FOREST SERVICE NEGOTIATED RULEMAKING TO START
Access Fund policy expert appointed to committee

The US Forest Service announced on Oct. 29 the start of the Negotiated Rulemaking process that will clarify Wilderness climbing policy and write any regulations governing the use of fixed anchors. The Access Fund's position on fixed anchors is that the opportunity to place, use, and replace fixed anchors is essential for climbers. Most Wilderness climbs require few, if any, fixed anchors, and this standard should be preserved. But it shouldn't be a criminal act to leave rappel anchors on a Wilderness climb due to emergency, bad weather, or other factors.

"We have lobbied for a clear national policy on the issue of fixed anchors in Wilderness areas, and we support the Forest Service's proposed rulemaking as a step in this direction," said Access Fund's Senior Policy Analyst Sam Davidson.

Davidson is arguably the nation's foremost expert on climbing policy and will be the Access Fund's representative at the Forest Service's first-ever Negotiated Rulemaking. Davidson, a former NOLS instructor, has been working on Wilderness climbing issues for more than 10 years.

"However," Davidson continued, "We are concerned about the committee's makeup. There are other independent organizations with a unique stake in this issue that should also participate, including the American Safe Climbing Association. We also feel that the committee would benefit from a presentation by the Sawtooth Climbers Coalition, due to their work in the Sawtooth Wilderness, where a local decision in 1997 precipitated the Forest Service's recent attempt to ban "all use" of fixed anchors in Wilderness in June of 1998."

In early November the Access Fund mailed a Climbers Alert to all members to ask that they write suggesting the above groups be included on the committee. These letters must be postmarked by Nov. 29 to be accepted into the record. See the Access Fund Web site at www.accessfund.org for more information on how to write the Forest Service about this issue.

The implications
At stake in the Negotiated Rulemaking is the opportunity to climb hundreds of North America's most classic routes, from California's Mount Whitney to Pinnacles in the Winds, from Granite Mountain in Arizona to Idaho's Sawtooths, from Tahquitz Rock in California to Linville Gorge in North Carolina.

Hundreds more equally important climbing resources—including El Capitan, Baboquivari Peak, the Tetons, Zion, and Joshua Tree, which are not in national forests—could also be affected by the Forest Service rulemaking. These climbing resources lie in Wilderness areas managed by the Park Service and BLM, which are expected to follow the Forest Service's lead in managing climbing in Wilderness.
Spray

OPINIONS FROM THE

REMOVABLE BOLTS: NOT THE ANSWER

by Marion Butchison, regional coordinator

The concept of drilling holes to place bolts versus the concept of drilling holes for removable gear will quickly, if not immediately, become one and the same in the minds of managers, conservationists, the public, and most climbers. This is not a revolutionary concept. Climbers could have been drilling/chiseling permanent slots on blank faces for accepting conventional small wired nuts anytime since their invention. However, the climbing community has never accepted that practice. If they had we wouldn’t be currently in the middle of a bolt controversy with federal land managers—we would be in the middle of a “pack” controversy.

These “new” devices are not new technology. They are simply a modified design of existing removable gear, like sliders. The practice of drilling, chiseling or otherwise altering the rock for placing removable gear has never been accepted on the national scene. Remember, the biggest problem non-climbers have with fixed anchors is not the fact that people see them, it’s the fact that they know they exist. It will be no different with drilled holes. When or other are seen or are visually less noticeable than the already invisible bolt hanger doesn’t matter. The fact that people know climbers are out there drilling holes will be just as concerning.

Drilling holes and altering rock for placing removable gear seems like some much awaited savior. It’s not. For climbing areas on our state and federal lands, and especially in areas like Oklahoma’s Wichita Mountains, which are under a management plan requiring a permit for placing fixed anchors, I think there is absolutely no question that drilling holes for placing removable gear should at the very least be regulated. The real question is whether or not the practice should be allowed at all. If I can drill a half-inch hole for placing a removable nut, why can’t I drill or chisel a half-inch slot for placing a wired stopper? How about a half-inch finger pocket so that I can link all the moves on my 50-foot, 6.14c face climb?

