

# VERTICAL TIMES

The National Publication of the Access Fund  
Fall 09/Volume 85  
[www.accessfund.org](http://www.accessfund.org)



## The Inside Scoop on the Access Fund Land Conservation Campaign

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“Great things are not done by impulse, but by a series of small things brought together.”

— Vincent van Gogh

After our summer break from publishing the spring *Vertical Times*, it feels good to take a moment to reflect on the past four months and write to you. We've focused much of our energy on building the capacity of the Access Fund to support the work of our volunteer leaders and local climbing organizations (LCOs). And we've made progress.

In June, after six years of collaborative negotiations (yes, six years), we finalized a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the National Park Service (NPS) that outlines how we will work together toward our common interests. LCOs can leverage the agreement to initiate relationships with managers of national parks in their region.

This July we launched a new online advocacy tool. Building on our long tradition of action alerts, this new online technology enables supporters to quickly and easily generate letters in response to urgent access issues. The advocacy tool has the ability to focus on specific, local issues, enabling LCOs to use it as though it were their own.

And we recently announced the Access Fund Land Conservation Campaign (AFLCC). The AFLCC is a multimillion-dollar revolving loan program that provides LCOs with the funds and expertise needed to act quickly to save threatened climbing areas on private lands. We are halfway to our \$2.5 million goal and have already loaned out \$35,000 through two pilot projects. Though our fundraising efforts are ongoing, the program is fully operational.

It has been a busy summer, and there is no end in sight to the potential I see for the Access Fund and our network of volunteer organizations to become more and more effective at protecting our climbing resources. Steadily we're building momentum and capacity. In spite of the economic downturn, we are a stronger organization than we were just a year ago. Thank you for your help in making this progress possible.

I'll be touring the country in October with North Face athletes Conrad Anker and Jimmy Chin to promote the work of the Access Fund. We'll send out more information on dates and venues soon. If you get the chance, it would be great to see you at one of the shows.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brady Robinson".

**Brady Robinson**

*Executive Director*

facebook

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Yep, we're now on Facebook.

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Chris Archer



### More Toilets at the Gunks?

I was climbing at the Gunks recently and noted that the AF had helped fund another toilet installation in the parking lot—in addition to the one funded a while ago on the carriage road. I'm curious as to why the AF is providing facilities that the Mohonk Preserve, currently charging climbers \$15/day, could readily fund themselves?

— **SIMON CARR,**  
Maryland

**AF:** *Simon, good question. We try to evaluate projects on the merit of their benefit to the climbing community. That said, the Mohonk Preserve funded 90% of the toilet installation, and the Access Fund picked up the rest. So your day-use fees are being used for these projects!*

### The Fight to Keep CA State Parks Open

I recently came across the Access Fund's online alert re: CA state park closures. It's great to see another partner in this fight. Since the proposal was announced on May 28, we've been running the Save Our State Parks campaign and keeping the heat on CA lawmakers to avoid the cuts and keep state parks open. We're glad to have the Access Fund on our list of supporters for the campaign.

— **GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS,**  
California State Parks  
Foundation

**AF:** *The original \$70 million proposed cut for California state parks was significantly reduced to \$14 million, less than 10% of the original proposal. The final budget plan was signed on July 28; the final closures list is expected this fall.*

### THAT'S A MEDIUM?!?!

There I was, little newbie me, filled with anticipation and glee: My T-shirt, AT LAST! I would now be able to flaunt my generous \$10/mo contribution in the symbolic icon of climbing preservation, responsibility, and generosity. And then I saw it: the medium. "THAT'S A MEDIUM?!?!!" I gasped to myself! When I couldn't get my ankle through the neck hole after 10 heartfelt attempts, I decided I'd best let it go.

— **AMANDA CHAPIN,**  
Albuquerque, NM

**AF:** *Amanda, we don't recommend using Access Fund T-shirts as leg warmers, and we cannot be held responsible for any injuries caused from trying to get your ankle through the neck hole (be careful out there). New T-shirt—one size larger—is in the mail! Sorry about the sizing issue—we had a batch of T-shirts earlier this year that took vanity sizing to a whole new level!*

### New T-shirt designs

Earlier this year we asked you to submit your artwork to be considered for the next Access Fund T-shirt. We are psyched to announce the winner of our T-shirt artwork contest—Erica Lyon of Kelly, WY. Erica's vivid take on Half Dome will adorn our new shirts, which will ship to renewing members this September!



