

VERTICAL TIMES

NEWS FOR CLIMBING ADVOCATES

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2018 Climbing Advocate Awards

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Climbing offers us a special kind of fleeting magic that inspires us year after year to test ourselves in some of our most beautiful and sensitive landscapes.

This magic motivates us to become climbing advocates and stand up to protect the places we love. These are the moments that have brought me to Access Fund as the next executive director. I am honored to have the opportunity to lead the premier organization that protects our climbing landscapes, and I am so excited to serve our community.

This transitional moment is critical for Access Fund, and this time is also pivotal for climbing itself. Our sport is exploding in popularity with the growth in climbing gyms across the country. Our community is diversifying quickly. Many new climbers are transitioning from gym to crag, and our special places are facing challenges from overcrowding and resource damage. Hardware is aging. Meanwhile, land managers are facing budget shortfalls, and public lands are under political attack.

It is natural to resist change as we try to hold onto what we know. But we have to look forward and plan for the future. The growth of our sport presents some challenges—but think about the positive impact we can share with a new generation of young people. Our increasing diversity has enriched our community and strengthened our collective voice. Look around: Rural communities and economies have blossomed when they promote outdoor recreation and protect public lands. New climbers coming into our sport are finding that same inspiration to protect our special places and become advocates for our climbing landscapes.

At Access Fund, we are working toward that positive vision every day, with a clarity of focus on conservation and climbing that has served as a foundation of our work for almost 30 years. To get it done, we will continue to partner with and support our local climbing organizations around the country. We will work hand-in-hand with land managers and private landowners. And we will forge new relationships in the outdoor and conservation spaces. To preserve access, we will continue to build a vibrant and diverse community of climbing advocates, and partner with organizations dedicated to conservation.

I hope you will continue to support Access Fund in the coming years and become more engaged with our work. I bring to the table 20 years of experience protecting our public lands as an environmental lawyer. The dedication and expertise of our staff are unparalleled—they are all unsung heroes working in the public interest day in and day out. Our board of directors is strong and unified, and we have a deep base of community support. All the pieces are in place for us to venture into the unknown and take a few risks, and I'm honored to help lead the way. If you have thoughts about our work or ideas for the future, feel free to reach out to me anytime.

Sincerely,



Chris Winter
Executive Director
cwinter@accessfund.org



Become a Legacy Donor

Some of us may never develop a climbing route, put up a first ascent, write a guidebook, or climb 5.15. But there are other ways to contribute to the story of climbing in America. Making a planned gift to Access Fund is an easy way to establish your own legacy of climbing access and conservation, and give back to the climbing experience. Planned giving is not just for the wealthy or financial planning experts. Learn more at www.accessfund.org/plannedgift.

Access Fund's Commitment to DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

BY TAIMUR AHMAD

The conversation around climbing is changing. Instead of debates about rap bolting and ground-up ethics, today's central issues in our community are diversity and inclusion. Women, people of color, and other underrepresented groups are standing up, amplifying their voices, and demanding representation—and the climbing world has noticed.

My name is Taimur. I'm a climber from New York City—I got my start bouldering on Rat Rock in Central Park—though these days I'm based in Bishop, CA. I'm also Access Fund's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Fellow. I aim to help make Access Fund and, more broadly, the climbing world a more inclusive place.

My first day on the job was working the Access Fund booth at the Color the Crag festival at Horse Pens 40 in Alabama. This gathering is devoted to diversity in climbing, and it exemplifies so much of what I love about climbing and our community: high psych, perfect stone, and great people to share it with. Between wrestling sandstone slopers, the community was also asking difficult, important questions about diversity, inclusion, representation, and tribal sovereignty in the climbing world.

Access Fund is committed to collaborating with the broad community to help answer these questions, and many more. This work has already started. Our track record—from supporting the June closure at Devils Tower to teaming up with tribes to sue the Trump Administration over the Bears Ears National Monument reduction—informs the direction we want to take with our tribal partners. Since 2015, Access Fund's Native Lands Coordinator, Aaron Mike, has been engaging on climbing issues with the Navajo Nation and many other tribes.

