

# VERTICAL TIMES

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## Mixed Emotions: The Impacts and Implications of Dry-Tooling

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“In 2007, the Access Fund had a dilemma. Though we were nearing our 20th anniversary, we were also facing a bit of an existential crisis.”

Climbers had come to rely on the Access Fund to be there when a climbing area was threatened with any kind of closure. Whether the access restriction was related to raptors or real estate developers, climbers assumed the Access Fund would take on the bad guys when they came knocking. But what most climbers didn't know was that there was no “fund,” despite our name. We had a small endowment, largely based on a bequeathment from the late Northwest climber Mark Bebie. But it wasn't a lot to begin with, and the dot-com stock market crash hadn't helped it.

The Access Fund had come to realize that it just didn't have the resources to buy endangered crags as a way to protect them. We had done a few transactions in earlier days and ended up owning three climbing areas (coincidentally, all in Colorado—most notably, Table Mountain in Golden). We learned the hard way that owning land meant you get to manage it forever. The small Access Fund staff in Boulder, which was trying to cover issues all over the country, found itself spending time negotiating for trash pickup and toilet cleaning, not to mention meeting with hysterical neighbors angry at random visitors who left behind a trail of empty beer cans.

An even bigger dilemma was trying to raise enough money from donors to have cash ready when push came to shove at a threatened crag. It turned out that most people are understandably more concerned about crags near them than places they've never heard of and perhaps won't ever see. But the odds of each donation going to work at a crag in the donor's area seemed slim. It was hard to motivate potential donors when we couldn't tell them how their money would be used.

So, it was somewhat understandable when I first joined the board in 2000 to hear, “We don't buy land anymore.” The

Access Fund had tried, but the tools available at the time didn't scale into a solution that could address the entire United States. While we did offer land-use expertise and legal advice for local climbers who called to ask for help when their crag was in jeopardy, inevitably the local climbing organizations (LCOs) began to feel like they were on their own. They questioned the value of the Access Fund to help them solve problems with more than good advice.

It was a frustrating situation. After all, if you're called the Access Fund, it's not unreasonable for your members to expect an actual bank account ready to go when needed. A breakthrough idea emerged at a casual lunch with a friend who was the NW region vice president of the Trust for Public Land (TPL). The TPL is very successful at using sophisticated financing techniques to leverage relatively small amounts of money to save big areas, like the Marin Headlands, its first project.

The model the TPL developed is elegant. The core idea is that it has cash ready to go when an opportunity to protect a prize property arises. When property comes into play, there is almost always a developer ready with cash on hand. The landowner has the choice of capturing a sure thing now or giving the local conservation community time to rally together, raise the money, and create a long-term stewardship plan, which usually takes a year or more.



Former AF Board President,  
Dan Nordstrom

If you're called the Access Fund, it's not unreasonable for your members to expect an actual bank account ready to go when needed.



In most situations, the cash talks and the developer wins. To be a credible alternative, the conservation community needs to have money in the bank and be ready to write a check on a moment's notice.

The TPL model is to partner with a local group that can, given time, raise money and become the long-term steward for the property. The TPL puts up the initial cash to secure the property, and then a local land trust or possibly a government agency pays back the TPL funds and takes over. The TPL then has the same amount of money back, ready to go to war again. Over time, the TPL folks figured that its revolving funds were saving \$18 worth of property for every \$1 donated.

As my friend described the TPL's approach during that lunch, a light bulb went off—the same thing could work for the Access Fund. Donors could feel good that their contribution would not go to one crag and remain stuck there forever. Instead, every dollar they contributed could be used over and over, at crags all over the U.S. The Access Fund could step in front of the developer, engineer the deal, and make the up-front payment. Then, the locals could have time to do their thing and raise the money to pay back the loan. Once the local players were organized, Access Fund staff wouldn't have to worry about managing the property and could focus on the next opportunity.

It didn't take much for the Access Fund board to get behind the concept. It gave us the opportunity to get back in the business that we always knew we should be in: saving threatened crags. We did an initial study to see what members thought and, sure enough, our amazing community of supporters saw the beauty and gave us the green light to launch our first major capital campaign. It got a little more interesting when we asked for our first big donations in the fall of 2008, right in the middle of a global economic meltdown.

But climbers like a challenge, right? It was kind of like spending a year getting ready for a big expedition and then having the weather forecast turn to shit on the drive to the airport. Turn around and go home? Nah, let's see what happens!

For me, the best part of the whole process was that just as we had raised our initial chunk of real money, a "No Trespassing" sign went up at Lower Index Town Wall, my home crag. It was amazing how quickly the whole plan clicked into place. The family who owned the old quarry site needed to sell. They threatened to sell it to a quarry company but gave the climbers a short window to make something happen. The Washington Climbers Coalition was confident that it could raise the money, but it needed time. The state

was willing to manage the area as a state park, but only if it didn't have to pay for it. Boom, before we had even finished fundraising, we found ourselves stepping in to help save one of the most iconic trad crags in the country. Since then, the successes have just kept coming.

