A Million-Dollar Legacy of Local Empowerment

page 8
Between the flooding in Colorado and the budget impasse in Congress, pretty much every single climbing area in the Boulder area is closed as I write this. The First Flatiron opened up a few days ago; that’s about what we’ve got for now. Rocky Mountain National Park is closed. Eldorado Canyon is closed. You can’t even drive up Boulder Canyon. And Yosemite and all the other National Parks in the nation are closed. A few people pointed out that our intentionally over-the-top video ad in Reel Rock last year depicting El Cap closing down really came to pass. We didn’t expect that to actually happen.

This is not a permanent state of affairs – by the time you read this, many if not all of these areas will likely be open again. But it does go to show that what once seemed nearly immutable – roads, bridges, cliffs, and access trails – can be taken away, either through natural disaster or tragic political comedy.

The morale of the story? We shouldn’t take anything for granted. I once heard someone say, “What are you going to do when all the climbing areas are open and safe?” Yeah, right. And though our government can be incredibly frustrating, it is important to stay engaged, even if we begin to lose faith in our leaders. Our public lands, beloved climbing areas and yes, even our democracy are treasures worth fighting for.

That’s what we’ve been trying to do, more or less, at the Access Fund for nearly 23 years now. In this issue of the Vertical Times we celebrate our one millionth grant dollar, congratulate the Southeastern Climber’s Coalition on 20 years of successful work, and welcome three brand new local climbing organizations into our network.

Have a great holiday! Check out our holiday packs – they always sell out and make great gifts. And let’s all hope for less dysfunction in our government in 2014.

See you out there,

Brady Robinson
Executive Director
Local Climbing Organization 101:
How to Secure a Recreational Lease

Your local privately owned crag has been closed for years now, but the landowner has finally come around to consider a recreational lease for climbing access. Fortunately, Access Fund has some resources and tips to assist local climbing organizations with this process:

Insurance: Most landowners require insurance for additional liability protection. Purchasing a single policy can cost thousands, but Access Fund has a program to provide the local climbing organization and landowner with additional named insured coverage through our policy if Access Fund is listed as a co-signer on the lease. Certain limitations and requirements apply, such as no commercial use.

Lease Payments: The landowner may consider no annual payment. But when it’s required, consider the LCO’s fundraising capacity for the climbing area—$1,000 may be reasonable to fundraise on a yearly basis.

Lease Term: Long terms such as five years or more are generally preferred so the lease does not need to be renegotiated annually. Provide a provision for automatic renewal, but also provide for termination if necessary.

Stewardship Support: Include terms for an annual Adopt a Crag and periodic maintenance like litter removal—this will help show the landowner that climbers are good stewards.

Parking & Access: This may be the trickiest part, depending on the climbing area. Many landowners who live onsite are concerned about privacy and high traffic. Consider opening access only on certain days of the week to accommodate the landowner. Make sure expectations are reasonable, because volunteers can’t be available to enforce rules 24/7.

Legal Review: Access Fund can help draft a lease agreement and spell out additional language, but separate legal review by a qualified attorney is always suggested.

For more information and resources, visit www.accessfund.org/landownersupport.

The Access Fund wants to hear from you. Share your thoughts, ideas, and perspectives on access issues. Tell us what we’re doing well. Tell us where we could improve. E-mail your comments to holly@accessfund.org.
**HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?**

Pack it in, pack it out. This is a familiar mantra to the seasoned outdoor enthusiast. But what happens when we don’t pack it out? How long does our trash last?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bits of discarded finger tape</td>
<td>Up to 5 MONTHS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sings on trees</td>
<td>30-40 YEARS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange/banana peel</td>
<td>Up to 2 YEARS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aluminum cans</td>
<td>80-100 YEARS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cigarette butts</td>
<td>Up to 5 YEARS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climbing shoe</td>
<td>80-100 YEARS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy bar wrappers</td>
<td>5 YEARS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expired oxygen bottles</td>
<td>100+ YEARS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poop bags</td>
<td>10-20 YEARS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy drink bottles</td>
<td>FOREVER</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Before moving on from the base of a climb or resting place, search the area for “micro-garbage,” including cigarette filters, discarded finger tape, and organic litter such as orange peels. Even minute amounts of waste can harm animals and the environment. Be vigilant about packing out your climbing trash, and help spread the word!

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**SPOTLIGHT ON LOCAL ADVOCACY**

**SAVE SANDSTONE BOULDERING**

Access Director Joe Sambataro recently caught up with Jeff Engel of Minnesota Climbers Association (MCA) for our Spotlight on Local Advocacy series. MCA formed over 10 years ago to preserve climbing across the state, and it recently kicked off a campaign to protect one of the finest bouldering areas in Minnesota. Learn more and go online to donate today at www.accessfund.org/sandstone.