The bigger question here is whether or not this practice would help reduce impacts caused by using fixed anchors, but rather, would this practice lead to the next generation of climbers to readily accept alteration of our rock resources for any purpose?

I think the climbing community needs to think long and hard about the implications of this. At one time not too long ago, clean climbing meant something, and chiseling holes or drilling handfuls of bolts in a 40-foot wall is unbelievable. Then came sport climbing, and years later we are dealing with the fallout of too much drilling and too many bolts. Now suddenly, drilling holes and altering rock for placing removable gear seems like some much awaited savior. It’s not.

We have already witnessed at some sport climbing areas (mostly on private lands, but also on state and federal property) the practice of drilling, chiseling and sculpting holds. Along with an extensive network of grid bolting, these areas amount to nothing more than manufactured outdoor gym climbing. While this interpretation of climbing may be acceptable to some at certain local, private climbing areas, it is not something the national climbing community or land managers want or need descending on our state and federal lands. This “new” vicious idea of drilling placements for removable gear may initially seem as though it has no negative repercussions when compared to placing fixed anchors. However, the bigger, unseen threat is the underlying erosion of one of climbing’s most long-standing and accepted values: no alteration of our rock resources.

While it can be argued that drilling holes for fixed anchors alters the rock resource, bolts have historically been used as a last resort for the purposes of providing necessary security for the first ascent party, as well as for all who follow. Since every climber carries carabiners, there is no disinclination as to who in the future can access that route. However, a route with drilled holes for removable gear cannot be safely climbed by anyone who does not own those specialty devices. Given the option between holes for fixed anchors versus holes for removable gear, the choice is obvious.

The opinions voiced in Spray are not necessarily those of the Access Fund.

BLACK CANYON, COLORADO

Southwest Colorado’s Black Canyon became the newest national park in the US on Oct. 23. The Black Canyon National Park, formerly managed as a national monument, gained nearly 10,000 acres in the process.

For climbers, the most noticeable impact will be the continuation of the $7 per car entry fee instituted last summer. Climbing permits will continue to be required, but park staff expects they will be free for the foreseeable future.

Park Service staff began working on a climbing management plan in 1998; what effect the Black’s change in status will have on that as yet unpublished document remains to be seen.

Boulder Mountain Parks, Colorado

Climbing access and conservation in Boulder’s Mountain Parks took a giant stride forward with the formation of the Flatirons Climbing Council (FCC) in September, an exciting and innovative partnership between the Access Fund, American Alpine Club, Colorado Mountain Club, and the Action Committee for Eldorado

Collectively these organizations represent the interests of 27,000 members. The FCC is dedicated to conserving the climbing resources and environment of the Flatirons, preserving climbing access and the area’s diverse climbing experience, and to working cooperatively to resolve climbing management issues. Through volunteer conservation and stewardship projects, direct funding, educational outreach, and the establishment of a cooperative relationship with Boulder Mountain Parks and City Open Space, the FCC hopes to establish a standard of excellence in the arena of public/private partnerships.

For information on getting involved with the FCC, please contact Access Fund Regional Coordinator Dave Turner at 303-554-8535.

The Monastery, Colorado

For several years, this area near Estes Park has had no officially designated parking area. Most climbers parked on the switchback near the trailhead. Things began to change last summer when a local landowner trucked in a modular home on the road. Due to the truck’s difficulty negotiating the switchback because of climbers’ cars, the Forest Service posted “No Parking” signs on the switchback and created an official, designated parking site—a gravel meadow—100 yards down the road.

Despite the designated parking site, some homeowners remain vigilant over the newfound popularity of this area. Recently, two climbers who had parked in the designated site returned to their cars after a day of climbing to find the message “Tow and impound—DHSF” painted on their windshield. Despite the message, we have confirmed that this was not the work of the Forest Service. However, climbers are encouraged to respect the privacy of area homeowners and to use only the designated parking area.

Rifle, Colorado

Relations between climbers and the city of Rifle became strained during last summer’s climbing season due to parking issues. New “No Parking” signs were installed, parking enforcement was stepped up, and those individual parking spots were removed.