I'm super proud to have been part of the launch of the Access Fund Land Conservation Campaign (AFLCC), and I'm pleased to see the current Access Fund staff "ring the bell" on the fundraising initiative. Having raised over \$1.6 million, we've got the war chest we need to fight the fight and win the battles to save our crags and keep climbers climbing.

I hope you enjoy this issue of the *Vertical Times*, especially the overview on page 13 of our AFLCC projects to date.

Climb Safe,



**Dan Nordstrom**

CEO of Outdoor Research  
Former AF Board President

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we've got the war chest we  
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## Northern Colorado Climbers Coalition Continues Partnership with State and County Parks

Northern Colorado Climbers Coalition (NCCC) has a long, successful history of stewarding popular areas like Horsetooth Reservoir and Poudre Canyon. Most recently, NCCC spearheaded a successful partnership with Lory State Park, creating a new approval process for route and fixed anchor installation — a major first for an area known to climbers almost solely for bouldering. This spring, NCCC continued its longstanding partnership with Larimer County Parks, doing trail and infrastructure work at Carter Lake. For more information on NCCC, visit its website at [nococlimbing.org/](http://nococlimbing.org/).



## Climbers Lead Massive Trail Work Efforts in Red River Gorge

Volunteers and local groups in the Red River Gorge continue to step up and organize some of the largest and most successful Adopt a Crag trail work days in the country. In August, the Red River Gorge Climbers' Coalition Annual Johnny & Alex Trail Day did maintenance on trails to popular areas like Drive By and built new trail opening access to a few new crags. In September, Friends of Muir Valley, along with numerous volunteers and Muir Valley's generous owners Rick and Liz Weber, knocked out bridge building, new trails, and invasive plant removal. Cheers to these extraordinarily successful stewardship efforts in the Red!

## More Local Groups Offer Joint Membership with Access Fund

Access Fund is proud to welcome another great group of local affiliate organizations to our joint membership program: Allied Climbers of San Diego, Black Hills Climbers Coalition, Minnesota Climbers Association, and Salt Lake Climbers Alliance. You can now join Access Fund and your local climbing access organization with a single membership. Visit [www.accessfund.org/jointmembership](http://www.accessfund.org/jointmembership) to learn more.

## New Access Fund Regional Coordinator in Minnesota

A warm welcome to Phaydara Vongsavanthong (Pi, for short), new regional coordinator for Minnesota. Pi is a co-founder of the Minnesota Climbing Co-Op and a new board member of Minnesota Climbers Association. Pi is working to open bouldering access to Banning State Park in Minnesota, where he recently conducted a site visit with state park resources specialists and Access Fund's Conservation Team. We look forward to working with Pi on more stewardship and access projects in MN!



## Local Climbing Organization 101: Donor Stewardship

Individual donors often play a big role in sustaining the important work of local climbing organizations. Here are some pointers to help your organization maintain that support.

### Acknowledge every donation—

Make sure that no donation goes unacknowledged. Either a personal e-mail or a nicely worded automated e-mail acknowledging and expressing appreciation for a donation goes a long way. This is a great job for a volunteer!

### Send an end-of-year letter—

Donors like to see that their money is going to good use. At the end of each year, take the time to inform your donors about the good work you were able to accomplish that year thanks to donors like them. Time the letter to go out in November, and you will also get on their radar during the holiday giving season.

**Provide a tax receipt—**If your organization has 501(c)(3) status, provide your donors with a letter acknowledging the amount of their yearly contribution that they can use for tax purposes. Include your tax ID number. Ideally, this receipt would go out with your end-of-year letter.

### Host a donor appreciation event—

At least once a year, invite your donors to a social event where you can begin to build personal relationships with them. This can be as simple as a BBQ or a gathering at a local bar or coffee shop.



**E**ver arrive at a boulder problem to find the (very obvious) finishing jug ticked in thick, white chalk? Or climbed a route that is caked with gooey chalk on each and every hold?

Despite the obvious benefit of chalk for climbing—its drying effect on sweaty hands—climbers can often get carried away with it. Over the years, chalk gets caked onto holds, forming layers, which affects the texture of the rock and the friction of that very poor sloper. Too many ticks can also cause confusion on a route, botch on-sight attempts, and ruin the self-discovery and problem-solving aspect of climbing.

Too much chalk can also have a negative visual impact that can be a deal breaker for landowners and other recreationists. This visual impact of chalk and tick marks can lead to chalk restrictions (take Garden of the Gods or Arches National Park, for example). The State of Tennessee recently gave climbers an ultimatum when it reclaimed Laurel-Snow State Natural Area where the Honeycomb Roof is located. Climbers are no longer allowed to use white chalk, although Eco Chalk is still permissible.

