and equipped with 11mm static line that will be checked periodically by rangers and removed each winter. Pulling ropes on the two Cruise Gully rappels had contributed to both access bottlenecks in the gully and rockfall in the landing zones, so in past years climbers often had fixed old beater ropes at these points. Mammut Ropes, working through Climbing Magazine and the Access Fund, donated a spool of burly 11mm static cord that should keep the raps fresh and safe for many seasons. Many thanks to all involved.

Bill Approved to Protect the NJ Highlands

In a sweeping act reminiscent of the one that saved the Pinelands a quarter-century ago, the Legislature overwhelmingly approved a bill to preserve the northern Highlands and protect the water supply for half the state. The passage of the bill protects resources in the area. Decisions have not been finalized regarding climbing access. For more information, visit the Highlands Coalition website at www.highlandscoalition.org/ For general New Jersey climbing access information, visit the Access NJ Climbs site at <http://climbnj0.tripod.com/>



John Heisel

Mammut Ropes, working through Climbing Magazine and the Access Fund, recently donated a spool of 11mm static cord to replace rotting rappel ropes in the Cruise Gully of the Black Canyon, CO and keep climbers safe!

SUPPORT ACCESS TO OUTDOOR RECREATION!

As summer approaches, Americans for our Heritage and Recreation (AHR) is also kicking off its Land and Water Conservation fund (LWCF) petition drive to the President. LWCF has been responsible for the creation of more than 40,000 parks and recreation areas ensuring access for millions of Americans to get outdoors. Additionally, it also protects open space, wilderness areas, wetlands, and refuges. We are simply asking the President to keep his promise and fully fund LWCF. As LWCF faces decreased funding, it is imperative to let the President know that people rely on this program for outdoor recreation. Please go to www.asap2004.org today to sign our petition and join us in getting one million signatures by Labor Day so that we can ensure all Americans enjoy the benefits of LWCF!

Join Us at the Access Fund's 2004 Annual Dinner in San Francisco

Our annual dinner is a vital tool for building financial support to advance our mission; keeping climbing areas open and conserving the climbing environment.

We rely solely on membership fees, corporate sponsors, individual donors and foundations to fund our mission. This year's dinner will contribute resources for our key initiatives. We hope you will join us for a wonderful evening of sharing adventures with friends about climbing in Yosemite.

When: Thursday, September 23, 2004

Where: San Francisco, Golden Gate Club, On The Presidio

Who: Allen Steck, Hans Florine, Tommy Caldwell and Beth Rodden; Access Fund board members, staff and friends.

What: An evening of dinner and conversation with speakers from three generations sharing their climbing adventures in Yosemite.

Invitations for the event and registration will be made available on the AF website.

For more information, visit www.accessfund.org/events/annual_dinner.html

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GRASSROOTS

CRAG-VT Working to Protect the "Vertical Trail"

(Report submitted by Heather Furman, CRAG Vermont President and Access Fund Board Member)



In 1999 a group of local climbers came together over the potential loss of access to a series of cliffs in northwestern Vermont. Out of these meetings, the Climbing Resource Access Group of Vermont formed as a locally led, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that works toward maintaining access and promoting the conservation of Vermont's climbing resources. In the past several years, CRAG-VT has been building relationships with local landowners and land managers throughout the state to assure continued access to climbing areas that have seen generations of use.

Virtually all of climbing areas in Vermont are located on private land. Maintaining a Vermont tradition of allowing access to private property, many landowners permit a wide range of recreational pursuits, including climbing. However, the explosive popularity of climbing is increasing the use of these privately owned lands, making landowners hesitant to maintain their open-door policy. Lack of knowledge about legal liability and protection, and greater pressure on the more popular climbing areas, are beginning to threaten access to these privately owned lands. Over the past decade, several landowners have posted their property, removing some of the most beautiful and exciting cliffs from the current repertoire of available crags.

