CLIMBERS FOR POLITICAL ACTION EVENT A SUCCESS

CASTLE ROCKS, IDAHO OPENS TO CLIMBING
Stewardship of Our Climbing Resources

Recently, two significant events have occurred that directly affect our climbing areas and how we care for them: the Climbers for Political Action (CPA) event in Washington DC and a bold step taken by Peter Metcalf (Black Diamond CEO and long time Access Fund supporter). CPA occurred on May 15th. 6 members of Congress and the Undersecretary for Agriculture who oversees the Forest Service spoke to the climbing community — an unheard of turnout for a small non-profit such as the Access Fund.

Mr. Metcalf used the economic clout of the climbing industry to pressure the Governor of Utah to stop making backdoor deals which affect numerous climbing areas.

While different in approach, both efforts shared a common ideal to speak our minds to elected officials who create our laws and manage our lands. We let them know where climbers stand on issues that affect our climbing areas.

Advocating for climbing access elicits a responsibility to also care for the resource and work to provide the same opportunities to future generations.

At the Access Fund, the national voice for climbers, we take our stewardship role very seriously. In 2000, we initiated the Adopt-a-Crag program, which places a stewardship responsibility in the hands of local climbing communities. This year we plan to have over 100 events. This is the climbing community taking direct action to partner with land managers and other user groups to promote a sense of respect and responsibility for our climbing areas. Several of our corporate partners support Adopt-a-Crag financially and with other resources. See page 10 for more news about this special event.

Through our political actions and stewardship work, we are making our voices heard and backing up our requests with actions. This is our goal and all of you are making it work. THANKS!

Steve Matous
Executive Director
Congress Takes Climbers Seriously at CPA Event

The first ever Access Fund event in Washington DC came off in a very positive fashion. AF Executive Director Steve Matous presided and Keynote speaker Congressman Mark Udall D-CO (Boulder area mountains west) received the Access Fund Congressional Sharp end award for his contributions to keep climbing areas open and conserve the climbing environment. Their presence was strong with seven speakers from Congress including: Representative Nick Rahall D-WV, (New River Gorge); Mark Rey, Undersecretary for Natural Resources and the Environment (oversees US Forest Service); Representative Jay Inslee D-WA (Seattle area); Representative James Gibbons R-NV (Cave Rock); and Representative George Radanovich R-CA (Yosemite). Also, the legislative assistant for Senator Larry Craig R-ID (City of Rocks, Sawtooth NF) spoke on his behalf.

CPA was intended to improve the connections between climbers and government, and galvanize climber activism in support of legislation and regulatory initiatives that benefit climbing in the United States. Also, it gave climbers and environmentalists an opportunity to respond to these initiatives. We believe this event was a great success.

The speakers expressed their concerns and suggested solutions to problems associated with the use of public lands. “CPA put the Access Fund on the map with regards to Congress and their staff, because we demonstrated that we could get Congress to speak on important public lands issues,” said Policy Director Jason Keith, “It is really difficult to get that many members of Congress to go to a political event. This demonstrates that Congress takes climbing seriously and we intend to capitalize on this new awareness of climbing related issues and continue to lobby in D.C. on behalf of American climbers.”

The Access Fund and US Forest Service Ink Groundbreaking Agreement: Government-Private Partnership Formalizes Working Relationship to Promote Responsible Use of Public Lands. The Access Fund, a climbers advocacy organization, and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) recently announced a ground-breaking agreement that formalizes a cooperative effort to work at the national, regional and local levels on mutually beneficial programs, projects, training and other recreational activities. The five-year agreement will see the USFS and Access Fund working together on programs, projects and activities that leverage both of their charters and are in the best interests of the public.

“There is a strong need throughout the country to actively promote public and private partnerships that encourage the responsible use of public lands,” said Steve Matous, executive director of the Access Fund. “Today’s agreement solidifies what has been an informal working arrangement, and creates a watershed for the use and management of public lands across America.”

The heart of this accord is the commitment by the Forest Service to encourage its local officials to utilize the AF and its affiliates’ expertise in developing USFS
•continued on next page

Congressman Mark Udall, D-CO, was the keynote speaker at the Climbers for Political Action Event in May.
programs and management as they relate to climbing. In addition, the AF will provide technical assistance to land managers involved in climbing oversight projects, support educational activities, develop and maintain a nationwide communication network, and facilitate communications between climbers and public agencies.

“Both the Forest Service and the Access Fund share the common interest of providing information to the public on such subjects as conservation, recreation and natural resource activities as they relate to climbing,” said David Holland, director, Recreation, Heritage and Wilderness Resources for the United States Forest Service. “We’re looking forward to working with the Access Fund to identify appropriate partnership opportunities and to jointly pursue them on a national basis.”