It's in every climber's best interest to minimize tick marks and overly chalked holds. Here are a few things to keep in mind next time you're out at the crag:

- **Keep ticks to a minimum.** This might seem obvious, but to many it's not. If you are going to tick (and we've all done it), take a few minutes to brush off the tick marks before you leave.
- **Choose the right kind of brush for your rock type.** Certain bristles can negatively affect certain types of rock. For example, nylon brushes can damage sensitive rock like sandstone. The best go-to brush is a Lapis Boar's Hair Brush, which doesn't polish or erode the rock.
- **Use chalk lightly** in areas where it won't be cleaned off naturally by rain, like overhangs, caves, and desert environments.
- **Consider using Eco Chalk by Metolius**, an alternative that can lessen the visual impact.
- **Get involved with your local climbing organization.** Help initiate a chalk cleanup day at your local climbing area. ■

Headline image © Andrew Kornylak  
Special thanks to guest contributor Whitney Boland

# Golden Partnership Preserves Access to Trout Creek

Tucked away in central Oregon, Trout Creek is a crack climbing gem popular with climbers in the Northwest. Located high on a bluff overlooking the Deschutes River, the cliff offers fantastic jamming between tall, clean columns of basalt.

Trout Creek's cliff line also offers prime nesting sites for the federally protected golden eagle. And in February, 2012, the Prineville, Oregon, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) office issued a surprise emergency closure of Trout Creek due to nesting activity in the area.

The abrupt closure blindsided many local climbers. News spread quickly, and the wider climbing community rallied to support the partnership between climbers and the BLM. A broad coalition of support formed, including the Access Fund, Friends of Trout Creek, Central Oregon Rocks, American Alpine Club, Mazamas, and Crag Law Center.

In late February the BLM agreed to a follow-up meeting with climbers, and things went much more positively. "The meeting was a great step toward crafting the kind of relationship between climbers and the BLM that we hoped to have all along," says Eric Sorenson, Access Fund regional coordinator. In what Friends of Trout Creek called "a great gesture of good faith from the BLM," the closure was changed from mandatory to voluntary. A one-month comment period gave the public (including climbers) ample time to provide input on the environmental assessment that would determine final golden eagle protection options.

In March, a pair of golden eagles occupied the nest on Trout Creek's Main Wall and began incubating eggs—highlighting the importance of these efforts. Local climbers respected the closure and refrained from climbing; however, sadly, the nest ultimately failed—through no fault of climbers. The BLM later contacted Friends of Trout Creek and asked climbers if they would investigate the nest site on rappel to gather photographs and evidence to help them understand why the nest failed. The local climbers readily agreed, and Eric Sorenson (shown on right rappelling into the nest site) took on the job.

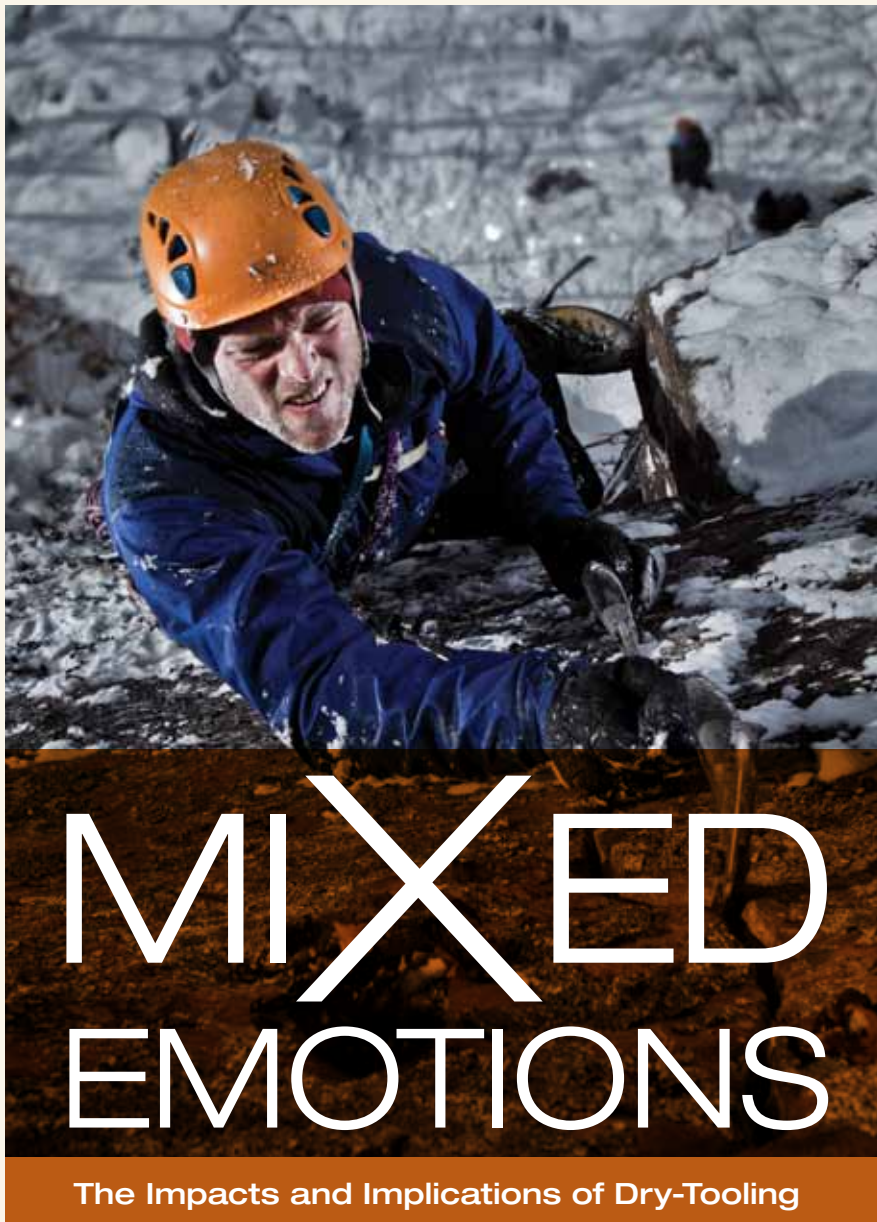
For now, the climbing closure has been lifted. Bumps in the road could have derailed a successful partnership, but local climbers and the BLM stuck to a mutual commitment to work together. Sorenson puts it succinctly, "It's exactly what we had hoped for all along: a fair deal for golden eagles and climbers."