As a result, CRAG-VT works with landowners in different ways to secure access to these vertical trails; from handshake agreements, to outright purchase of property. In May 2003, CRAG-VT received 5-acre land donation that includes the cliffs at Lower West Bolton. This acquisition has permanently secured access, and

preserves an area that so many climbers enjoy. As owners of this important climbing resource, CRAG-VT takes its stewardship responsibilities seriously by promoting safe and ethical climbing. With the success of the Lower West acquisition, CRAG-VT has embarked on a second climbing resource access project. The Bolton Quarry has long been a regionally significant rock and ice climbing area. Once used during the construction of Interstate-89, the Quarry was abandoned upon its completion in the 1960's. It has since developed into one of Northern Vermont's most important rock and ice climbing locales. CRAG-VT is negotiating to buy the Bolton Quarry and its surrounding 30-acre parcel for recreational climbing, hiking, and wildlife habitat preservation.

Working to secure access to the Bolton Quarry is a formidable task. The total project cost is nearly \$55,000. So far, with support from the national climbing advocacy organization - the Access Fund, area retailers such as Climb High, member donors, and events such as the Everest Challenge Climbathon, CRAG-VT has made significant steps toward achieving its goal. For more information about CRAG-VT please visit our website: www.cragvt.org.

New Access Fund Affiliates

The Access Fund would like to welcome the following climbing organizations that have joined the Affiliate Partnership. We are very excited to formalize our relationship with the climbing organizations that perform such great work at the local and regional levels. In joining together, our goal is to not only strengthen the Access Fund's relationship with local climbing organizations, but also to strengthen all of our advocacy efforts, as well.

There truly is strength in numbers and, through our unified effort, we can make a difference for the preservation of climbing access and conservation of the climbing environment. We are looking forward to a long-term and mutually beneficial relationship.

Boise Climbers Alliance
Boone Climbers Coalition
Carolina Climbers Coalition
CRAG-Vermont



Eastern Iowa Climbers' Coalition
Gunks Climbers' Coalition
Kootenai Climbers- Idaho
NJAccess
Pennsylvania Alliance of Climbers
Ragged Mountain Foundation
Salt Lake Climbers Alliance
San Diego Climbers Coalition
Southern Sierra Climbers Association
Western Massachusetts Climber's Coalition

See the AF LCO page at:
accessfund.org/whoweare/who_lco.html
for a list of Affiliate websites/links. If you are a grassroots, volunteer-based climbing organization, association, or access committee, we encourage you to sign up as an Access Fund Affiliate. For more information, please contact Deanne, grassroots coordinator at 303.545.6772 ext 112 or Deanne@accessfund.org.

Adopt-a-Crag 2004

This year, the Access Fund is taking Adopt-a-Crag to new heights! Our goal is to support 89 Adopt-a-Crags around the country. If we were to climb Yosemite's Salathe Wall (35 pitches), The Nose (31 pitches), and Half Dome, Northwest Face (23 pitches) in a day, we would complete 89 pitches of climbing. Of course, we can't do it alone. We need your help to reach this goal. Presently, there are 21 events. We have just moved off "Thank God Ledge" on Half Dome, and with your help we will top-out soon.

Consider Adopt-a-Crag as an avenue for building alliances and partnerships and to plan for the future. Adopt-a-Crag inspires activism, advocacy, volunteerism, and stewardship. This national conservation effort promotes a sense of respect and responsibility and provides a means of giving back to climbing areas.

This year we have expanded Adopt-a-Crag to encompass the entire month of September. We made this change to encourage organizers to schedule their Adopt-a-Crag event on a day that works best for their community and to partner with other organizations. You can obtain all your Adopt-a-Crag information and register on the AF website. For more information, contact Deanne, grassroots coordinator at 303.545.6772 ext 112 or Deanne@AccessFund.org.