Castle Rocks Opens to Climbing
Over Memorial Day weekend, Castle Rock Ranch opened for public use after 5 years of effort. The 400-foot high pinnacles and monoliths attracted climbers for years but were privately owned and off-limits until recently. In 1999, the Conservation Fund and the AF teamed up to buy the ranch, and subsequently the Castle Rock Ranch Acquisition Act of 2000 authorized the National Park Service (NPS) to purchase the 1,240-acre ranch with the understanding that the area would be turned into a state park and opened for public recreation, specifically climbing. The Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation (IDPR), the same agency that currently manages City of Rocks National Reserve, will manage the state-owned portion of “Castles” (BLM and USFS land lies behind the state park).

After environmental analyses by the NPS, the state of Idaho began planning for the opening of the park in late 2002. In January, Access Fund Policy Director Jason Keith facilitated a climbing management plan workshop at Castles with participants from the American Alpine Club, the Boise Climbers’ Alliance and individual climbers from Salt Lake City, Pocatello, Ketchum, Boise, and Jackson. Over 50 new routes were established on opening day, and a host of happy climb-
ers raved about the climbing at Castles, which is comparable to the neighboring City of Rocks. Additional zones may open up to new route development as early as this summer, but route developers must attend a short education and orientation program at the contact center and possess a valid permit to place fixed anchors.

Castle Rocks State Park is open as a day-use facility between the hours of 8 a.m. and 10 p.m. from Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day, and between the hours of 8 a.m. and 10 p.m. on Friday-Sunday during the months of September, October, April, and May. All recreation users must pay a motor vehicle entrance fee or exhibit an annual pass or Idaho VIP pass. When the 25 parking facilities are maximized, additional vehicles will be excluded until space is available. Users entering on bike, horse or foot will be permitted without charge or concern for parking capacity up to a total occupancy of 75 people at any given time. For more information, contact the City of Rocks Visitor Center at 208-824-5519.
The National Park Service (NPS) is presently reviewing comments for a Climbing Management Plan (CMP). The NPS intends that the CMP will meet the following objectives:

1. Protect natural and cultural resources within the park, and the scenic integrity of the area;
2. Provide the opportunity for climbing related recreation;
3. Maximize input from public and climbing community;
4. Determine appropriate commercial use as related to climbing; and
5. Develop an effective interpretive and educational program to enhance compliance.

For the Access Fund’s comments on the New River Gorge Draft CMP, see www.accessfund.org/whoweare/COMMENTS/NRG-CMP.htm

The New Climbers Rendezvous was held on May 16-17 at the New River Gorge. Despite a torrential rainstorm, locals still managed to put on a great event offering a wide selection of clinics and classes, free camping, and slack line, dyno, pull-up, bouldering and climbing comps. Saturday night saw a short film contest, a raffle (which helped raise over $1800 for the New River Alliance of Climbers), free food, and a dance party with music by spinmeisters Jason Babkirk, Andy Marstiller and Matt Campbell. The following morning, Trango USA and Stonewear Designs treated aching heads to coffee and a free pancake breakfast.

Kings Bluff Dedication, TN
(report by Doyle Parsons)

The dedication of Kings Bluff was a very significant event for the Southeast Climbers’ Coalition (SEC), a local climbing organization that has received numerous grants from the Access Fund. In 2002, the Lyttle family donated this land in Clarksville, Tennessee with about 200 limestone routes, to the climbing community. The property is now owned and managed by the Southeastern Climbers Coalition.

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AF Policy Director Jason Keith (left) met with Greg Jarvis (center) and Gary Hartley (right) of the National Park Service in May to discuss the Draft Climbing Management Plan at the New River Gorge, WV.
Coalition. Previously, the property had a history of vandalism and other problems, yet has been cleaned up through the collaboration of climbers and the landowners.

About 70 climbers gathered for the event to climb and celebrate. At the ceremony, Drane Lyttle attributed her decision to donate the land to climbers as something that she was “meant to do.” She made the decision after watching a climber working a route and feeling a special connection to the activity.

“I think we are meant to take care of the crag,” said Doyle Parsons of the SEC, “but mostly we are meant to do something with it. As climbers, we have the opportunity to show what we are capable of in creating a beautiful, natural and well groomed climbing area.”