The Access Fund and local climbers are working with the BLM to advocate for a site-specific golden eagle management plan that creates appropriate seasonal buffer zones around each nest. The hope is that each nest can be independently monitored and managed, so that once the eagles have chosen a nest, some closures can be lifted early on climbs that are away from the occupied nest and outside of the buffer zone.

For more local updates, go to [www.facebook.com/FriendsofTroutCreek](https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofTroutCreek). ■







*By Dougald MacDonald*

**T**wo stunning vertical ice climbs, the Rigid Designator and the Fang, split a limestone bowl above East Vail, Colorado. Behind these classic pillars is an overhanging cliff that helped launch the modern mixed-climbing revolution, starting with Jeff Lowe’s visionary Octopussy back in 1994. Over the following two decades, this soft rock bore the brunt of hundreds if not thou-

sands of dry-tooling ascents, leaving divots drilled by monopoints and rows of scratches carved by front-points and tool picks. As one climber put it, the most popular routes look like they’ve been attacked by Freddy Krueger.

Such is the price of dry-tooling on soft stone. And in places like Vail where the rock is much too chossy for rock climbing, and only ice and mixed climbers ever see the cliff up close,

the scars don’t bother many people. But what happens when dedicated dry-toolers venture onto established rock climbs in search of new places to ply their craft?

“I love mixed climbing, but last fall I came across a guy top-rope dry-tooling a sport route I established at a local crag, and I wanted to wring his neck,” says Connecticut-based photographer and climber Chris Beauchamp. “It was like 55 degrees in October. I was just furious that someone would possibly destroy a route that’s climbable 10 months out of the year for a little dry-tool session.”

Dry-tooling is still a tiny subset of our sport, but the numbers have grown steadily in recent years with improvements in gear and the widespread development of bolt-protected “M climbing.” Dry-tooling may seem weird to many climbers, but it’s challenging, strenuous, and plenty fun. “As mixed climbers get stronger, more and more people are able to do hard dry-tooling, and they’re looking for new terrain,” says Joe Sambataro, access director at the Access Fund.

So far, conflicts between dry-toolers and rock climbers have been relatively rare, and dry-tooling has not raised the hackles of land managers. “Most dry-tooling areas are separate from rock climbing areas, so they coexist,” Sambataro says. “However, mixed climbers need to tread lightly to prevent future access issues.”

To a rock climber, the way to avoid conflicts may seem obvious: Keep your picks and points off my crag. But as with many controversies, the issues are subtler than they first seem, and views about dry-tooling vary widely based on local tradition and

Ryan Stefiuk on East Side Slab at Stoney Clove near Tannersville, NY | © Christopher Beauchamp



geology. Especially among younger climbers, there may be confusion about what's acceptable. Is it OK to climb a rock route if it's got snow on it? Is it OK to dry-tool on a crag that has some manufactured handholds because the routes are "artificial" anyway? Is dry-tooling a popular alpine rock route OK because it's in the mountains, even though it might never see substantial ice build-up?

In some parts of the country, winter ascents of popular summer climbs have been happening for decades.

"We have a long tradition of mixed climbing, with many mixed routes climbed from the 60s through the 80s," says Nathan Smith, co-author of *Wasatch Mixed*,

a guide to Utah mixed routes. "More recently, Doug Heinrich and Chris Harmston were some of the first to bolt mixed lines in many of our local areas, often before sport climbers started development. For example, Santaquin Canyon had its bolting started by mixed climbers; the rock climbing routes came later. This early adoption and simultaneous development have kept people's attitudes to mixed pretty reasonable."