We're also building partnerships with DEI organizations. Access Fund has worked with Brothers of Climbing, Brown Girls Climb, and Flash Foxy as they continue to build out Color the Crag, the Women's Climbing Festival, and other initiatives.



We've collaborated with Latino Outdoors to translate the Climber's Pact into Spanish and make the information it contains culturally accessible. We are sponsoring and attending the 2019 PGM ONE conference, which focuses on bringing together environmental leaders of color. We're also building DEI into our policy work by convening a working group to make our Climb the Hill event, a joint partnership with the American Alpine Club, represent all members of the climbing community.

Access Fund's mission remains firmly rooted in protecting our climbing areas and the climbing environment. Our commitment to partnering with tribes and supporting the many organizations leading on DEI in our community complements and enhances our ability to do this work by bringing together more ideas and collaboration to protect the climbing areas we love.

This is just the beginning of what's going to be a pivotal time for the climbing community, and I'm thrilled to get the chance to be in the middle of it. We know we have a lot to learn—and we want to listen. Please feel free to reach out at taimur@accessfund.org. ■

CLIMBERS ACQUIRE MEDICINE WALL

in San Antonio

San Antonio-area climbers will soon be able to access Medicine Wall, a limestone bluff that provides an urban getaway for outdoor climbing. The Texas Climbers Coalition (TCC) and Access Fund are pleased to announce the acquisition and permanent protection of the area, which is set to open to the public next year.

Despite never being officially open to public access, the privately owned Medicine Wall was a popular sport-climbing crag for more than 20 years. Then, in 2015, a tragic accident in which two climbers were killed prompted the landowners to strip the hardware from the wall and strictly enforce no-trespassing laws.

Still, the development company that owned the land recognized the recreational value of the property, and they hoped to conserve it. After closing access to Medicine Wall, they approached the City of San Antonio in hopes that the city would acquire the property for inclusion in the greenway trails system. The city declined to take ownership, due in part to liability concerns, but put the landowners in touch with TCC.

The landowners agreed to convey the Medicine Wall parcel to TCC, provided that a separate land trust hold an easement on the property to permanently protect it. TCC reached out to Access Fund, an accredited land trust, who agreed to facilitate the transaction and hold a conservation and recreation easement on Medicine Wall to permanently protect the property.

Today, TCC officially owns the property, and Access Fund holds a conservation easement. While Medicine Wall is now climber owned, it will not open for climbing until

the wall can be rebolted and the City of San Antonio can complete its trail project. For more specific details about public access, or for other information about Medicine Wall, please visit texasclimberscoalition.org/medicine-wall.

“We’re thrilled to have supported TCC in the acquisition and permanent protection of Medicine Wall,” says Brian Tickle, Access Fund’s Texas Regional Director. “Texas is loaded with small, high-value crags just like Medicine Wall, and protecting them serves both conservation and recreation interests.”

TCC President Adam Mitchell agrees: “Medicine Wall is a great crag for the San Antonio climbing community, and we’re really excited to serve that community through this acquisition. This is something we’d like to repeat across the state,” he says.

Despite Texas being home to a vast quantity of climbing resources, only 5 percent of its land is public property. The state’s population is projected to double by 2050, and public parks like the Barton Creek Greenbelt, Enchanted Rock, and others will continue to face ever greater demands and impacts from public use—presenting unique challenges for climbers and land managers. Acquisitions like Medicine Wall make much-needed recreation space available to the public.

Now, TCC needs help to raise \$37,000 to manage Medicine Wall and pay for the expenses associated with the property transfer, stewardship improvements, and long-term costs of the conservation and recreation easement. Donate today at texasclimberscoalition.org/medicine-wall. ■

Restore Our CLIMBING AREAS

The climbers who quietly established routes at most American climbing areas could not possibly have imagined how popular the sport would be in 2019—at the time, climbing was relatively obscure. Developers didn't consider that sites might one day need infrastructure to contain impacts and protect the environment, so most climbing areas weren't designed by experts in recreation management.