Adopt-a-Crag Events (as of 6/04)

- 8/21 Anchorage, AK. Seward Highway Adopt-a-Crag, Wayne Fuller, climb@alaska.net
- 9/04 Brevard, NC. Adopt-a-Crag at Looking Glass Rock, contact Adam Fox, adam@foxmountainguides.com
- 9/11 Hager's Mountain, Cary, NC. 3rd Annual Hager's Mountain Adopt-a-Crag, Roger May, alpinist@nc.rr.com
- 9/11 8am, Cody, WY. Shosone River Canyon Clean-Up, Kenny Gasch, bwb@vcn.com
- 9/11 Lafayette, GA. Lost Wall Trail Day, Pigeon Mountain, Bryan Raffield, ynorman@mindspring.com
- 9/11 Monticello, IA. 7th Annual Wild Iowa-Pictured Rocks Adopt-a-Crag Clean-up, Evan Fales, evan-fales@uiowa.edu
- 9/11 Sandrock, AL. Sandrock Adopt-a-Crag, Michelle Connell, tradclimber@myway.com
- 9/18 Great Falls Park, VA. Adopt-a-Crag at Great Falls Park, Thomson Ling, thomsonling@hotmail.com
- 9/18 Pinnacle, NC. Adopt-a-Crag at Pilot Mountain State Park, Michael Pinkston (Mr. P), TheClimbingPlace@aol.com
- 9/18 Lewis and Clark State Park, OR. Adopt-a-Crag at the Bluffs, Tony Holmes, nwwilderness@aol.com
- 9/18 Rocky Butte, OR. Rocky Butte Rendezvous, Kellie Rice, accessfundgal@yahoo.com
- 9/18 Iron Gate, Clifton Forge, VA. Roanoke College Adopt-a-Crag, Mr. P, TheClimbingPlace@aol.com
- 9/18 Dragons Tooth, VA. Dragons Tooth Adopt-a-Crag, "Mr. P, TheClimbingPlace@aol.com
- 9/18 Salem, VA. Hanging Rock Adopt-a-Crag, Mr. P, TheClimbingPlace@aol.com
- 9/18 Roanoke, VA. McAfee's Knob Adopt-a-Crag, Mr. P, TheClimbingPlace@aol.com
- 9/19 Clifton, ME. Clifton Adopt-a-Crag, Paul Stern, paul.stern@umit.maine.edu
- 9/25 Anacortes, WA. Mount Erie Adopt-a-Crag hosted by Cascade Guiding Services, Scott Harder, scott@cascadeguide.com
- 9/25 Santa Barbara, CA. Gibraltar Rock Adopt-a-Crag Clean-Up hosted by UCSB Adventure Programs, Rod Tucknott, rod@par.ucsb.edu
- 10/02 Castlewood Canyon State Park, CO. 2nd Annual Castlewood Clean-Up, Todd Mayville, tamayvil@acsd14.k12.co.us
- 10/10 Coopers Rock, WV. Coopers Rock, Greg Corio, gcorio@mail.wvu.edu

MEET THE AF

Michael Pinkston ("Mr. P"), President of the Carolina Climbers' Coalition & Adopt-a-Crag Aficionado

Deanne Buck: What can you tell us about the success of your Adopt-a-Crag events?

Mr. P: A genuine passion for the sport in all its forms, combined with and unbridled enthusiasm, as well as a strong desire to bring the opposing camp together seem to be some of the elements which have contributed to my over all success. As a climber of almost forty years, I've always been active in climbing and environmental issues. Much of my early climbing was in Europe where it was easy to get involved in the Alpine Club, or the UIAA. I arrived back in the states just about the time the Access Fund (AF) was getting started. Those who know me would call me enthusiastic if nothing else. I've always had a tendency to throw myself into a project 100%. As a lone climber, I knew that I could accomplish something, but with the AF, it made it much easier to introduce myself and say that I am a represent of the AF a nationally recognized climbers advocacy group. Lots of genuine handshakes eventually led to meetings and the beginning of positive relationships between land managers and climbers.

DB: What is your motivation to host/organize Adopt-a-Crag Events?