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](mailto:holly@accessfund.org).

### The Northeast Ohio Climbers Coalition

We are pleased to welcome our newest affiliate organization in the Midwest. Northeast Ohio Climbers Coalition hosted its first successful Adopt a Crag at Whipp's Ledges and is currently building relationships with Cleveland Metro Parks. For more information, contact Brian Sabourin at [NEOhioClimbers@gmail.com](mailto:NEOhioClimbers@gmail.com).



### New LCO in Northern Wisconsin

North of 29: Northern Wisconsin Climbers Coalition is one of our newest affiliate organizations. Daniel Goscha, founder and president, is currently working with the US Forest Service on upcoming stewardship projects for Quartz Hill Trail, located in the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest. The coalition is also working to establish an MOU with Rib Mountain State Park. For more information, visit [www.wiclimb.org](http://www.wiclimb.org).

### Delaware Climbers Coalition

The Delaware Climbers Coalition is our first affiliate organization in Delaware. It is currently working toward a climbing management policy with the Delaware State Parks. For more information, visit [www.declimbers.org](http://www.declimbers.org).

### New Regional Coordinator in Texas

We are happy to introduce one of our newest regional coordinators, Paul Brady. Paul will be working with climbers throughout Texas to provide support with private and public land access issues. For more information, contact Paul at [bradypaul@gmail.com](mailto:bradypaul@gmail.com).



### New Regional Coordinator in New Jersey

Thomson Ling, cofounder of the Mid-Atlantic Climbers (MAC) and regional coordinator for the metro DC area, is packing up and heading to New Jersey. Thomson will become the new regional coordinator for New Jersey beginning this October. He hopes to develop new relationships with the local climbing community and provide assistance with access issues in the area.



### Denver Climbers Coalition

The Denver Climbers Coalition is working hard on filing its 501c3, hosting Adopt a Crag, and developing a relationship with Denver Mountain Parks to open climbing in the area. For more information, visit [denverclimberscoalition.blogspot.com](http://denverclimberscoalition.blogspot.com).

### Local Climbing Organization 101: **How to Leverage an MOU**

The Access Fund holds memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with all three public land agencies: the National Park Service, US Forest Service, and Bureau of Land Management. These MOUs outline how climbers and the agency will work together. As AF affiliates, local climbing organizations can use these MOUs to get a seat at the table when management planning involves agency lands that contain climbing resources. LCOs can leverage the MOUs to initiate mutually beneficial relationships with agency officials at local crags. For more information, visit [www.accessfund.org/mous](http://www.accessfund.org/mous).



To submit an update for your local climbing organization or area, contact Amy Ansari at [amy@accessfund.org](mailto:amy@accessfund.org).

# Why Climbers Are... AWESOME

Highlights from the Shenandoah Rockfest, April 18–19, 2009

It was a brisk morning as six leaders of the Mid-Atlantic Climbers were anxiously setting up tables in an empty field in Shenandoah National Park, VA, in preparation for the Shenandoah Rockfest Adopt a Crag weekend.

As volunteers began trickling in and setting up camp, the empty field was soon transformed into a bustling base camp, the energy building like static electricity before a storm.

Just as volunteers gathered around the table for the morning briefing, a groggy camper (wearing only his skivvies) rolled out of a hammock strung from a nearby tree and, to his amazement, found himself surrounded by

a hundred people. The man just happened to have set up camp in the field after hiking in the night before. But when he learned what everyone was gathered there to do, he signed up to help on the spot.

“My takeaway for Rockfest is simple: climbers are awesome,” says Fred Wilson of Mid-Atlantic Climbers. “You ask them to come together and complete a task, and it’s going to get done.”

The volunteers split into groups and walked the park, including 38 overlooks along Skyline Drive. They set up belays and made technical ascents at many of the overlook sites to remove



trash and debris from every crack and crevice—many of which hadn’t had a thorough cleaning in nearly 40 years. With close to 125 volunteers, the group collected and removed 2,375 pounds of trash from the park and sorted it into “garbage” and “recyclables” using dumpsters and containers provided by the park service.

In the early afternoon, volunteers got word from park service officials that a hiker was injured nearby and needed assistance. The park service was short-staffed that day and turned to the climbers for help. Eleven volunteers from the Adopt a Crag event stepped up to carry the injured hiker on a Stokes litter from the waterfall on Rose River Loop to Skyline Drive, where he could be transported to a medical facility.