Rifle Mountain Park is owned and managed by the city of Rifle and supported by entry fees and by taxes on Rifle residents. Climbers are reminded that area residents have been very tolerant of climbers “taking over” their city park in the past. Please obey the parking signs, respect the other users we share the park with, and refrain from loud swearing when other visitors are present.

South Table Mountain, Colorado

Colorado Springs’ Table Mountain was recently closed despite a three-year effort by the Access Fund to keep the area open. Table Mountain is owned by Colorado’s State Land Board, an agency established to use state-owned lands to generate income for Colorado schools. When the Fund began investigating ways to ensure access, the property was leased by a hunting group and a rancher. The Fund expressed interest in leasing the area for climbing, but the Land Board has granted an 80-year lease to a sand and gravel company to quarry aggregate at Table Mountain. Due to liability and safety concerns, the area is no longer open to public access.

Castle Rock, Idaho

The opening of public access to this new area near the City of Rocks is subject to a complex series of land transfers that will
be enabled through authorizing legislation in the US Congress. Idaho Senator Larry E. Craig recently introduced Bill S.1705, which will authorize the land transfers to the US Senate on Oct. 7. The bill is now before the Senate Committee on Natural Resources.

The Access Fund appreciates the input from our members on possible climbing management strategies for the Ranch (see Vertical Times V.8, p. 11). We are currently working with Idaho Parks and Recreation to evaluate management options.

In the next few months, Access Fund members will have another chance to help with the acquisition of the Ranch by writing letters in direct support of Sen. Craig's bill. This is the most crucial aspect of the Castle Rock Ranch acquisition for Fund members to support. Stay tuned for an update early next spring. For more information, contact Rick Thompson, acquisitions director, at 303-545-6772 ext. 105.

RED RIVER GORGE, KY

The Red River Gorge, which has been featured in several national climbing publications, is facing closure. Natural Bridge Kentucky State Resort Park is currently in the process of purchasing a parcel of land that contains Pocket Wall, and has announced the Park intends to close the climbing area once purchased. A unique rock resource, Pocket Wall is an integral part of climbing in the Red River Gorge with its signature pockets, huge huecoes, long, gently overhanging pitches, and host of moderate routes. Currently climbing is prohibited at Kentucky State Parks, but the purchase of Pocket Wall would place a fully nature destination crag on state park property for the first time.

The Access Fund, Regional Coordinator Sharron Stuart-Smith and the Red River Gorge Climber's Coalition are working together to open a dialogue with the state park and are exploiting the options for keeping Pocket Wall open. The groups have requested a meeting, tentatively scheduled for the end of November, to address the park's concern of protecting the plant and animal communities that are unique to sandstone cliffs in other parts of the park.

In the next few months, Access Fund members will have another chance to help with the acquisition of Castle Rock Ranch by writing letters in direct support of an authorizing bill.

For more information, contact Shannon Stuart-Smith at 606-269-876.

QUINCY QUARRIES, MASS.

New England Regional Coordinator Richard Doucette and local activist Larry Sodano have led recent efforts to work with the Massachusetts Metropolitan District Commission (MDC), which is the agency charged with managing Quincy Quarries. After the MDC proposed to fence off and drain the quarry, climbers and local residents appealed to the state environmental officials to protect public access and protect natural resources. In a Settlement Agreement signed with local interests, the MDC agreed to develop a long-term management plan and to solicit input from area climbing organizations including Access Fund representatives.

To date, the MDC has not solicited climber input and has performed no work on the management plan. To jump-start the process, local climbers have organized a letter-writing campaign to state legislators asking that they persuade the MDC to work with local citizens, and fulfill their obligations under the Settlement Agreement.

TAKE ACTION

Massachusetts climbers can help with the situation at the Quincy Quarries by writing to their state representatives. In your letter, state that the MDC should develop a Management Plan for the Quincy Quarries and should solicit input from local residents and climbers.

Names and addresses of State Legislators can be found at www.state.ma.us/legis/citytown.htm or by calling 617-727-2356 (House) or 617-722-1275 (Senate). More volunteers are needed. Contact Regional Coordinator Richard Doucette at 617-924-4688 or Larry Sodano at 617-381-0280.