This wasn't a problem when cliffs and boulders saw few visitors. But today, as our numbers continue to swell, climbing areas are buckling under the pressure of more and more visitors. Access Fund's mission doesn't end when access is secured. We are committed to the sustainable management of our climbing areas. We work alongside local climbing organizations to address these issues, and we need additional resources to prepare, and in many cases restore, climbing areas to handle increased traffic.



A Plan For the Future

Access Fund is working to scale our programming to address the climbing-stewardship crisis. Here are our top priorities:

Build a nationwide inventory of climbing-area needs and stewardship plans. Each climbing area faces its own unique challenges. We are expanding our efforts to assess climbing areas, document urgent needs, identify future concerns and opportunities, and develop comprehensive stewardship plans.

Increase support for local climbing organizations. Our most important partners in stewardship work are local climbing organizations. Access Fund is working to expand essential services to our network of 130 local climbing organizations. We will offer more trainings in strategic stewardship planning, technical field skills, fundraising, and community outreach to increase their capacity to tackle stewardship initiatives.

Strengthen the Access Fund-Jeep Conservation Team program. We already have three teams of trailbuilders/conservation specialists on the road, but the demands on these teams far outpace their current capacity. We are building additional support for this critical program, allowing

us to tackle more large-scale projects, train more advocates, leverage more volunteers, expand project scopes, and reach more communities in need.

Deepen climber outreach and education initiatives. Many climbers lack the knowledge that there is a real problem, or that threats to climbing access even exist. We are working to expand our education and outreach to reach more climbers and help them understand how to limit their impacts.

Deepen partnerships with land managers. We are working to expand and deepen partnerships with land management agencies. These relationships are the starting point for collaborative stewardship initiatives, ensuring science-based climbing management that allows continued access and ensures our climbing areas are ready to handle the growing population.

Please consider making a donation to support these critical efforts: www.accessfund.org/donatestewardship



THE CLIMBER'S PACT

Are you willing to stand up for our climbing areas?

As climbers, we have a personal stake in the health of our outdoor landscapes—without them, we have no place to climb. But as our sport continues to grow in popularity, we are loving our climbing areas to death. Join us in protecting our outdoor landscapes and the climbing experience we love. Making a few minor adjustments to your climbing practice is easy to do and will help protect climbing areas for the long haul.

COMMIT TO THE CLIMBER'S PACT:

- Be considerate of other users
- Park and camp in designated areas
- Pack out all trash, crash pads, and gear
- Dispose of human waste properly
- Stay on trails whenever possible
- Respect wildlife, sensitive plants, soils, and cultural resources
- Place gear and pads on durable surfaces
- Clean up chalk and tick marks
- Minimize group size and noise
- Learn the local ethics for the places you climb
- Respect regulations and closures
- Use, install, and replace bolts and fixed anchors responsibly
- Be an upstander, not a bystander

Sign the Climber's Pact at: accessfund.org/theclimberspact

National Park Service

BANS CLIMBING AT HARPERS FERRY

Harpers Ferry National Historical Park sits at the confluence of the Potomac and Shenandoah rivers, less than an hour from Washington, D.C. It has been a regionally important climbing area since 1939, the date of the earliest known ascent of Maryland Heights.

In the late 1970s, a crew from Catonsville, Maryland began putting in some serious climbing time at the Harpers Ferry cliffs. Local climber Rob Savoye wrote the first guidebook and left copies with rangers to help visiting climbers with route finding. For the past 40 years, this quirky climbing area has attracted Mid-Atlantic climbers looking for a little adventure.

Since 2014, Mid Atlantic Climbers (MAC), an Access Fund affiliate, has worked with the National Park Service on climbing policy, stewardship, and education initiatives that support seasonal raptor closures and efforts to control recreation impacts in the park. The climbing community has an exemplary history of compliance with park regulations, and climbing access has been stable.