“Events like the Shenandoah Rockfest are so important because they not only bring climbers together, they help protect climbing access by showing land management agencies that climbers are a responsible user group,” says Amy Ansari, Grassroots Coordinator with the Access Fund.

It seems the National Park Service agrees. On May 22, the Access Fund received a letter from the superintendent of the National Park Service singing the praises of the Mid-Atlantic Climbers and its volunteers. A special thanks to all of the volunteers and the Shenandoah National Park for hosting such a great event. ■



A group of participants in the Shenandoah Rockfest. Photos by Ocean Eiler

## A GUIDE TO

# Planning a Successful Adopt a Crag Event

Imagine an event where strangers quickly become friends, where joking and laughing are contagious, and where people often discover that, while they can't move mountains, they can move huge boulders.

If you've ever participated in or organized an Adopt a Crag event, then you know exactly what we're talking about. If you haven't, then what are you waiting for?

Anyone of any age can organize an Adopt a Crag stewardship event. All it takes is a little time and planning. Here are a few tips to get you started:

**Pick Your Project:** The work needed at your crag might be obvious, like trash, graffiti, or erosion problems on the trail. Or it might not be so obvious, like chains or bolts that are excessively worn or invasive weeds running rampant. Pick your project, evaluate the needs, and determine the manpower required to get it done.

**Get Permission:** If the crag is on private land, you might already know the landowner. Other times, you have to play detective—contact the county assessor's office or visit its website to find out who owns the land. If your crag is on public land, go to the appropriate city, county, state, or federal website and contact the area's volunteer coordinators. Plan to make several calls in order to speak with the right person.

**Develop a Checklist:** Document the resources needed to complete your project. You might need experts to help with trail building, or someone to tell you what to do with all those trash bags when they are full. Keep a running checklist of what you need. Visit [www.accessfund.org/AACorg](http://www.accessfund.org/AACorg) for a comprehensive checklist to get you started.

**Advertise:** Submit a press release to your local newspaper using the Access Fund's customizable PR template,

available at [www.accessfund.org/AACorg](http://www.accessfund.org/AACorg). Rally volunteers using Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter. Contact the Access Fund, and we'll send you posters to display at local gyms and gear stores, announcing the date and location of your event.

**Partner Up:** People in the climbing business are generally happy to help out. Contact your local REI, gear shop, and climbing gyms to tap into local expertise, help promote your event, get swag items to raffle, and generate volunteers from their staff.

Remember, the Access Fund is here to help you. We can help promote your event on our website, provide you with resource materials, and send you cool swag. Contact Amy Ansari at [amy@accessfund.org](mailto:amy@accessfund.org) or **303-545-6772 x105**.

For more information, visit [www.accessfund.org/adopt](http://www.accessfund.org/adopt).



## Find a Local Climbing Organization in Your Area

The Access Fund has over 80 affiliated local climbing organizations across the country. These volunteer-run organizations work to keep climbing resources open in their local areas, conserve the climbing environment, and promote responsible outdoor climbing. They are the liaisons between the climbing community and local land managers/owners, and they're the first line of defense when an access issue arises.

We encourage you to find the local climbing organization near you and get involved today! For a complete list of organizations across the country, visit [www.accessfund.org/lcos](http://www.accessfund.org/lcos).

# THE INSIDE SCOOP

## The New Access Fund Land Conservation Campaign

Last month Access Fund member Jeremy Chrislip got an e-mail from us announcing the launch of the Access Fund Land Conservation Campaign, “a multimillion-dollar revolving loan program designed to provide local climbing organizations and other agencies with the funds and expertise needed to act quickly to save threatened climbing areas.”

Jeremy, curious how his membership money is being spent, decided to come ask us a few questions about the new program. Keep reading to get the inside scoop on Jeremy’s interview with Access Fund Executive Director, Brady Robinson.