In North Conway, New Hampshire, as well, popular rock routes have been climbed in winter for years. "Many classic rock climbs here are mixed test pieces, and more and more are showing the impact of increased traffic," says Erik Eisele, a climber, journalist, and Access Fund regional coordinator for New Hampshire. "The 5.8 corner on Diedre [on Cathedral Ledge] is covered in crampon scratches. It's hard not to notice. It isn't a huge problem

yet, but it's something people are starting to have to grapple with."

Great Britain has a well-established tradition of winter climbing in its mountains, and the standard for acceptable mixed climbing conditions has long been that a cliff must be "white"—that is, covered in snow or ice—before it's okay to climb with tools and crampons. But a thin coating of rime ice actually does little to protect the rock, and what's okay in Scotland and the Lake District may not be okay in other parts of the country. A furor erupted in the U.K. climbing community two seasons ago when a pair of young dry-toolers spent the weekend top-roping grit stone classics at Millstone Quarry, near Shef-

field, despite other climbers asking them to stop. Perhaps understandably, the snow-covered rock at Millstone seemed little different to these climbers than snowy crags commonly climbed farther north.

In the absence of a clear local tradition on dry-tooling, the lesson may be that it's best to err on the side of abstinence. In a story at UK Climbing about the Millstone incident, well-known Scottish climber Dave MacLeod says, "It's easy to go round in circles with arguments about what's justifiable and what isn't, [but] it seems to me that a crucial part of your decision to take a sharp tool to a crag is respect for the others who use it. It's this principle that's always been behind sustainable use of crags for everyone. If you scratch up a popular rock-climbing crag that's not in the mountains, the majority of people that use it are going to be extremely disappointed."

yet, but it's something people are starting to have to grapple with."

To a rock climber, the way to avoid conflicts may seem obvious: Keep your picks and points off my crag.



Jake Hirschi on Unnamed M8, Great White Icicle, Little Cottonwood Canyon, Utah | © Nathan Smith

Making a point that would apply to many areas in North America as well, MacLeod adds, "There are literally thousands of great unclimbed mixed routes in our mountain crags. Ones that are perfect for mixed climbing and won't ruin anyone else's experience of climbing. So why be so careless and disrespectful to other climbers? It doesn't make sense."

Generally, few people object to climbing with tools and crampons in the high mountains—that is, after all, the very essence of alpinism. But shades of gray enter the picture when climbers begin dry-tooling long-established alpine rock climbs. In Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP), for example, some climbers have been reticent about publicizing winter ascents of summertime classics out of fear of angering other climbers.

One who isn't shy about it is Josh Wharton, who frequently does winter ascents of rock routes on the north face of Hallett Peak and other well-known walls in the park. "In RMNP, I feel there is a tradition of winter climbing, so climbing on existing rock climbs in the winter shouldn't be a problem," Wharton says. "Scottish-style mixed climbing in RMNP, particularly on longer routes, is being done by such a small group of people that the impact is very small."

At the extreme far end of the rock-hardness spectrum from Rocky Mountain National Park's granite and gneiss is the sandstone of the desert Southwest, where ice climbers have discovered multi-pitch waterfalls that occasionally freeze in winter. "This last winter, I climbed a 600-foot flow in a slot canyon in Utah," says Nathan Smith. "It's still a 'secret,' so there has not been much impact, but as word gets out, the effects of crampon scratches on the walls will grow—mostly from the rappels, not climbing. I'm not sure what the answer is. It doesn't seem right to say no winter climbing, but it only takes a few people to carelessly place or drag their crampons on the walls to mar the area for the summer visitors."

Keeping a low profile—and thus minimizing climber traffic—may, in fact, be a good way to reduce the impacts of dry-tooling, and this choice extends to guidebook authors as well as climbers. In addition to laying out the generally accepted "ground rules" for their local areas, some guidebook writers may omit climbs they don't feel are sustainable or ethical. Don Mellor, author of *Blue Lines: An Adirondack Ice Climber's Guide*, says, "While I have no interest in or right to tell others what to do in their recreation time, as a guidebook writer I do not want to be complicit in encouraging people to scar rock with ice gear."

Since climbers can be notoriously resistant to following rules, or even guidebook authors' suggestions, the leadership of experienced locals becomes paramount. James Loveridge, a top mixed climber from Duluth, Minnesota, says of his local scene, "All of us who do mixed climbs are also rock climbers, so I think that gives us good perspective on what is appropriate to dry-tool and what is not."

Choss is in the eye of the beholder, of course, which reinforces the point that it's up to a local community to define what's acceptable and spread the word. After all, it's in every climber's interest to minimize dry-tooling impacts and to negotiate conflicts without dragging land managers into the fray. "While this issue isn't critical to access yet," says Brady Robinson, Access Fund executive director, "it's important for the community to get out in front of it before it is critical." ■

## Dry-Tooling: BEST PRACTICES

**1. To avoid conflict, avoid existing rock routes.** Most areas have chossy or mossy cliffs, road cuts, quarries, masonry walls, or other areas suitable for dry-tooling where rock climbers never tread.