WEST
Report on accessibility at Duncan’s Ridge, Fort Collins
(Reported by Brian Narus)

Currently a fence runs up the hogback from the gate on the road (CR 23). On the fence and gate there are several signs indicating that climbing is not permitted. These signs are not entirely accurate. They apply specifically to the actual construction site at Spring Canyon Dam to the south of the fence.

*AREA REPORTS continued on next page*
Climbing is permitted at Duncan’s Ridge. A small gap has been left in the fence right next to the old wooden fence so the trail is accessible. Since the dam is blocked off, the parking area can only be reached by turning off Overland Trail at the stadium onto CR 42, then go south on CR 23.

This information was obtained from the Public Relations Office at the Bureau of Reclamation (970) 667-4410. Ask for Kara Lamb for further details.

Mt Lemmon –Aspen Fire
(report by James Deroussel)

For the second summer in a row, the Santa Catalina Mountains north of Tucson, Arizona have been ravaged by wildfire. As of this writing, the two-week old Aspen Fire has burned 42,000 acres and is seventy percent contained. Like the Bullock Fire of 2002, this year’s Aspen Fire was found to be human caused. Together the fires have burned an estimated forty percent of the ponderosa pine forest on Mt. Lemmon. In addition to the immense loss of homes and habitat, several ultra classic Mt. Lemmon crags have been affected by the wildfires. However, restricted access to burned areas has limited efforts to assess damage to the rock and fixed protection.

NORTHEAST
CRAG-VT Acquires Lower West Bolton Cliffs

CRAG-VT (Climbing Resource Access Group of Vermont) completed the donation of the Lower West in late May. CRAG-VT received the generous donation of the 5+-acre parcel from Mr. Patrick Smith, who purchased the land in 2000. The transfer of the cliff to CRAG-VT will ensure access to climbing in perpetuity. CRAG-VT is a 501(c) 3 not-for-profit dedicated to promoting access and conservation of Vermont’s climbing resources. For more information visit www.cragvt.org.

“His” and “Hers” Clean Mountain Cans at the base of Denali, Alaska. The Access Fund gave a
The Access Fund will host a national conference for climber-activists from September 11-14, 2003 at the Estes Park Center in Estes Park, Colorado. The event will unite the organization’s national network of regional coordinators with activists from local climber organizations (LCOs) for several days of training, workshops and discussion. Over 100 attendees have been invited to discuss strategies for preserving access, conserving the climbing environment and promoting effective outreach at the grassroots level.

The Summit underscores the Access Fund’s commitment to preserving access by investing in the support, training and promotion of local grassroots activism. The event also provides an excellent forum for volunteer activists from around the country to share the ideas, experience, resources and knowledge necessary to preserve climbing access and the climbing environment. This will be the fourth such event held by the Access Fund in its 13-year history.

“With so many dedicated volunteers and seasoned activists gathering in one place, the Summit will be a remarkable learning experience,” said Shawn Tierney, Access Fund access and acquisitions director. “I expect all will come away from the weekend with a greater understanding of the crucial role grassroots activism plays in preserving climbing access.”

The Access Fund Activists Summit will occur September 11-14, 2003 at the Estes Park Center in Estes Park, Colorado.
Registered Adopt-a-Crag Day Events (as of July 4th)

- Southington, CT — Ragged Mountain Foundation, Adopt-a-Crag Day at Ragged Mountain. Contact Mike Stokes (203) 239-7882, stokes512@aol.com

- Chatsworth, CA — Friends of Stoney Point, Adopt-a-Crag Day at Stoney Point. Contact Michael Geibelson (310) 828-2160, mageibelson@yahoo.com

- Pocatello, ID — Idaho State University Outdoor Program. Adopt-a-Crag Day at Ross Park. Contact Peter Joyce (208) 282-3912, joycpete@isu.edu

- Tallulah Gorge, GA — Southeastern Climbers Coalition / Crowder, Inc. Adopt-a-Crag Day at Tallulah Gorge. Contact Michael Crowder (404) 329-1519, biners@crowderinc.com

- Cody, WY — Bison Willy’s Bunkhouse. Adopt-a-Crag Day in Shoshone Canyon. Contact Kenny Gasch (307) 587-4944, bwb@vcn.com

- Asheville, NC — Pisgah Climbers’ Association. Adopt-a-Crag Day at Looking Glass. Contact Brandon Calloway (828) 712-1707, bathook@charter.net

- Decatur, GA — Atlanta Climbing Club. Adopt-a-Crag Day at Lost Wall. Contact Davis Peacock (404) 636-4648, d.peacock@mindspring.com

- Linville, NC — Boone Climbers’ Coalition. Adopt-a-Crag Day at Linville Gorge. Contact Ron Dawson (828) 963-7579, hsmg@earthlink.net