**JOE:** Has climbing always been allowed at Sandstone?

**JEFF:** Years ago we made an agreement with the owners to allow bouldering. We gave our word we would take care of the property and strive for minimal impact. The landowners don’t live close to the property, so keeping contact was difficult. I’ve sent letters over the years asking if climbing access was still allowed, but in most cases never heard back.

**JOE:** How did MCA learn that the bouldering area was for sale?

**JEFF:** Last fall there was an incident where a group of boulders had a run-in with a bow hunter who claimed he was the only one with access to the land. Alarmed, I sent out letters to both brothers who own the property. Finally I got an email reply from one of them. They were apologetic about the incident. Turns out one brother gave us access, and the other brother gave the hunter access. It was through that encounter that we learned the land was for sale.

**JOE:** This project is getting some key support from the Parks and Trails Council of Minnesota (PTCM). Tell us a little more about their role?

**JEFF:** The landowners gave the climbing community the first opportunity to buy their land. We had six months to figure out a way to make a deal. I made contact with the PTCM, whose mission is to buy property in Minnesota and eventually turn it over to the state park system. This was a perfect match. The PTCM accepted our application for assistance and made a purchase agreement with the landowners. MCA is helping to fundraise the holding and closing costs.

**JOE:** How has it been working with PTCM?

**JEFF:** It has been great. Not only are they helping us purchase Sandstone, but they are helping us work with the MN Department of Natural Resources and nearby Banning State Park to encourage them to allow climbing and bouldering in their park, where it is currently prohibited.

**JOE:** It’s been only a few months of fundraising, and MCA has raised over $25,000 toward its goal of $30,000. MCA has been really creative in its fundraising efforts. What are some fundraising tips for other local climbing organizations to try out?

**JEFF:** We’ve made a fair amount of money with raffling off big prizes like a bouldering package or sport climbing package. This fall we’ve had a couple of really cool fundraising events, including a festival at Robinson City Park across the river from the bouldering and a celebration at Vertical Endeavors climbing gym. Visit “Save Sandstone” on Facebook to learn about any upcoming events.

**JOE:** Have any new partners come out of the woodwork to help save Sandstone bouldering?

**JEFF:** The whole local climbing community has rallied for this cause—individual climbers have donated, and we’ve received support from The Wisconsin Climbers Association, Organic Bouldering Mats, and Walltopia to name a few.

**JOE:** What should climbers keep in mind during their next trip to Sandstone? How can they get involved?

**JEFF:** Next time you’re climbing in Sandstone, remember that at one point it was not allowed. Thank the landowners for letting it happen and for giving climbers the first opportunity to buy the land.

**JOE:** Any other thoughts that you’d like to share with the climbing advocacy community?

**JEFF:** Smile lots, make landowners know they are king, and never stop pursuing your goal. Access is a slow process, and you have to be tenacious and dedicated to make it happen.

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**COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE**

**LOCAL ADVOCACY SAVE SANDSTONE BOULDERING**

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The Access Fund is thrilled to have awarded over $1 million to local organizations, climbers, and public agencies through the Climbing Preservation Grants Program. Take a look back over the last 23 years to see what $1 million in grant funding looks like across the country.

Assets:
- **281 grants awarded**
- **$1,008,393** awarded
- **$3,589** average funding awarded per grant
- An average of **$43,843** awarded per year
- **1991** grant program launched
- Grants awarded in **34** states

Legacy of Local Empowerment

The Access Fund has yet to award grants in these states: Florida, Hawaii, Indiana, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey, North Dakota, Ohio, Rhode Island, South Carolina, and Virginia

We want to award grants in these states! If you are a climber, local climbing organization, or land manager in any of these states, consider submitting a grant application today at www.accessfund.org/grants!

Vertical Times
www.accessfund.org
303-545-6772
Grant Funding by Category

- 33% Land Acquisition & Protection
- 29% Stewardship Projects
- 20% Advocacy & Outreach
- 11% Human Waste Improvements
- 6% Parking & Trailhead Improvements
- 6% Climbing Education
- 2% Climbing Management
- 5% Research
- 2% LCO Start-Up Costs
- 6% Climbing Education
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- 2% Climbing Management
- 5% Research
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**SOUTHEASTERN CLIMBERS COALITION CELEBRATES 20 YEARS**

Twenty years ago, the National Park Service was set to close Sunset Rock, the crown jewel of Southern Sandstone, which hosts a fantastic collection of trad climbs on a ridge high above Chattanooga, Tennessee.