MP: It's no secret that climbers have gotten a bad rap from just about every media source. They say climbers are reckless, irresponsible, and antisocial. The Adopt-a-Crag events have given climbers a chance to meet land managers and in many cases build lasting relations between officials and climbers. Organizers of Adopt-a-Crag events are in many ways ambassadors of knowledge and good will.

DB: What can people do to be stewards of their local climbing areas outside of Adopt-a-Crag?

MP: The Adopt-a-Crag event is just the beginning. It's great to have a single day to conduct a clean up. Following the event have a party, get to know the climber, get

names and address, and phone numbers, and begin to network. Invite the park staff and take a few minutes to ask what other projects could we help you with.

DB: Is there anybody you want to thank for helping you organize your events?

MP: The willingness of park officials, land managers, private land owners and federal land managers to work with the AF, and individual climbing leaders have been invaluable and very instrumental in the overall success of each event. However, it is the climbers and activists who come together giving a consolidated effort to make climbing areas a place where future generations of climbers enjoy. Without the individual climber who freely gives of their time, skill and effort, we would be in the Stone Age. I would like to thank the AF for their visionary thinking and I would definitely like to thank all the sponsors who freely give products to help make each individual event a huge success.

DB: Why should climbers join the AF?

MP: Belonging is a natural part of human nature. As a member of the AF, you're declaring your intention to become part of a much larger group of climbers. When I think of all the complex and different climbing disciplines within our climbing community, I can only think of one organization, which celebrates the complexity and diversity of the whole climbing community. Joining the AF is not like any other organization you will ever be a part of. As a member of the AF, climbers can become directly involved in the future of climbing. To date, there is no other organization on the planet that is solely dedicated to the expressed interest of climbers and their future. For the most part the AF represents the voice of reason in an otherwise insane world where land managers seemed determined to close access to cliffs, and climbers battle for the right to climb. I view the AF as a reasonable bridge between bureaucracy and climbers' rites. Throughout the country individual climbing coalition groups have begun to spring up as a result of the threat of closures looms in, however, and with few exception it is the AF who time and time

again has helped work out a reasonable resolution to many closure thought the United States. So, why should climbers join the AF? Because for the first time in climbing history we have become a powerful voice for the future of climbing. Because, regardless of which climbing camp you find yourself in—Bouldering, Sport, Trad, Big Wall, Alpine or Ice, the AF is there for you the individual climber. As climbing continues to grow we need a flag pole to rally around from time to time, a place that gives us a center of gravity if you will. The AF is our organization and our representation and is our future. So, who should join the AF? Everyone who owns a chalk bag, has taped their fingers, has climbing shoes, grips an ice ax or places a cam in rock. Everyone who climbs in a gym, or part of an outdoor climbing club or would like to become a climber. Everyone. The more members, the more lobbying power the AF has. While development in climbing will continue to astound mere mortals, the AF will remain steadfast to protect the rights of all climbers.

DB: What do you think of the cost to join the AF?

MP: This is our organization, and regardless of the type of climbing you enjoy all climbers should become members of the AF. To put it in terms climbers can understand: Some chalk bags cost more than it cost to join the AF. For a fraction of what you pay for a rope, you can become a member of the AF. Most cams cost more than it takes to sign up for the AF. Crash pads may very well save you from a bad fall, but by joining the AF you can always help to assure that you will have a place to boulder. You can't even get a good ice screw for what it takes to pay a years membership into the AF. Climbers need to put their priorities in order when getting started, so include in your new starter kit which include a harness, carabiner, belay device, chalk bag, chalk, shoes, and an AF membership. Climbing gear wears out and climbers get old, but your membership in the AF will continue to grow and help shape the future of our sport.

DB: Any last thoughts?