That changed suddenly in the spring of 2018, when MAC and Access Fund learned that the park superintendent had closed all climbing in the Virginia and West Virginia areas of the park. This decision was made without any explanation or opportunity for the climbing community to provide input. Train Tunnel Wall, The Pillar, Skink Rock and the Stone Fort, Loudon Heights, and bouldering areas in the

Virginia and West Virginia portions of the park are among the closures. For new and experienced climbers alike, these walls provided multi-pitch climbing opportunities that don't exist anywhere else in Maryland.

MAC President Chris Irwin teamed up with Access Fund Policy Director Erik Murdock to meet with Harpers Ferry staff to negotiate a solution. Over the course of two meetings, NPS staff presented three primary concerns with climbing at Harpers Ferry:

1. The park needs to study the potential impacts of climbers
2. The park is not aware of the extent of the climbing resources
3. The rock is not good enough for climbing

In response, MAC and Access Fund sent the park a complete inventory of park climbing resources (including GPS coordinates), explained that the rock quality is sufficient for climbing, and offered to participate in an environmental assessment of the climbing areas

We also offered to work with park staff to develop a climbing-management plan that would address the park's concerns and allow collaboration with the climbing community. Thus far, the park has largely ignored our proposals, which align with best practices for climbing management at National Park Service areas across the country.

The National Park Service has a long history of collaborating with climbers on effective climbing-management strategies across the country.



Unfortunately, this blanket closure does not follow that tradition.

MAC launched an advocacy campaign in February 2019, asking climbers to submit letters to the park superintendent. As of this writing, the closures are still in effect. The park has not provided a timeline for reinstating access. MAC and Access Fund are committed to work as long as it takes to reopen the unique and historic crags at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park. ■



CLIMBING ADVOCATE

We're proud to announce the recipients of the 2018 Climbing Advocate Awards. For more than 20 years, Access Fund has been recognizing the outstanding work of climbing advocates across the country. Among this year's honorees are rockstar community builders, local climbing organizations, bolt warriors, climbing stewards, grassroots organizers, and visionary leaders. These individuals and organizations stand out for their commitment to the American climbing community.



RON YAHNE
Menocal Lifetime Achievement Award

For leadership in the Black Hills climbing-advocacy and

stewardship community. Ron helped develop routes throughout the region and established one of the longest-running, most successful bolt-replacement programs in the country. He hosts the Black Hills Climbers Coalition's annual Beans & Biners gathering and has put in countless volunteer hours restoring climbing areas throughout the region. Ron's dedication and energy have made a lasting impact on Black Hills climbing.



CODY RONEY
Bebie Leadership Award

For seven years of leadership as executive director of the

Southeastern Climbers Coalition (SCC). Cody has expanded SCC's stewardship programs, organized hundreds of trail days, and mobilized thousands of volunteers. She led SCC's largest-ever acquisition and permanent protection project, Denny Cove. She also led SCC's work to permanently protect Hell's Kitchen and Dogwood West. We wish Cody the best in her new role as Executive Director of Lula Lake Land Trust.



BETHANY LEBEWITZ
Advocate & Community Builder

For her leadership in creating a more inclusive

climbing-advocacy and conservation community. Bethany has made a lasting impact through her work to build Brown Girls Climb and bring more diverse voices to advocate for the protection of our climbing areas. Her leadership at Climb the Hill, Color the Crag, and Access Fund's Climbing Advocacy Summits has inspired and changed the climbing community for the better.



HANNAH NORTH
Local Organizer & Advocate

For her decades of dedication and leadership

at Castle Rock State Park and City of Rocks in Idaho. Hannah was a founding member of CRAG-Idaho, helping to convene quarterly meetings, inventory re-bolting needs, organize stewardship projects, negotiate with private landowners, and provide the park staff with input on management plans. Her local knowledge, connection to the land, and passion for advocacy have been a great benefit to the climbing community.

AWARDS



DAVE HAAVIK

**Local Leader
& Organizer**

For his dedicated leadership of Washington Climbers Coalition

(WCC). Dave’s organizational leadership has been key in countless access and stewardship projects, including the campaign to save the Lower Index Town Wall in 2009 and the ongoing Liberty Bell Conservation Initiative. Dave sums up his philosophy: “It’s amazing how much can be accomplished if no one cares who gets credit... This award is as much about the WCC board as it is about me.”