**Jeremy: Is it weird to have me interview you like this?**

*Brady: Not at all; it’s great. Other members of the community are likely to have similar questions, so this is a good forum for answering them. Go for it!*

**Jeremy: OK. First, what makes the Access Fund Land Conservation Campaign different?**

*Brady: To answer this question, it helps to have a little history. The AF has been involved with acquisitions for nearly 20 years. It’s always been an important part of our mission. Take, for instance, North Table Mountain in Golden, Colorado. We acquired it years ago and still hold it and manage it to this day. But we’re a small staff of nine in Boulder, Colorado...*

**Jeremy: Right, that strategy probably wasn’t scalable across the country...**

*Brady: Exactly. So after the Table Mountain acquisition, we decided the right strategy was to grow the grassroots network of local climbing organizations so that they could take the lead, not only in acquisitions but in issues that arise locally. That strategy worked, and we now have over eighty LCOs across the country. Some have even undertaken acquisitions on their own. Then we asked ourselves, ‘How can*

*the AF help those organizations become more successful?’ That’s when we created the revolving loan program to give them the financial capital and expertise necessary to undertake acquisitions and conservation with our support.*

**Jeremy: Yeah, about that, what exactly is a revolving loan program?**

*Brady: Well, if you make a five-dollar donation, over time we are going to preserve fifteen, then twenty, then fifty dollars’ worth of property off that original five dollars because we use the money over and over again. It’s a strategy that is not unique to us. It has been used with great success by a number of other organizations, notably the Trust for Public Lands.*



**Jeremy: So you provide financial capital and expertise. What kind of expertise are you talking about?**

*Brady: We hired a guy by the name of Joe Sambataro, who formerly worked for the Cascade Land Conservancy, which is a highly respected regional land trust in the Seattle area. Depending on the LCO’s needs, Joe will work with them on purchase options and best practices for conserving land and stewarding it over time. He is available to offer help and support, as needed.*

**Jeremy: Your website mentions that you loan LCOs money in order to allow them more time to fundraise and finalize a takeout strategy. What exactly is a takeout strategy?**

*Brady: It's the long-term plan for the land, the endgame. Maybe the ultimate plan for the land is for the LCO to hold it in perpetuity, which might be viable if they have the long-term stewardship funding. Another takeout strategy might be for the LCO to sell the property to another long-term owner, be it a land trust or a local, state, or federal agency.*

**Jeremy: Like you did with Shelf Road here in Colorado?**

*Brady: Exactly. We bought the crag and our takeout strategy was to transfer it to the Bureau of Land Management for long-term management.*

**Jeremy: So will the Access Fund ever own properties outright?**

*Brady: It's possible. We learned through experience that owning and holding land across the country is not a sustainable or scalable strategy for us. But we won't rule it out. There may be an instance where there is an extremely important climbing area and there is no one around to hold the property. In those special circumstances, the AF would consider holding the property. But in general, that's not our strategy.*

**Jeremy: Of all the potential projects out there, how do you determine which get funded?**

*Brady: We have a set of predetermined criteria, combined with an approval process by the staff and board. We evaluate whether the climbing area is of regional, local, or national significance. Are there other climbing resources in the area, or is this the only place where people in the area can climb? Is it close to a metro area? It's difficult to make hard and fast rules, so there will always be an element of judgment in our decision making.*

**Jeremy: Do you have other projects lined up? What's next?**

*Brady: We've got a number of things in the pipeline. But these kinds of negotiations can be tricky. If we don't have the property secured in some way, then we can't publicize it. It could spook the landowner or alert developers or other people that also might be interested in the property. So it's important for us to maintain some level of confidentiality around our projects until they reach a point at which we are certain that everything is going the way it should; then we'll let our members know.*

**Jeremy: If I, a private citizen, wanted to purchase property and conserve it for climbing, would you loan me money?**

*Brady: Ha ha. What area did you have in mind? Let's just say that if an individual wants to buy a piece of property to preserve climbing access, they should contact the Access Fund to talk about ways we can partner.*

**PROGRAM BETA**

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**Funding**

Fundraising Goal	\$2.5 million
Progress Toward Goal	> 50%
Founding Corporate Donors	Black Diamond Mammut Mountain Gear The North Face Outdoor Research Petzl prAna

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**Projects**

Lower Index Town Wall, WA	\$15,000 bridge loan to secure option agreement (see next page)
Steele Cliff Line, AL	\$20,000 loan to bridge funding gap for 25-acre cliff line (see next page)

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**How to Get Involved**

Members	Make an additional donation today at <a href="http://www.accessfund.org/donate" style="color: white;">www.accessfund.org/donate</a>
Corporate Partners/ Major Donors	Contact <a href="mailto:smith@accessfund.org" style="color: white;">smith@accessfund.org</a>
Got a Project?	To apply for funding, contact <a href="mailto:joe@accessfund.org" style="color: white;">joe@accessfund.org</a>