- Estes Park, CO — AAC Central Rockies Section. Adopt-a-Crag Day at Lumpy Ridge. Contact Greg Sievers (970) 586-4075, gsievers@estes.org

- Silverado, CA. Adopt-a-Crag Day at Echo Cliffs. Contact Louie Anderson (909) 721-7090, clanders@flash.net

- Phoenix, AZ — ASU Environmental Law Society. Adopt-a-Crag Day in Queen Creek Canyon. Contact Nate Scheer (480) 206-3865, nate.scheer@asu.edu

- Winston-Salem, NC – Carolina Climbers’ Coalition. Adopt-a-Crag Day at Moore’s Wall. Contact Sean Barb (336) 971-3941, sean_barb@hotmail.com

- Norman, OK — Wichita Mountains Climbers Coalition. Narrows Trail Adopt-a-Crag Day Contact Marion Hutchinson (405) 364-9390, marionhutch@aol.com

- 9/13 Klamath, CA – Wild Humboldt Quarterly. Love Lost Rocks Day. Contact Bennett Barthlemy (805) 640-7171, wildhumboldt@hotmail.com

- 9/20 Okinawa, Japan — Okinawa Adopt-a-Crag Day. Contact Emmanuel Lacoste, emmanuellacoste@yahoo.com

- 10/18 Roseburg, OR — Climbers of Southwest Oregon. Adopt-a-Crag Day at the Callahans. Contact Greg Orton (541) 440-9848, gorton@climbsworegon.com
The Access Fund Announces 4th Annual Adopt-a-Crag Day

The Fourth Annual Adopt-a-Crag day is set for September 6, 2003. Adopt-a-Crag Day is the Access Fund’s signature conservation event, an opportunity for climbers to express their dedication to stewardship and volunteerism, and to give back to the climbing and bouldering areas they frequent. Due to the significant interest garnered in previous years, as well as numerous early registrations, the Access Fund anticipates hosting nearly 100 Adopt-a-Crag Day events this September.

Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI) has signed on as Adopt-a-Crag Day’s Title Sponsor for a second year, as has Presenting Sponsor W.L. Gore. Clif Bar, involved since the inaugural Adopt-a-Crag Day four years ago, is once again the event’s Supporting Sponsor. “The Access Fund is grateful for the financial generosity of REI, Gore and Clif Bar,” said AF Development Director Heather Clark. “The support of these outdoor industry leaders makes Adopt-a-Crag Day not only a possibility, but also a success.”

Adopt-a-Crag Day has become synonymous with grassroots activism. The national event has helped facilitate relationships between climbers and land managers, and has inspired communities to assist in the care and maintenance of the climbing areas dear to them. Adopt-a-Crag Day has sparked the formation of Local Climbing Organizations, and ignited such projects as visual impact mitigation, litter removal, erosion control, trail construction, and the installation of signage.

Says local event organizer Brandon Calloway, “The Pisgah Climbers Association is excited to continue hosting Adopt-A-Crag events in North Carolina. Adopt-A-Crag Day can be proactive in fostering access to our climbing areas, and is a means to share information about Leave No Trace ethics and safe climbing practices.”
Expansion of Raptor Closures in Boulder Canyon is Unjustified!

Anyone who has climbed in Boulder Canyon for less than 4 years may not realize that the best winter crags were not always closed to climbing, due to seasonal closures for raptor nesting. In fact, until February 2001, Security Risk Crags, Happy Hour Crag, the Riviera and Bihedral Rock were never closed to climbing. In the early 1990's, bitty Buttress was the nesting site of a pair of golden eagles, resulting in the closure of that crag and occasionally the nearby Blob Rock. Around the mid-1990s, Eagle Rock became the home of the Eagles, resulting in the closure of that cliff and the opening of Blob Rock and Bitty Buttress. Throughout the decade of the 1990s, the seasonal closures for raptor nesting were limited to one or two cliffs that were the nesting site for the eagles. These reasonable closures were respected by the climbing community.

In February 2001, a dramatic expansion of the raptor closure occurred as a result of decisions by the Colorado Division of Wildlife and Roosevelt National Forest. This expansion went from 1 or 2 cliffs to more than 8 cliffs, including Eagle Rock, bitty Buttress, Wall of Voodoo, Blob Rock Area, Security Risk Crags, Bihedral Rock, plus the Riviera and Happy Hour Crag, which are less than 500 feet from the highway. Interestingly enough, no raptor nested in the expanded closure zone in 2001. The same closure was applied in 2002 and the eagle returned to nest at Eagle Rock. Again, the same closure was in place in 2003 and recently lifted in late April because no raptors were found nesting in the closure zone.