BITTERROOTS, MONT.

Regional Coordinator Steve Porcella has been leading the charge for climbers and the Access Fund in Montana's Bitterroot Range for a progressive approach to managing climbing impacts in that area. Climbing in the Bitterroots takes place on Forest Service, BLM designated wilderness areas, proposed wilderness areas, and private land.

"We're still in the planning or information gathering stage," Porcella says. "There's an increase in climbing use in the Bitterroots over the last ten years. Some of the growth has been new climbers, some of it out of state climbers. But we're starting to get some impacts here like eroded trails, accumulation of trash, and poorly bolted or over bolted routes.

"There's no problem now," Porcella continues, "compared to other places in the US...but we're trying to be progressive about preventing problems in the future. The Forest Service, the main managing agency we're dealing with, doesn't have the resources or man power to manage climbers. Therefore, we are volunteering our time and expertise to help them deal with the expanding climbing user group. One plan in the works is to set up kiosks at trailheads to present climbers three related messages:

"The first will center on a recommend- ed, ethical, low impact behavior with regards to climbing techniques and presence in the back country. The second will focus on safety issues such as multiple parties on a single route, rockfall, climbing within one's abilities, etc. Lastly, the third message will deal with historical aspects of climbing in the Bitterroots to demonstrate that low impact ethics and responsible behavior are a landmark of the range. With this system in place we want to encourage a responsible behavior to local and out of state climbers that will lessen impact over time, preserve the quality of the resource, and present the climbing community in a favorable, progressive role. The goal is to lessen impact to resources, thereby minimizing involvement and potential future education by government agencies responsible for preservation of public lands."

JOE ENGLISH MILL, N.H.

The Access Fund recently received several inquiries about climbing access at this area located on the grounds of the New Boston Air Force Station. Joe English sports about 150 routes that average two to three pitches in length.

Access has long been tenuous at this area due to the military's concerns about security and safety. Safety is problematic because the base of the cliff, which was used for training practice during World War II, is not expected to have remaining occupants.

It is possible to get explicit permission to visit Joe English, but the process is not easy. Those interested should contact the Superintendent of Recreation at the air station to arrange access.

MCCONNELLS MILL STATE PARK, PENN.

Regional Coordinator Bob Value and Access Fund staffs Rick Thompson and Kathy Pyke recently produced a 27-page

"Restoration, Conservation and Policy Proposal" that was submitted to park management in September. Activities Carl Samples and Ken Clise also provided extensive input for the document.

The proposal first analyzes existing site conditions, evaluates the contributing causes of the impacts, and then makes specific recommendations for mitigating impacts and improving current climbing policies. Access Fund trail guru Jon Angel will visit the site in November to make a thorough site inspection, and will subsequently develop a restoration plan for Rim Road, the Mill's most frequented climbing site. Current plans call for a major remediation project in spring, 2000.

Local climbers are encouraged to contact R.C. at 724-776-4918 for more information and to get involved in promoting climber activities at the Mill.

HUECO Tanks, TEXAS

In September a rock art survey company announced that more than 40 rock art sites had been identified at Hueco Tanks State Historical Park in Texas. Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, which manages Hueco Tanks, immediately said the findings meant the agency should take a "stewardship approach" to public access to the park.

"Using computer scanning and digital enhancement of photographs, Rupesh Sarchi, a team member of the survey, was able to present a 3D image of rock art to the public and to the park visitors," said Maryann Neft, a Texas Parks & Wildlife spokesperson. She added that, while there is no plan to open all 40 sites to the public, the agency is looking into the possibility of opening others.

The Access Fund has always supported TPWD's commitment to protect the rock art at Hueco Tanks (see related story, page 9). What we do not support is the agency's decision to restrict climbing access severely when there is little or no evidence that climbing has damaged rock art in the park, or could not be managed easily with fewer restrictions.

The Access Fund's goal is to get TPWD to agree that Hueco Tanks has unique value as a world-class climbing resource, and to
obtain adjustments to the park's climbing access policy which support this recognition while providing full protection for rock art. To this end the Access Fund continues to review TPWD internal documents and do other legal research, and is working with local climbing organizations on additional strategies.