**Jeremy: What kinds of protections are going to be put in place to make sure that once the land has been purchased it will remain open in the event that the purchasing organization ceases to exist?**

*Brady: There are a lot of options available to us, depending on the situation, but it gets pretty technical. One example might be the Access Fund holding a conservation easement as "backup" to the ownership of the local climbing organization. If you want to dive into the details, I'll refer you to Joe. But the important takeaway is that we're committed to permanent protection of climbing access and all that it entails.*



### Lower Index Town Wall, WA

Lower Index Town Wall features one of the best concentrations of steep, clean granite cracks and face climbs in western North America and boasts a 50-year climbing history. Private landowners historically allowed public access and climbing

at the Lower Index Town Wall. However, recent interest from quarrying companies led the landowners to post “no trespassing” signs in March 2009.

The Access Fund Land Conservation Campaign provided \$10,000 in bridge financing to secure an option agreement that gives the Washington Climbers Coalition (WCC) the sole right to purchase the 23-acre parcel for long-term management or to assign it over to Washington State Parks. AFLCC provided an additional \$5,000 in start-up costs to help kick off the fundraising efforts and complete the title work. The WCC is spearheading fundraising for the remainder of the purchase price and related conservation efforts. Visit [www.washingtonclimbers.org](http://www.washingtonclimbers.org) for more information.



### Steele Cliff Line, AL

Steele features over one mile of 100-foot-tall sandstone cliffs located in northeastern Alabama. The area has a long history of climbing dating back to the mid-1970s. However, it has been closed to climbers since 1987 due to private landowner issues.

The Southeastern Climbers Coalition (SCC) has been pursuing the purchase of the cliff line for years. In the summer of 2008, the SCC finally found its break when landowners decided to sell a central, 25-acre tract with 1,418 linear feet of cliff.

The Access Fund Land Conservation Campaign provided a \$20,000 bridge loan to assist with the project, which will enable the SCC to close on the 25-acre tract and position the coalition to acquire an adjoining parcel that contains an additional 400 linear feet of cliff line.

Visit [www.seclimbers.org](http://www.seclimbers.org) for more information.

**Jeremy: You're trying to raise 2.5 million dollars in what is arguably the worst economy of our time. Do people think you're a little crazy?**

*Brady: Let me use an analogy here. If you're on a climbing trip and you spent a lot of time, money, and energy to get in position to do a climb, and you wake up that morning, unzip the tent and the weather doesn't look that great, what do you do? Do you pack up, go home, and try again next year? In my experience, the most successful and motivated climbers go for it, unless it's completely foolhardy. If you're in position, you go for it. You make an attempt even if the conditions aren't perfect.*

*So yes, it's the worst economy of our time, but the fact that we're more than halfway toward our fundraising goal is proof that we were wise to continue.*

**Jeremy: One could also argue that there's a lot of opportunity in real estate right now...**

*Brady: Absolutely. Even though it's harder to get the money in, there is a lot of property on the market that wasn't on the market before. The two pilot projects that are underway right now—Steele and Index—those properties weren't for sale last year. And it's not a coincidence that this economy has shaken those properties loose and put them on the market at a lower price than they would have listed a few years ago. So this is actually a very good time to be buying climbing areas.*

**Jeremy: How can I donate specifically to the AFLCC?**

*Brady: Right now we're asking people who want to support the AFLCC to make an additional donation to the Access Fund. Every dollar above and beyond what we've budgeted for individual donations will go directly into the campaign. If people are interested in making a significant gift to the campaign or making a pledge over several years, they should contact Jason Smith at [smith@accessfund.org](mailto:smith@accessfund.org).*

We followed up with Jeremy a few days after his interview with Brady to see how he was feeling about the Access Fund Land Conservation Campaign. “Some of my first exposure to the Access Fund was at Table Mountain, and the thought that there was a nonprofit out there helping to keep places like that accessible really prompted me to join,” says Jeremy. “It sounds like a solid program, and it's good to see some of my dollars going toward a program that fits my initial perception of what the Access Fund does.” ■

# What the Heck Is an MOU

## Access Fund and National Park Service Agree to Collaborate

**A**fter six years of collaborative negotiations, the Access Fund has finalized and signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the National Park Service.