A group of concerned local climbers banded together under the name Southeastern Climbers Coalition, intent on working with the Park Service to save access to Sunset Rock. And that is exactly what they did.

Twenty years later, the Southeastern Climbers Coalition is one of the strongest local climbing organizations in the nation, with over 500 members, thousands of volunteers, and a track record of preserving climbing access at dozens of world-class climbing areas across the Southeast.

“We are getting more effective every year, and finding new, creative ways to partner with other groups that support our mission,” explains Matthew Gant, SCC president. “We’ve successfully protected climbing for 20 years, and I fully expect to see even greater things from SCC in the years to come.”

The SCC owns six crags across Georgia, Tennessee, and Alabama—including Boat Rock, Kings Bluff, Jamestown, Yellow Bluff, Steele, and Hospital Boulders—and leases Castle Rock in Tennessee.

But they’ve done more than just buy land. “Protecting a crag from closure is only half the battle,” says Access Fund Southeast Regional Director Zachary Lesch-Huie. “The SCC has been equally strong on the stewardship front, leveraging thousands of volunteers to build and maintain trails, educate younger climbers, maintain fixed anchors, and sustain the climbing areas in the Deep South.”

SCC’s 20th anniversary celebrates two rock-solid decades of protecting access in the Southeast, and we fully expect to see even greater things from SCC in the years to come.

**TOP FIVE ACHIEVEMENTS**

1. **INSPIRE.** SCC spurred a movement of Southeast land acquisition and protection, beginning with the purchase of Boat Rock in 1998 to save the beloved Atlanta bouldering area from development.

2. **MANAGE.** SCC manages eight climbing areas in Alabama, Georgia, and Tennessee for the benefit and enjoyment of the public.

3. **VOLUNTEER.** They logged over 20,000 volunteer stewardship hours maintaining trails, stewarding climbing areas, and making the Southeast a more beautiful place to live, play, and climb.

4. **PROTECT.** The group plays a critical role in protecting access to public lands, including Sunset, Foster Falls, T-Wall, Sand Rock, and more. Many climbing areas on public land would otherwise be closed if not for SCC action.

5. **EQUIP.** They distributed thousands of fixed anchors to local equippers to make existing routes safer.
Meet the Access Fund Staff

Ever wonder who is behind the work of the Access Fund? Learn about our staff and know whom to contact if you need our help!

MANDY BISHOP
Office Manager
Mandy makes the Access Fund office run. She handles day-to-day office management, membership fulfillment, and online store orders.

JIM CHASE
Operations Director
Jim is in charge of the health of the Access Fund as a nonprofit organization. He handles all business and finance operations, as well as human resources.

LEICI HENDRIX
Development Director
Leici develops and implements fundraising strategy to expand philanthropic support for the Access Fund through our major donor and corporate partner programs.

JASON KEITH
Sr. Policy Advisor
Jason manages the Access Fund’s government affairs caseload related to recreational access and conservation work on public lands.

ZACHARY LESCH-HUIE
National Affiliate & Southeast Regional Director
Zachary heads up the Access Fund’s national affiliate network from Chattanooga

and serves as Southeast Regional Director. Zachary helps grassroots affiliates address climbing access and conservation issues at the local level.

JULIANA STATIUS MULLER
Membership Manager
Juliana is our data and member services wizard. She manages the membership program at the Access Fund. If you have a question about your membership, Juliana is the gal to ask!

ERIK MURDOCK
Policy Director
Erik is the lead policy guru on climbing management planning on federal and state lands. Erik works with local affiliate organizations and activists to design and implement climbing advocacy strategies.

BRADY ROBINSON
Executive Director
Brady provides leadership and sets the vision for the Access Fund. He works with the board of directors on strategies to fulfill the mission of keeping climbing areas open and conserving the climbing environment.

JOE SAMBATARO
Access Director & Northwest Regional Director
Joe is our land acquisition and protection master. He manages the Access Fund Land Conservation Campaign, helping local climbers purchase and protect their climbing areas. Joe recently moved to Seattle and acts as Northwest Regional Director as well.

CURT SHANON
Arizona Policy Analyst
Curt works part time to represent climbers and the Access Fund in our current opposition to the Southeast Arizona Land Exchange and Conservation Act—more commonly known as the Oak Flat Land Exchange Bill.

HOLLY SMOLENSKI
Communications & Marketing Director
Holly oversees all marketing and external communications, including Access Fund branding and production of the Vertical Times, Beta e-newsletters, annual reports, and fundraising materials. She also provides general oversight of the Access Fund website.