**2. When in doubt, ask first.** Local tradition may accept dry-tooling on certain routes, but don't assume a splitter tip's crack is ripe for torqueing just because there's snow on the ground. At the risk of sparking a flame war, you can quickly get a sense of what's generally accepted by posting a query at sites like Mountain Project, Cascade Climbers, and NE Ice.

**3. Avoid soft rock.** Dry-tooling causes much less damage—and generates less controversy—on harder stone like granite or gneiss than soft limestone or sandstone. And if you do dry-tool on existing rock climbs, choose steep routes with big holds. "It's really bad style to destroy a good rock route just because you want to hone your thin mixed skills," says Minnesota climber James Loveridge.

**4. Wear rock shoes for warm-season dry-tooling.** Crampons generally cause more damage than ice tools. Plus, as Loveridge points out, dry-tooling in rock shoes can improve your footwork for summertime rock routes. "I've learned all sorts of subtle ways to make my feet stay on the rock," he says.

**5. Train on an artificial wall.** To learn the subtleties of technique, you need to climb outside. But to get stronger, a wall or home woody works great. Gyms such as CityRock in Colorado Springs or the Minnesota Climbing Co-Op allow dry-tooling in designated areas or off-hours. There also are special indoor-climbing tools designed to hook over plastic holds ([alpkit.com/drytooling](http://alpkit.com/drytooling); [schmoolz.com](http://schmoolz.com)).

**6. Be careful when rappelling.** At many areas, crampons scratch the rock more during lower-offs and rappels than during actual ascents. Stay on the ice when rappelling or lowering, and remove your crampons before descents—but only if it's safe to do so.



# Joshua Tree Wilderness **DEFILED**

Imagine heading out to climb and stumbling across chiseled approach steps, burned trees, stashed climbing gear, and apparently “enhanced” routes. Now imagine that scene is within the pristine wilderness of Joshua Tree National Park. That’s exactly what happened to a local climber earlier this year when he headed out to climb at an area known as the Underground Chasm on Queen Mountain.

There are bad apples in every community, and while we hate to admit it, the climbing community is no exception. Upon learning of the situation, the park immediately conducted an investigation and discovered hundreds of illegally placed bolts, fixed rope, burned Joshua trees, stashed camping and climbing gear, chipped steps, and damage to other nearby trees and plants in this federally protected area.

In 1976, Congress created the Joshua Tree Wilderness, which includes Queen Mountain and the Underground Chasm. At that time, Joshua Tree National Monument managed Joshua Tree Wilderness under Leave No Trace principles without any

formal backcountry or wilderness management plan.

By 1993, hundreds of routes had been developed on Queen Mountain, and the park implemented a bolting ban that prohibited placing new bolts and replacing old bolts throughout the entire park. In 2000, the park finalized a Backcountry and Wilderness Management Plan that replaced the bolting ban with fixed anchor management policies specific to wilderness and non-wilderness areas.

Today, climbers cannot place bolts in Joshua Tree Wilderness without a permit. Fortunately for climbers, the park reached out to the Access Fund and Friends of Joshua Tree for help instead of summarily closing the Underground Chasm to climbing. In June, representatives from the Access Fund and Friends of Joshua Tree toured the Underground Chasm with park staff, and then met with the Joshua Tree superintendent to discuss how to respond. The options discussed ranged from doing nothing to removing all the illegally placed bolts and banning all climbing (and bouldering) within Joshua Tree Wilderness. Given the

number of violations, clear connection to climbers, and budget challenges, removing all of the bolts and banning climbing in the area was an option that the park seriously considered.

The Friends of Joshua Tree and the Access Fund have worked hard for decades to establish a positive relationship with the park, and egregious wilderness violations like these jeopardize access to Joshua Tree Wilderness for all climbers. Luckily, the years of relationship building and stewardship that climbers have invested in Joshua Tree helped mitigate the situation, and the decision was made to 1) use the incident to educate climbers about proper wilderness ethics, 2) evaluate the illegally established routes under the park’s permit application protocol, and 3) only remove routes that would not have been granted a permit.

Thankfully, the illegal acts at the Underground Chasm will not (at least for now) affect climbing access. However, if such blatant violations continue, the park will have to consider policy changes that could significantly reduce climbers’ access. ■



# PROTECT What's Holy



**P**icture it: huge sandstone boulders nestled in the backwoods of southern Illinois, boasting Fontainebleau-like sandstone with perfect friction and aesthetic lines. The Holy Boulders are a hidden gem that have attracted professional climbers and strong athletes from around the country for years. The area features 150 developed problems and potential for hundreds more that climbers of all abilities can enjoy.

“My first impression of the Holy Boulders was incredible,” says professional climber Jimmy Webb. “The rock quality there is second to none and is probably some of the best sandstone I’ve ever climbed on.”

But when “For Sale” signs went up on the property in early 2012, everything changed. Suddenly, climbers were at risk of losing access to the Holy Boulders forever under new ownership.