It doesn’t take a rocket scientist to figure out that current seasonal closure zone isn’t helping to attract and protect raptors such as the pair of golden eagles that have traditionally nested here. The size of closure is unnecessary and unjustified in light of the evidence. Climbers should be asking a lot of questions as why the Division of Wildlife decided to expand the closure. Perhaps it has something to do with the personal prejudice of government officials about climbing and outdoor recreation.

I have always been told that land managers close all this land just as a precaution for the bird. I don’t buy this argument. I believe the Division of Wildlife can abuse its power because the climbing community does not stand up to it and question their authority. Furthermore, the Access Fund has worked in cooperation with these land managers, helping to further their policies, rather than provide the resistance necessary to represent climbers’ right to use public land.

I have always obeyed bird closures but perhaps the day has finally come when that will no longer be the case and civil disobedience will be necessary to protest such closures. The day has come that we should be looking for solutions to limit the size of the closure, and the timing couldn’t be better. With the shrinking federal budget cuts, we can advise the legislature as to where those cuts should be made.

Government agencies need to be reminded they are accountable to we the people. The abuse of power by government agencies will not bring more revenues to the region, even if a few fines are handed out to those who disobey this law. Dramatically reducing the current closures will help local economies since more recreational opportunities will be available thus attracting more visitors throughout the year.

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

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

**Featured Partner—**Rock & Ice Magazine has been a Diamond level corporate sponsor of the Access Fund since 1993. “Supporting the Access Fund is a top priority for Rock and Ice magazine. The Access Fund is THE climber’s voice, speaking for all of us in key political circles, working to keep our crags open for today—and tomorrow’s—climbers.”

Duane Raleigh, Editor in chief and publisher

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Outdoor Research – 1999
Phoenix Rock Gym – 1997
PML – 1991
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Shoreline Mountain Products – 2001
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Thanks

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George Hurley, Peter Croft, Hans Florine, Kurt Smith, Elaina Arenz-Smith, Mike Ousley of Ousley Creative, Mike Strassman and Range of Light Productions, Nebraska University’s Climbing Club, the University of Northern Colorado, the Jersey Rock Gym, Saint Lawrence University, Sophia and Sports Basement, Ibex, OKC Rocks, Pagan Mountaineering, Upper Limits, Discover Outdoor Center, Fox Mountain Guides, Mizzou Climbing Club, Mitch and Riverat, Towson University, The Challenge Rock School, Brent and the Minnesota Climbers’ Association, Lee Means and the Southeastern Climbers’ Coalition, Deb Grass and Rock’n & Jam’n, Josh Sorya and Poly Escapes, Jason Kurten and Texas A & M University, Harrison Hood and the R.I.M Club, Lauren McLaughlin and Marin Outdoors, Black Dome Mountaineering, Rock and Snow, and Vertical Endeavors.

Kickin Access #3
“The Friction Addiction Video Tour”

Kurt and Elaina Smith are set to get back on the road in August to bring another kick butt Access Fund, tour to a city new you! This year will feature the local premiere of their new film, “Friction Addiction” featuring the Black Hills of South Dakota. This one hour film will highlight traditional climbing and bouldering on the pebble pinching madness of the Black Hills. Featuring the latest soundtrack from Underground Chuck and a segment on the godfather of bouldering John Gill. This film will showcase the impressive bouldering fields of the Black Hills and the foundation that Gill laid over 40 years ago combined with all the new school problems that will make this your next bouldering destination!

This high energy event will feature DJ Highball dropping deep progressive beats, action packed dyno comps, the video premiere and the booty packed Access Fund raffle and auction. All for the cause of supporting the Access Fund and grassroots efforts to keep our climbing areas open.

Look for Kickin Access/Friction Addiction to come to a climbing gym or retailer near you soon. For complete tour info, pictures and stats go to www.accessfund.org.
Invest in the **Future of Climbing**

In these uncertain times, life affirming activities such as climbing are more important than ever. Invest in the future of climbing. Give a gift to the Access Fund.

There are many ways you can help preserve our valued climbing resources. The Access Fund's planned giving staff can help you determine which one is appropriate for you. They include:

- Stock
- Bequest
- Charitable Gift Annuity
- Pooled Income Fund

If your gift is $10,000 or more, you may designate it for one of the following categories: Acquisitions, Advocacy & Activism, Membership, Trails, Education, Climbing Preservation Projects or Unrestricted. For more information on any of these options, contact the Access Fund Development Director at 303.545.6772, ext. 100.