So now you're wondering, *What's an MOU?* Well, it's a document that states a cooperative relationship between the climbing community and the National Park Service, outlining common interests that the parties share—such as conservation and planning—as well as how we will work together to reach common goals. Basically, we agree to play nice with each other.

The greatest value of this MOU will be realized by the Access Fund's more than 80 affiliated local climbing organizations, which can use the agreement to initiate relationships with managers of the national parks in their areas. **See page 5 for details on how to leverage the MOU in your area.**



### Did You Know?

The Access Fund holds MOUs with all three federal land agencies: National Park Service, US Forest Service, and Bureau of Land Management.

The Access Fund has been building a case for the MOU since early 2003, and we presented an extensive support package to the National Park Service in September 2005. The package outlined the contributions that the Access Fund and local climbers have made to NPS lands, such as collaborating on conservation events, participating in management planning, granting funds for trail improvements, and installing bear boxes. This support package showed NPS officials that climbers are a cooperative and responsible user group.

The Access Fund was also able to show a long history of collaboration between climbers and National Park Service officials, illustrated through successful climbing management in areas like Yosemite National Park in California, Denali National Park and Preserve in Alaska, New River Gorge National River in West Virginia, and Devils Tower National Monument in Wyoming, to name a few.

Numerous NPS officials provided endorsements for the Access Fund in support of the MOU, including the previous superintendent of Yosemite National Park, Michael Tollefson, who stated, "We enjoy a direct line of cooperative and thoughtful conversation with [Access Fund staff], and believe that this connection allows forward-thinking solutions."

For more information, visit [www.accessfund.org/MOUs](http://www.accessfund.org/MOUs). ■

## MOU IN ACTION

The Las Vegas Climbers Liaison Council (LVCLC) is in the process of leveraging the Access Fund's MOU with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to establish its own, local MOU with BLM officials at Red Rocks in Nevada. "The value of the MOU for us," states LVCLC President Lisa Buchina, "is that it's an effective way to be seen as the local experts on climbing management issues and conditions. This helps ensure that the BLM will work with us on climbing management planning at Red Rocks." The LVCLC maintains a collaborative relationship with the BLM and hopes to have its local MOU in place by the end of the year.

# TAKE ACTION NOW!

## Access Fund Launches New Advocacy Tool



**T**ake action now!” These are familiar words to our members and supporters. Founded in 1991, the Access Fund started as an advocacy organization with a small group of climbing activists taking on state and federal government to protect our climbing freedoms.

Today, climbing advocacy still makes up a large portion of what we do. As members, you are used to seeing Access Fund “action alerts” in your inbox informing you about issues where your voice is needed to help protect our climbing resources—both local and national. And you diligently respond, drafting your own letters, cutting and pasting letter templates, and digging around to find the correct decision makers. We’re happy to report that AF advocacy just got way easier!

The Access Fund is pleased to announce the launch of a new online grassroots advocacy tool that makes it easier and faster for you to influence public policy that affects climbing access.

This new technology allows you to quickly and easily respond to urgent action alerts online by sending a preformatted letter (written by our policy director) or customizing your own letter, which is then automatically sent to the

correct decision makers based on the state where the issue is located and on your zip code.

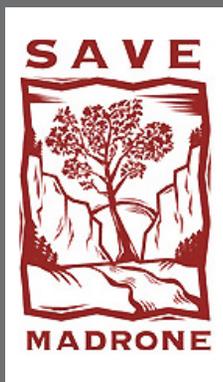
You can also help spread the word by forwarding the issue to friends and climbing partners using the software’s “Spread the Word” tool, empowering *you* to help mobilize the climbing community around issues that could impact climbing access.

“We are extremely excited about this new technology,” says Access Fund Policy Director Jason Keith.