CHRIS SCHULTE

**Athlete Advocate
& Steward**

Chris is an inspired climber and role model in

climbing advocacy, conservation, and volunteerism within the climbing community. He sets a stellar example for sustainable, low-impact climbing. Chris has also been a tireless advocate and steward for Indian Creek and Bears Ears National Monument. He helped tell the incredible story of Bears Ears through a Google Voyager Story and helped lead an Access Fund Fireside Chat to inspire climbers to protect public lands.



WILDERNESS LAND TRUST

Land Conservation Award

For completing the multi-year effort to acquire and permanently protect Castle Crag, a cluster of multi-pitch rock climbing and wilderness alpine adventures in Northern California. In 2013, Access Fund provided Wilderness Land Trust with a grant and loan to help secure the property from a timber company. In 2018, Wilderness Land Trust transferred Castle Crag to the US Forest Service for long-term, climber-friendly management.



WESTERN COLORADO CLIMBERS' COALITION

Land Conservation Award

For completing the multi-year effort to acquire and permanently protect Lower Mother’s Buttress and Television Wall in Unaweep Canyon outside Grand Junction, Colorado. In 2018, WCCC completed the necessary subdivisions and sales to make the final loan payment, returning critical funds to the Climbing Conservation Loan Program. The completion of this project increases the protected area of Unaweep Canyon to 50 acres, encompassing eight cliffs and approximately 200 climbing routes.



COURTNEY CURTNER

Local Organizer & Steward

For outstanding leadership of Ohio

Climbers Coalition (OCC) and lasting stewardship of local climbing areas. Courtney played a key role in reopening Mad River Gorge, a historic Ohio climbing area. As president of OCC, Courtney has functioned as a key link between land managers, sponsors, and the climbing community, showing impressive dedication to community engagement. Her fundraising and organizing work have also brought critical support to bolt- and anchor-replacement initiatives in Ohio.



JODY SANBORN

Local Leader & Advocate

For exemplary leadership of Bighorn

Climbers' Coalition in Wyoming, spearheading stewardship and advocacy work at Ten Sleep, one of America's most popular sport-climbing areas. Jody helped launch the Bighorn Anchor Initiative to replace aging hardware and led stewardship efforts at Piney Creek, addressing human- and dog-waste issues. She also solidified a partnership with the Forest Service and assisted with the creation of a climbing management plan for Ten Sleep.



GREG KUCHYT

Rebolt Warrior & Educator

For his leadership in the sustainable

replacement of fixed anchors. Greg was a key contributor at Access Fund's 2018 Sustainable Climbing Summit and Southeast Regional Summit, providing instruction on bolt-replacement tools and techniques. His commitment to service in the community is apparent to anyone who has had the pleasure of working with him: "If I can help anyone by getting the right tools into their hands," he says, "I'm always willing to help."



REI CO-OP

Corporate Responsibility

For its investment in

the future of our outdoor climbing areas. REI Co-Op gives back nearly 70 percent of its profits to the outdoor community, models responsible outdoor ethics, and leads the industry in creating an inclusive community. They have been a steadfast Access Fund supporter for over two decades, providing critical financial support for national climbing policy and stewardship. REI Co-Op also activates and supports the growing network of local climbing organizations.



MADRONE WALL PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

Local Leaders & Advocates

For reopening Madrone Wall outside Portland, Oregon. After a 20-year closure, climbers can enjoy over 100 basalt sport and trad climbs within 30 minutes of Portland. The organization put in two decades of advocacy to open the area, rallying dozens of supporting partners, thousands of individual comment letters, and tens of thousands of dollars in grant funds to complete the necessary park improvements and open the gate for the recreation community to enjoy.