The boulders sit on a 78-acre tract of farm and forestland that the Tripp family has owned for over 47 years. In 2004, local climber Aaron Brouwer discovered the Holy Boulders from aerial photographs and introduced himself to the landowner. After initial concerns of liability, the family gave climbers verbal permission to climb at the boulders. For eight years, climbers maintained a positive relationship with the Tripp family, offering small tokens of appreciation and keeping information word-of-mouth so as not to jeopardize access.

But in May of 2012, landowners decided to sell the property. Local climber Dave Chancellor of Climb So Ill reached out to the Tripp family, and Leif Faber of Illinois Climbers Association reached out to the Access Fund in an effort to help protect this special resource in the American bouldering community.

The Access Fund recognized a narrow window of opportunity to protect the Holy Boulders and began working with the landowners to reach an agreement to protect the boulders and surrounding property through a multi-phased conservation project.

The Access Fund secured temporary ownership of the Holy Boulders using funds from the Access Fund Land Conservation Campaign, our revolving loan program designed to quickly save threatened climbing areas. Once acquired, the property was divided into two parcels: the climbing area that encompasses the boulder fields and cliff line, and a parcel east of the climbing area that is suited for farmland and a home site. The Access Fund plans to resell the parcel east of the climbing area, paying that portion of the acquisition cost back into the revolving loan fund.

**Your help is needed to raise money to secure permanent climber-friendly ownership of Holy Boulders. Visit [www.accessfund.org/holyboulders](http://www.accessfund.org/holyboulders).**

But your help is needed to raise an additional \$185,000 to secure permanent ownership of Holy Boulders and transfer it to a long-term owner that will keep it open to climbing access for future generations. Suitable long-term owners might include the Illinois Climbers Association (a new non-profit organization) or Shawnee National Forest; however, more work is needed to identify long-term ownership and management of Holy Boulders.

“Climbing is a finite resource,” says professional climber and Holy Boulders regular Matt Segal. “Especially areas like the Holy Boulders that are so special. It’s really important for us to take initiative and try to protect these areas for future generations.” ■

**Please donate to the Protect What's Holy campaign today to ensure long-term access to the Holy Boulders ([www.accessfund.org/holyboulders](http://www.accessfund.org/holyboulders))! With your support, we can protect and steward the Holy Boulders forever.**



# A Legacy of Climbing Area Conservation

In the spring of 2008, the Access Fund set out to raise nearly \$2 million in its first-ever capital campaign to create the Access Fund Land Conservation Campaign—a revolving loan program designed to quickly save threatened climbing areas.

While the Access Fund staff and board have been hard at work fundraising for the AFLCC, the revolving loan program has already helped conserve 11 climbing areas.

After almost five years of raising money for the Access Fund Land Conservation Campaign, we are pleased to finalize our capital campaign. Having raised over \$1.6 million to date, we are in a strong position to continue saving threatened climbing areas and creating a legacy of climbing conservation for years to come. ■

Crag	Location	AFLCC in Action	Loan Status	Long-Term Landowner
Lower Index Town Wall	Index, Washington	\$10,000 bridge loan secured an option agreement to save cliff from quarrying	Paid in full—funds available for new projects	Washington Climbers Coalition
Steele Cliff Line	Steele, Alabama	\$20,000 bridge loan facilitated the purchase of cliff line for climbing	Paid in full—funds available for new projects	Southeastern Climbers Coalition
Rumbling Bald West Side Boulders	Lake Lure, North Carolina	\$72,000 bridge loan saved the boulders from development	Paid in full—funds available for new projects	Carolina Climbers Coalition
Farley Ledge	Erving, Massachusetts	Short-term financing paid off a \$30,000 bank loan, saving thousands in interest and fees to be reinvested in local community	Funds due to return to the AFLCC in December 2012	Western Massachusetts Climbers' Coalition
Pendergrass-Murray	Red River Gorge, Kentucky	\$65,000 loan paid off the seller-financed loan, saving locals \$10,000 and eliminating the risk of losing the property	Paid in full—funds available for new projects	Red River Gorge Climbers' Coalition
Jailhouse Rock	Sonora, California	\$100,000 loan secured a permanent conservation and access easement	Funds due to return to AFLCC in November 2014	Private landowners; Access Fund holds permanent easement
New River Gorge Climbers' Campground	Fayetteville, West Virginia	\$90,000 bridge loan helped purchase 40 acres that provides parking and walking access to popular crags	Paid in full—funds available for new projects	American Alpine Club
Bolton Quarry	Bolton, Vermont	\$8,095 emergency stewardship loan helped rebuild a washed out access road after an unprecedented flood	Paid in full—funds available for new projects	CRAG-VT
Bubba City	New River Gorge, West Virginia	Secured an access easement to the public parking area and approach trails	No loan required; five-year extendable access easement	Private landowners; Access Fund and New River Alliance of Climbers co-hold the easement
Hueco Rock Ranch	Hueco Tanks, Texas	\$100,000 bridge loan helped purchase the Hueco Rock Ranch to ensure climber-friendly management	Funds due to return to AFLCC in July 2015	American Alpine Club
Holy Boulders	Pomona, Illinois	\$274,000 secured ownership after learning that private landowners were looking to sell	Funds due to return to AFLCC in December 2015	Access Fund continues to hold the property until a long-term climber-friendly land owner is identified