**“It is critical that policymakers hear our voices before a vote.”**

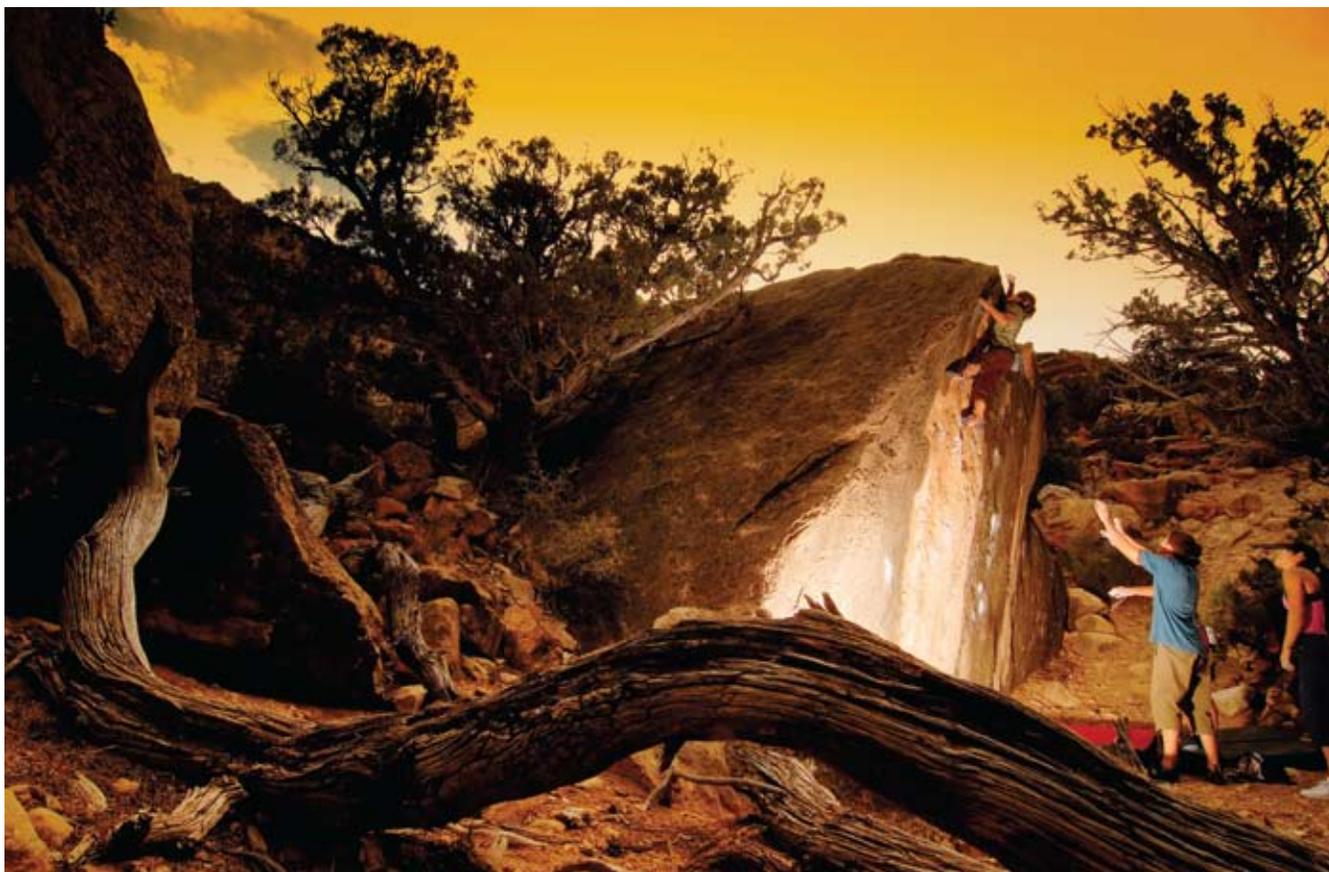
“It is critical that policymakers hear our voices before a vote. And this new capability will empower the climbing community to have real influence over public policy decisions, as well as support the work that we are doing in Washington, DC.”

Supporters can stay informed of current action alerts by visiting the Action Center at [www.accessfund.org/action](http://www.accessfund.org/action), placing the Access Fund RSS feed on their home page, or becoming a fan of the Access Fund’s Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/accessfund](http://www.facebook.com/accessfund). ■



### Advocacy in Action

Last month the Madrone Wall Preservation Committee, an LGO in Oregon, asked the climbing community to help encourage county officials to maintain \$70,000 in budgeted funds for opening its home crag, the Madrone Wall. With only a week available, the climbing community flooded county staff with appeals to reject a proposal to reallocate the funds for an unrelated land purchase. On July 21, the Clackamas County Parks Advisory Board voted unanimously to retain the budgeted \$70,000 for phase one of the Madrone Wall park implementation. The volume of letters received and the climbing community’s sustained appeal to the county made a substantial difference in moving the park creation effort forward.