Climbers: A Growing ECONOMIC FORCE

From an economic perspective, climbers are ideal outdoor-adventure tourists: We visit our favorite climbing areas again and again, stay for weeks or months on end, and we often have disposable income. Sometimes, we even fall in love with a place, buy a house, and move there. In other words, we have a positive economic impact wherever we go.

A growing body of research indicates that climbing is good for the economy. The most recent study, completed by researchers from Eastern Kentucky University in 2019, found that climbers impacted a three-county region around the New River Gorge of West Virginia to the tune of \$12.1 million a year.

It's not just the New. In Western North Carolina, climbing in Nantahala-Pisgah National Forest brings in nearly \$14 million. In Kentucky's Red River Gorge, climbing has at least a \$3.8 million impact. Another study found that climbers spend nearly \$7 million annually in the Chattanooga area. Other iconic climbing areas like Red Rock Canyon, just outside Las Vegas, bring in serious tourist dollars, too.



“When people understand our spending power, they’re ready to listen and learn more about the positives climbing can bring.”

Photo courtesy of © Daniel Gajda

Picture your local crag. Pull up on a nice weekend, and the parking lot is full of cars with both in- and out-of-state plates. You walk up to the crag and count a few dozen climbers, and you pass a few more groups as you walk to your route of choice. There could be 50 or more people at the cliff. Each one of these climbers spent money on food, gas, lodging, and so forth.

“When people understand our spending power, they’re ready to listen and learn more about the positives climbing can bring to their community,” explains Access Fund Southeast Regional Director Zachary Lesch-Huie. “The question changes from ‘Can we even allow climbing?’ to ‘Where can we open new areas, and what can we do to improve the climbing resource?’ It’s a big shift.”

Economic-impact data is critical to helping Access Fund and local climbing organizations advocate for access and conservation opportunities, and to showing landowners and local officials the value climbing can bring to local communities. The more we can show that climbers spend money, support businesses, and create jobs, the more secure our access will be.

Climbing also has a positive effect on remote and economically distressed areas. Many of our most popular, highly valued climbing areas are located in places where the economic boost created by outdoor tourism is critical for turning things around. Take the Red River Gorge, home to world-class climbing, and also to some of the poorest counties in the country. Climber spending brings an annual \$3.8 million to the area, which in turn creates jobs and economic opportunity. In other words, studies show that climbing is also good for the non-climbing community—for the businesses and communities that surround climbing areas.

Interested in learning more about these studies? Check out accessfund.org/economics or contact us for more resources. ■



Adirondack Climbers Coalition Fills a Critical Need

In 2018, Adirondack Climbers Coalition (ACC) teamed up with Access Fund to begin tackling trail and staging area stewardship at the Sunshine City area of Spanky's Wall. The ACC also ensures climbers have a voice when Unit Management Plans for important zones come up for review.



Illinois Climbers Association Hard at Work

Illinois Climbers Association (ICA) had a knockout 2018. In partnership with the Forest Service, ICA put a dent in rebolting Jackson Falls. ICA also installed bolts at the Shelter 1 area in Giant City State Park to prevent cliff-top erosion. Work will continue at the Devil's Standtable area this spring. In addition, the annual Holy Boulders competition in November brought out more than 220 climbers and raised over \$20,000.



New Joint Membership Opportunities for Yosemite and Colorado

We are excited to welcome Yosemite Climbing Association (YCA) and Western Colorado Climbers Coalition (WCCC) to our Joint Membership program. YCA leads Yosemite Facelift, one of the largest and most successful climbing-stewardship events in the country. WCCC is a longtime steward and protector for climbing areas on Colorado's western slope. Both organizations are longstanding partners, and we're excited to expand our support for these important local groups.



LCO 101: **Financial Best Practices**

Managing finances can be a challenge for LCOs. Use these tips to get on the right track:

Adopt and Use Written Policies. Write clear policies and procedures for internal controls and board, staff, and volunteer roles. Examples: conflict-of-interest policy, handling cash donations.

Budget and Plan. To ensure you meet your responsibility to donors, complete an annual budget and provide direction and transparency for your board and stakeholders.