MP: During the last four years where

I've planed and participated in Adopt-a-Crag events I've noticed that this single event has begun to galvanize the climbing community. For the first time there is a unifying theme, which can unite climber or all kinds and begins to bring focused attention to climbing as a sport with an ever-growing population. We need to take this program to the next level by getting political support and activism. We can no longer stand in the shadows protecting our private crag or boulder field. Our future lies in our ability to organize and become part of the solution. We have already begun in many cases with our grassroots organizations, but we need to do more in order to protect our environment and the rock we so dearly love. One of the best ways to begin is by becoming a member of the AF. I would like to close with a challenge to all who read this article. This year's goal for Adopt-a-Crag events has been set between 80-100. I believe that this goal should be doubled. What kind of message do you think we could send if this year we host more than 200 Adopt-a-Crag events across the United States!



Michael Pinkston ("Mr. P.") after leading the classic *Sentinel Butress* at Moore's Wall.

LETTERS

Note: The opinions expressed below are not necessarily those of the Access Fund

OHV Thoughts

I just wanted to write, as an Access Fund member and off-highway-vehicle enthusiast, to let you know my feelings on the issue. It seems to me it's only a matter of time before the Sierra Club and other "hikers only if that" types of environmental groups get all of the other types of users to gang up on each other to the point of extinction. Can't you just see letters going out to rafter, hiker, and mountain biker advocacy groups saying "Climbers are the biggest threat to our wilderness, let's get rid of them! Write your congressman today!" Well that's the kind of thing Access Fund members can't stand. So...why would we want to kick out another user group from our national lands?

Climbers and OHV users are more similar than we are different: outsiders don't understand either group very well, both are seen (legitimately) as destroyers of the pristine state of wilderness, both feel (legitimately) that they do more to help nature than others, and both are being evicted from some of their favorite historic places for recreation.

Don't think OHV users are environmentally responsible? Have you ever seen a trail cleanup organized by these guys? I guarantee that we haul out a lot more garbage in our pickup beds than we climbers can put in our pockets and backpacks! I believe that all of the user groups need to work together for responsible use of the same areas regardless of our chosen form of recreation, or we will ALL end up fighting each other uselessly and have fewer venues for our favorite activities. To you and all the AF staff, keep up your great work protecting our access and I'll keep buying memberships, Adopting Crags, and encouraging others to do the same.

*Greg
Via Email*

The Access Fund Responds:

In April the Access Fund signed onto a joint letter supporting the Forest Service's intent to "develop new policies and regulations to address unmanaged off-road vehicle use and the growing negative consequences of such use." The Access Fund's mission serves to protect all types of climbing environments: from urban sport crags to alpine big walls, from highly used bouldering areas to isolated wilderness routes. Preserving the opportunity to experience backcountry climbing without the noise of motorized activity is just as important to the Access Fund as protecting the qualities of industrial sport climbing located next to busy highways.

The letter the Access Fund signed to the USFS represented our efforts to preserve the character of existing backcountry climbing by supporting some level of management of what is currently unmanaged OHV use. The AF doesn't "oppose" motorized recreation – nearly all climbers enjoy the benefits of motorized vehicles when approaching their climbing objectives. Rather, we seek to protect climbing experiences that share "fresh air, clean water, wild plants and animals, inspiration, and natural quiet and backcountry character." This letter did not ask the Forest Service to close any roads or even prohibit the establishment of new motorized routes. Rather, we urged the USFS to develop policies to address "illegal trespass, unauthorized route creation, safety concerns and user conflicts, [and] undue damage and disturbance to sensitive habitat and resources."

The AF believes that public land management agencies have a responsibility to manage activities (recreational or otherwise) that impair otherwise legitimate uses of public lands. This includes ATVs, jeeps, motorcycles – and climbers. We at the AF agree with you that "all user groups need to work together for responsible use of the same areas regardless of our chosen form of recreation." Thanks for supporting the Access Fund.

*Jason Keith
Access Fund Policy Director*

Available Online

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To view the current issue of the *AF E-News*:
accessfund.org/virtual_times/index.html

Access and Conservation Access Fund Member Handbook Online

The Member Handbook is a complete source of information about access issues, Access Fund programs, letter writing and other advocacy tools, and a primer on ways to get involved at your local crags. Look inside for:

- Tips for writing political action letters.
- What to do about climbing access problems
- Guidelines about how to climb responsibly.