LAND  
CONSERVATION  
CAMPAIGN

Placing land in climber friendly hands

## Corporate Partners

**A**rcher Law Offices, P.C. is a small law firm located in Boulder, Colorado, that provides practical, cost-effective, and creative solutions for its clients' business and individual legal needs. Since its inception in 1997, Archer Law Offices, with attorney and long-time climber Chris Archer at the helm, has had a strong commitment to community service by providing pro bono legal services to a wide variety of nonprofit organizations and individuals. Chris and his firm provide general legal services to the Access Fund and donate more than \$20,000 in legal services per year to the Access Fund and other outdoor nonprofits. Chris served on the Board of the Access Fund from 1994 to 2002, and he has been general counsel of the Access Fund since 2002. We thank Archer Law Offices for its decades of climbing community service and its dedication to keeping climbing areas open and conserving the climbing environment.

**T**hese partners are businesses that put their money where their mouth is to support the future of climbing. Please consider the important contribution these partners make to your climbing future. They support the Access Fund and you. We encourage you to support them!

### **ABOVE THE CLOUDS - \$100,000+**

Jeep® Brand/Chrysler Group, LLC  
Mountain Gear  
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### **TITANIUM - \$50,000+**

Black Diamond Equipment, LTD  
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### **DIAMOND PLUS - \$35,000+**

Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI)

### **DIAMOND - \$20,000+**

*Alpinist Magazine*  
*Climbing Magazine*  
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### **PLATINUM PLUS - \$15,000+**

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### **SILVER - \$2,500+**

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Mad Rock  
Metolius  
Outdoor Retailer  
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SuperTopo.com

### **MAJOR - \$1,000+**

Backwoods  
CAMP USA  
Climb Max Mountaineering  
Drive Current  
Evolve Sports  
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Louder Than 11  
Moosejaw  
Mountain Khakis  
New Belgium Brewing Company

Professional Climbers International (PCI)  
Sea to Summit  
Treasure Mountain Inn  
Upslope Brewing Company  
Yates Gear Inc.

### **CONTRIBUTING - \$500+**

Adventure Inn Moab  
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Alpine Ascents International  
Alpine Endeavors  
Amarillo Rock Climbing House  
Armaid  
DMM Excalibur/Wild Country/  
Red Chili  
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### **SUPPORTING - \$250+**

Boulder Rock Club/Colorado  
Mountain School  
Climb Nashville  
Omega Pacific  
Intelligentsia  
Mesa Rim Climbing Center  
The Law Firm for Non-Profits  
Zeal Optics





Clockwise: Patrick Cooke weaves his way up Porcelain Pillar at Stoney Clove near Tannersville, NY | The photographer, Christopher Beauchamp, self-portrait | Lucho Romero climbs Straight to Hell at Devils Kitchen near Tannersville, NY | © Christopher Beauchamp

# Christopher Beauchamp

**G**rowing up on the tail end of the cold war, Christopher Beauchamp spent some time in his childhood digging underground fallout shelters. This later developed into a passion for cave exploration, both domestically and internationally, and for investigating the often overlooked subterranean environments beneath cities. It was his efforts to document these spaces that ignited his drive to create unique imagery and led him to a career in photography.

Christopher is also an avid ice climber with a talent for capturing the dynamic moments of a climb. When not chasing dramatic underground ice (see the amazing cover shot of an ice formation in an underground mine in Kingston, NY), Christopher can be found in Connecticut, where he shoots dramatic environmental portraits and dynamic adventure sports imagery for advertising, editorial, and corporate clients.

Learn more at [www.christopherbeauchamp.com](http://www.christopherbeauchamp.com). ■

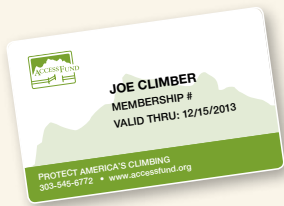


The Access Fund  
P.O. Box 17010  
Boulder, Colorado 80308

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## With a Gift Membership!

The holidays are just around the corner, and a gift membership to the Access Fund makes the perfect last-minute gift for the climbers in your life. When you purchase a gift membership, you'll be adding your partner to America's most effective climbing access and conservation community.



*Gift Membership – \$35*

*Gift Membership with T-shirt – \$50*



Buy a gift membership today at [www.accessfund.org/shop](http://www.accessfund.org/shop).

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### **Holiday Packs Are Now on Sale!**

Get the ultimate stocking stuffers for the climbers on your list right here! Filled with a one-year Access Fund membership and oodles of swag from our corporate partners, our holiday packs are perfect for the climbers in your life. Visit [www.accessfund.org/holiday](http://www.accessfund.org/holiday) to check out the great gear in this year's packs!

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