Restricted Funds. Restricting how funds can be used is sometimes necessary for grant requirements or complying with donor wishes. You may want to set a threshold for restricted funds—e.g., only donations over \$1,000 can be restricted.

Track Spending. Work with your treasurer or accountant to report and track program spending against your annual budget on a quarterly basis. Tracking helps you course-correct.

Set Up a Reserve Fund. To maintain stability and mission work through leaner times, create and pay into a reserve fund. Save enough to cover three to six months of operating expenses or a percentage of your overall annual budget.

Transparency and Reporting. Posting your IRS and state filings on your website is one basic measure. Consider producing an annual report with high-level financial information.

Fric tion Labs has been an Access Fund partner for the past several years. Based in Denver, Colorado, they focus on providing high-quality chalk to help you send your hardest grades. Friction Labs understands the need of all climbers to be good stewards of their climbing areas and supports this mission by helping to fund our stewardship and conservation programs and sharing low-impact climbing ethics with their customers.



The following businesses generously support the Access Fund. Please support them!

ABOVE THE CLOUDS— \$100,000+

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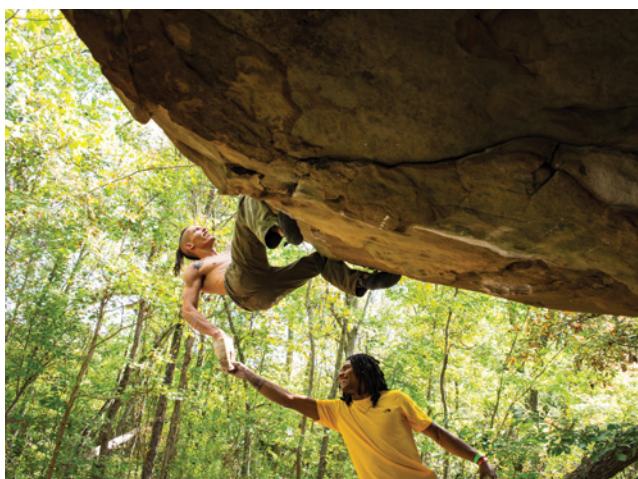
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Climbing Magazine
Dead Point Magazine
Rakkup
Rock & Ice Magazine
Schoeller
The Climbing Zine
Wolverine Publishing



Clockwise from top left: Self-portrait, jumaring in Calico Basin, NV | Sasha McGhee, Bethany Lebewitz, and Emily Mannisto at the pilot of the All Women's Single Pitch Instructor Course | Carlos Flores gets a hand chalking up at the first-ever Color the Crag Climbing Festival, Horse Pens 40, AL.

Irene Yee

Irene Yee is a highly acclaimed photographer based in Las Vegas, Nevada. Her passion has taken her to China to document offwidth first ascents, to Tennessee to teach photography from fixed lines, and across Western North America to capture genuine laughter among friends.

While focusing on women, people of color, and the average climber, Irene showcases the beautiful memories each of us creates while adventuring with friends in our backyard. One of the core beliefs behind her photography is that we need role models who inspire us and role models who are us.

Her work has been featured in *Outside*, *Climbing*, *Rock & Ice*, *Alpinist*, and online publications such as *SELF* Magazine, *Backcountry.com*, and *Weather.com*. You can learn more about Irene and her work at www.ladylockoff.com.

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ADVOCATE SPOTLIGHT



AARON MIKE

A local of Flagstaff, Arizona, Aaron has been working as the Access Fund Native Lands Coordinator since 2014. In this role, he helps build partnerships between climbers and tribes to protect native lands and cultural resources, as well as promote the importance of the Native voice within the outdoor industry. A native of the Navajo Nation, Aaron also works closely with NativesOutdoors, an outdoor company whose products support indigenous people and local advocacy groups to promote outdoor recreation in underprivileged communities. Aaron is also an AMGA Rock Guide, National Outdoor Leadership School and Wilderness Medical Institute Wilderness First Responder, and the owner of Pangaea Mountain Guides in Tucson, Arizona.