TY TYLER
Stewardship Director
Ty directs Access Fund stewardship efforts and education. He oversees the Access Fund-Jeep Conservation Team, as well as the Adopt a Crag and TeamWorks programs.

CONSERVATION TEAM – WE’RE HIRING!
We are currently hiring for the 2014 Conservation Team tour. If you want to travel the U.S. helping to conserve climbing areas, consider applying!
Our friends at prAna have been key supporters of the Access Fund since 1993. This year, prAna generously hosted the Rifle Climbers’ Festival, donating over $3,000 in proceeds to the Access Fund and helping clean up Rifle’s famous limestone crags. We thank prAna for going above and beyond to keep climbing areas open and to protect the climbing environment.

These 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
- Outdoor Research
- prAna
- The North Face

**TITANIUM - $50,000+**
- Black Diamond Equipment, LTD
- CLIF Bar & Company
- Mammut
- MSR®
- Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI)
- Petzl
- Therm-a-Rest®

**DIAMOND - $20,000+**
- Archer Law Offices, P.C.
- Alpinist Magazine
- Climbing Magazine
- Dead Point Magazine
- Mammut
- Patagonia
- Planet Granite
- Rock & Ice Magazine
- Touchstone Climbing Inc.

**PLATINUM PLUS - $15,000+**
- Osprey

**PLATINUM - $10,000+**
- Big Up Productions
- eGrips Climbing Holds
- Gore-Tex® Products
- Jason Keith Consulting
- La Sportiva
- Mountain Hardware
- Mountain Project

**GOLD PLUS - $7,500+**
- Sender Films
- Stanley
- Stonewear Designs
- Trango

**GOLD - $5,000+**
- Arc'teryx
- Avery Brewing Company
- BlueWater Ropes
- Campmor
- Carhartt
- Falcon Guides
- Liberty Mountain Climbing
- Mad Rock
- Metolius
- Outdoor Retailer
- SuperTopo.com

**SILVER - $2,500+**
- Backwoods
- CAMP USA
- Climb Max Mountaineering
- Drive Current
- Evolve Sports
- Fixed Pin Publishing
- Louder Than 11
- Moosejaw
- Mountain Khakis
- New Belgium Brewing Company
- Professional Climbers International (PCI)
- Treasure Mountain Inn
- Upstone Brewing Company
- Yates Gear Inc.

**MAJOR - $1,000+**
- Adventure Inn Moab
- Aiguille Rock Climbing Center
- Alpine Ascents International
- Alpine Endeavors
- Ama Dablam Rock Climbing House
- Armaid
- DMX Excalibur/Wild Country/Red Chili
- Desert Rock Sports
- Eddie McStiffs
- Footprints, Inc.
- GearEXPRESS.com
- Geezer, Inc.
- Got It Real Estate & Development
- Gregory Packs
- International Alpine Guides
- Jugo
- KNS Reps, Inc.
- Love Muffin Café
- Mob Half Marathon
- Mountain Tools
- Neptune Mountaineering
- Oskar Blues Brewery
- Outdoor Utah Adventure
- Poison Spider Bicycles
- Rocks and Ropes of Tucson
- Stone Age Climbing Gym
- Times Independent Publishing
- Tom K. Michael, DDS, PS
- Trailspace.com
- Verde PR & Consulting
- Wes & Gold

**SUPPORTING - $250+**
- Boulder Rock Club/Colorado Mountain School
- Climb Nashville
- Omega Pacific
- Intelligentsia
- Mesa Rim Climbing Center
- The Law Firm for Non-Profits

Chris is a writer, photographer, public speaker, and social activist whose work focuses on reconnecting people with nature and aiding the transition to a more mindful and sustainable world. He’s a veteran of over 30 expeditions to the most remote corners of the globe, including Everest, McKinley, Pumori, Ama Dablam, the jungles of Borneo, the Arctic, and remote regions of Bhutan and Burma. Chris’s current project, Women Who Dare: North America’s Most Inspiring Women Climbers, was published this month by Globe Pequot/Paladin Press. It is a celebration of feminine athleticism, wisdom, and skill. It profiles 20 of America’s most inspiring women climbers, ranging from legends like Lynn Hill to the rising stars of today. The book is illustrated with 124 of Chris’s full-color photographs of the profiled climbers in action, including the four shown here in the Vertical Times (cover, page 3, and page 15).

Look for Women Who Dare wherever books are sold.
Give the Gift of Access

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.

The more members we have, the more effective our collective voice as climbers. 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.

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 to check out the great gear in this year's packs!