Melissa Lacasse enjoys the moderate terrain of Triangle Arete, Joe's Valley, UT | © Matt Stark

# MATT STARK

Self-taught adventure photographer and mastermind behind *Dead Point Magazine* (*DPM*), Matt Stark claims to be more lucky than skilled behind the camera. But we tend to disagree, which is why we're featuring Matt's work in this issue of the *Vertical Times*.

Matt began his 18-year climbing career on the granite slabs of Looking Glass, NC, moving on to become a "sport climbing weenie" at New River Gorge, WV, and then ditched the rope altogether when he discovered bouldering in Hueco Tanks, TX, and

Boone, NC. Matt now lives in New River Gorge with his wife, Megan, and their dog, Rupert, and divides his time more evenly between climbing styles.

But it's Matt's accomplishments at *Dead Point Magazine*, the self-proclaimed "free media for the young and unruly," that we find most compelling.

Driven by his intense desire to give back to the climbing community, Matt put together a business plan for *DPM* in 2007, and then spent six months sitting in front of countless venture capitalists before finding an investor to back his vision.

"The community has changed since the '90s, when I started climbing," states Stark. "It has gone mainstream, but that doesn't mean climbing needs to stop looking and sounding like an extreme sport. Hopefully climbers find inspiration in the pages of *DPM* or in the videos we provide on our site."

You can also find Matt's photography in the pages of *DPM*. Check out *DPM*'s online community and see for yourself at [www.deadpointmag.com](http://www.deadpointmag.com). ■



**Black Diamond™**

## Special Thanks to Black Diamond Equipment!

In 2006, Black Diamond Equipment spearheaded the Access Fund Corporate Membership Match program, holding an AF membership drive at its offices and offering to pay 50% of the membership dues for any employees interested in joining the cause. Over the years, the program has expanded to include almost a dozen other corporate partners.

We would like to take a moment to recognize Black Diamond's continued commitment to strengthening the Access Fund's mission by boosting membership support and outreach to the climbing community. Thank you!

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!

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## Holiday Packs — Get Ready for the Swag!

The holidays are just around the corner, and we want to remind you that you can get the ultimate stocking stuffers for the climber on your list right here! Filled with a one-year Access Fund membership, our special edition 100% organic Access Fund T-shirt, and oodles of swag from our corporate partners, the AF holiday pack offers everything the climber in your life would want.

Stay tuned to [www.accessfund.org/holiday](http://www.accessfund.org/holiday) to see what kind of goodies this year's packages will hold!

**SALES BEGIN OCTOBER 15**

## Access Fund Members Receive 15% off prAna!

prAna would like to honor your Access Fund membership by offering a 15% discount off all merchandise for members in good standing.

Visit the [www.accessfund.org/partnerdeals](http://www.accessfund.org/partnerdeals) to cash in on this killer deal!



## Access Fund Piton Bottle Opener

How your support for the cause while cracking open a cold one. The Access Fund piton bottle opener is essential to any bivy or camp set. Lightweight and stylish, we suggest racking it up with your nut tool so it's on hand to help quench your post-burn thirst. Also fits perfectly on a key chain.

Get yours today at [www.accessfund.org/shop](http://www.accessfund.org/shop).



## Join Us Today!

Use the form below to join the Access Fund or to renew your membership. If you're already a member, encourage your friends and climbing partners to join!

### WAYS TO JOIN

1. Go to [www.accessfund.org/join](http://www.accessfund.org/join)
2. Call **1-888-8MEMBER**
3. Fill out this form, tear it off, and mail it to:

**Access Fund**  
PO Box 17010  
Boulder, CO 80308

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# PASS IT ON

We need your help to spread the word.

As a member, you recognize the value of the Access Fund's mission to keep climbing areas open and conserve the climbing environment. When you're done reading this issue of the *Vertical Times*, please pass it on to your climbing partners and tell them about some of the great benefits of membership.

- Swift action when US climbing areas are threatened
- Climber education to help prevent access issues
- A local and national voice on climbing policy issues
- Opportunities to give back to areas where you climb
- A network of over 80 local climbing organizations and hundreds of activists, all fighting to preserve our climbing way of life!

Join us today at [www.accessfund.org/join](http://www.accessfund.org/join) or fill out the form on the previous page. ■

Mike Williams punches into the crux of The Racist, New River Gorge, WV | © Matt Stark