- Download the PDF file at:
accessfund.org/pdf/memb-handbook.pdf

Vertical Times Also Online

Vertical Times, the Access Fund's bimonthly print newsletter, provides news on policy, area reports, events, action alerts, grants, and more. It is a benefit to members and non-members alike—if you are not a member, please join at www.accessfund.org. The AF is now offering this unique publication electronically to decrease printing and mailing costs, thus allocating more funds to protect YOUR CLIMBING FUTURE. If you choose to take part in this effort, and cease shipment of the Vertical Times to your home, please E-mail your name and address with "Remove Vertical Times" as the subject to:

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Presently, over 1400 members have chosen our online option — a savings to the Access Fund of \$4200 per year to be utilized in protecting YOUR CLIMBING FUTURE.

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Stay tuned for updated MIP items coming this July!

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Initiated in 1991, this program consists of 100 businesses dedicated to preserving America's diverse climbing resources. After each company's name appears the year it became a corporate partner. Please support these companies, which support YOUR CLIMBING FUTURE.

Featured Corporate Partner — prAna

"Access is one of the most important issues facing us as climbers, today. Whether it be on the local, regional or national level, time and time again the Access Fund has risen to the occasion and responded with clarity and conviction. More than just working progressively towards solutions that work, the Access Fund serves as a community builder, creating relationships and dialogues where they otherwise might not be. This is an extremely important function in our community, one in which deserves all the support we can muster."

Beaver Theodosakis, prAna CEO

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Events & Thanks

Event Calendar

July

7/08-7/11 Lander, WY, International Climbers Festival, climbersfestival@wyoming.com, www.climbersfestival.org, Jennifer Barrett, 307-349-1561

Thanks for your support through general events and projects

Paul Fish & Mountain Gear for the Red Rocks Rendezvous, Sig Hepp, Jr., The Outing Club, EMS-CT, Mat Erpelding, Texas Tech University-Outdoor Pursuits Center, Texas A&M University, Suzanne Rester, Robert Penn, Hampshire College Outdoor Program, James Wallish & Scott Williams, Vertical Endeavors, Jim Waugh, 21st Phoenix Boulder Blast, New Belgium Brewing Company, Paul Dief, Robb Shurr, Ojai Int., Heath Norton, *Vbouldering*, Stefan Bergill, Patagonia Beneficial T's, IZZE, Katie Brown, Hans Florine, all who attended the Boulder Project meeting at the PBB, Jeremy Graham, Aspen Rec. Dept, Pam & Chris Schmick & Jody Pollack, Upper Limits, Jungle Gym Sport Climbing, Mike Libeck, University of Tennessee-Rec Sports Dept., Brett Davis & Frank Harvey, Katie Wright & Steve Davis, Summit Canyon Mountaineering, David Schlosser & Rocknasium, Tommy Caldwell & Beth Rodden, Peter Ackroyd, American Alpine Club - Cascade Section, Bob Adams, The Challenge Rock Climbing School, Jennifer Jordan & Jeff Rhoads, Dray, Gary and the staff at Neptune Mountaineering, Brad McLeod, Southeastern Climbers Coalition, Carolina Climbers Coalition, Boone Climbers Coalition.

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LOCAL CLIMBING ORGANIZATIONS

LCOs are volunteer-based climber organizations working in collaboration with the Access Fund to preserve access and conserve the climbing environment at the local or regional level. LCOs also support the Access Fund through events and membership drives. To add your LCO to this list, E-mail deanne@accessfund.org. For links to websites of these LCOs, visit

www.accessfund.org/whoweare/who_lco.html

Alabama

Alabama Climbers' Association
Southeastern Climbers Coalition

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Arizona Mountaineering Club
Friends of Queen Creek
Northern Arizona Climbers Coalition
Tucson Climbers Association

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Ohio Climbers Association

Oklahoma

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Oregon

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Mazamas
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