For more information, contact Access Fund Action Committee Chair Eric Holcy at 972.247.1592.

CASTLE VALLEY, UTAH

Utah Regional Coordinator Allen Sanderson and activist David Early recently alerted the Fund that property at the base of Castleton Tower owned by Utah School Trust Lands will soon be coming up for sale in Castle Valley near Moab. This land includes historic and popular access and camping sites for climbs on Castleton and others. 

Utah School Trust lands are managed at times and are subject to disposal by the state. If protected, some of the properties coming up for disposal could be sold for development. The Access Fund has begun working with local climbers and the newly formed Castle Valley Collaboration, a local land preservation group, to assess the feasibility of purchasing this land for long-term preservation. For more information or to help with preserving the area, call Acquisition Director Rick Thompson at 888.863.6373, ext. 105.

SOUTHEASTERN UTAH

The Access Fund looks forward to working with new local climbers organizations in southeast Utah's canyon country. Called the Canyonlands Climbers Coalition (CCC), the group aims to coordinate service projects to benefit climbers and the environment; to promote access to public lands; and to foster relationships between climbers and land stewards. Although access issues have abounded in the red rock desert for a number of years (the ban on fixed anchors in Canyonlands NP, camping and trail issues at Indian Creek), the coalition is the first local group to take on these problems.

CCC is just getting started and actively looking for new members. The group is headquartered in Moab and led by Eve Tallman; contact them at 435.259.5639 or e-mail revtech@lani.net.

GREEN GIANT BUTTRESS, WASHINGTON

The Darrington Ranger District of the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest has proposed closing the road to one of Washington's premier multi-pitch walls, the Green Giant Buttress near Darrington. The District's plan is to gate Forest Road 2005 (Copper Creek Road) just past the Squirrel Creek Trailhead (the jumping-off point for Three Cocks Rock and Theomb) to avoid maintenance costs.

The District's proposal, if implemented, will add approximately four miles to the already time-consuming hike to and from the Buttress. This will make one-day ascents of the ultra-classic Dreamer route (VI, V.5 or V.10b), as well as Safe Sea (VI, V.5) and The Fast Lane (V, V.5,11c), much more difficult for most parties.

TAKE ACTION

The District's decision isn't final. You can help by writing or calling the District and asking them to please keep the road open. Explain to them that:
• Forest Road 2005 is used by climbers to reach the Green Giant Buttress, an important climbing destination; and
• Closing the road will make one-day ascents of the Buttress difficult and encourage parties to camp close to the wall, thus creating new impacts in a designated wilderness area.

Please write as soon as possible—time is critical with this issue. You can contact the District at:

Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Darrington Ranger District 1405 Enumas Street Darrington, WA 98241 360.436.1155

FRENCHMAN COULEE/LOWER TETON RIVER, WASHINGTON

Beginning this year, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has implemented an "Access Stewardship Decal" requirement to help make up a 16 percent maintenance budget shortfall caused by declining sales of fishing and hunting licenses. This means that climbers must now buy an $11 window decal (good for one year) in order to legally park at WDFW-managed areas such as Frenchman Coulee (Vantage) and the lower Teton River cliffs (Royal Column, The Bend, and Moon Rocks).

As a number of climbers have already discovered, the price for parking without a decal is a $56 ticket. Access Stewardship decals are available wherever fishing and hunting licenses are sold. A list of vendors is posted at www.wa.gov/wdfw/lic/vendor.htm.

The Access Fund has taken an official position opposing the use fee demonstration program administered by the federal agencies. Traditionally, the WDFW has relied upon the fees generated from fishing and hunting licenses but not tax money from the state general fund—to manage its lands. With hunting and fishing on the decline, and "new" recreation such as climbing and kayaking on the rise, the agency is incorporating new user groups into its traditional funding framework.

The Access Fund has worked hard to preserve climbing at Frenchman Coulee by representing that climbers are willing to mitigate their impacts. This position will be difficult to maintain if climbers refuse to comply with the decal requirement. At the same time, if the agency is collecting money directly from climbers, we are in a much stronger position to ask for needed improvements such as permanent toilets.

Therefore, at this time we encourage climbers to comply with the Access Stewardship Decal program.

GOVERNMENT POLICY PERTAINING TO CLIMBERS

NEW INITIATIVE TO BOOST RECREATION AND CONSERVATION FUNDING

The Access Fund has joined forces with a handful of similar advocacy groups, including the Outdoor Recreation Coalition of America, the American Hiking Society, and American Whitewater, to push for significant increases in Congressional funding for recreation and conservation programs in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2001 federal budget. This year, thanks to President Clinton's Lands Legacy Initiative and support from Congress, it appears that the Land and Water Conservation Fund will receive permanent funding. Monies from this fund can be used for land acquisition and protection. This is a positive step, but Congress has been trying to fund land management through user fees and other dubious alternatives to annual appropriations. The recreation community needs to let Congress know that, with respect to public lands administration, we want our tax dollars spent on recreation and conservation rather than resource extraction, and we do not want new and higher user fees to become an excuse for cutting agency budgets even further.

Here's an example of how appropriations do not match the role recreation plays.

The current investment does not match the role recreation plays.

This year, the Access Fund released a draft of a new position statement on climbing and fixed anchor use in wilderness areas. Sierra Club members are invited to comment on the position statement until December 1, 1999. The revised position statement retains its recommendation that fixed anchors be allowed and managed in wilderness. The Access Fund endorses the Sierra Club for its thorough analysis of this issue, and will encourage the Club to make sure that language in its position statement does not inadvertently create new problems in legal interpretation and wilderness management. We will continue to work closely with the Sierra Club and other leading environmental groups on wilderness preservation and management.

To review the proposed new position statement, visit the Access Fund Web site at www.accessfund.org. Comments can be sent by mail or e-mail to Ken Cline, 31 Ledgewood Avn., Bar Harbor, ME 04609 or kcline@sierrabc.org.

Yosemite: Camp 4 will be official name for historic campground

In September the Sierra Club released a draft of a new position statement on climbing and fixed anchor use in wilderness areas. The statement includes a recommendation that fixed anchors be allowed and managed in wilderness. The Sierra Club endorses the Access Fund for its thorough analysis of this issue, and will encourage the Club to make sure that language in its position statement does not inadvertently create new problems in legal interpretation and wilderness management.
Still Wondering what to get the climber on your list?

Set him or her up with our Climber’s Christmas Survival Set at a great discount price. The El Capitan mug will get your climber up Christmas morning, the O’Piner bottle opener will pry the lid off any bottle of holiday cheer, the hand strengthener will maintain finger power through the longest holiday layoff, and our refrigerator magnet will keep those X-mas bills neatly stuck to your fridge.

The Climber’s Christmas Survival Set is a $32 value that we’re blowing out the door for $25 plus $5 for shipping and handling. To hook up your favorite climber, give us a call at 888.863.6327 and ask for Heather at extension 100.

Happy Holidays from all of us at the Access Fund!

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**The HUCCO Files**

The truth is more out there than we thought by Sam Davidson, Senior Policy Agent

On the summer solstice of this year I got an alpine start—not for any climb, but for a flight to El Paso, Texas. I was to meet Access Fund President Michael Kennedy and legal ace Larry Guidafson for two days of perusing over documents buried in the files of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD). Not anyone’s idea of fun, but we were way beyond fun at Huco Tanks.

The Access Fund has been working since its formation in 1990 to improve relations between climbers and TPWD, as well as to help Huco Tanks address resource impact issues. Despite our efforts, and those of Texas climbing organizations, to work out a mutually satisfactory policy for climbing with TPWD, the agency last year imposed such severe restrictions on access that, unless you are a local, it is extremely difficult to visit the park as a climber. Even locals can’t boulder outside of North Mountain with any regularity—you must be accompanied by an escort, and have a maximum of two hours, for any type of visit to the rest of the park.

But what is worse is that TPWD has refused to acknowledge Huco’s importance as a climbing area. Recognition of a unique value is the first step towards preserving it. Not only is the park a world-class climbing resource, with seemingly infinite routes and problems of exceptional quality—it is the only climbing area of its type, anywhere. And in the name of rock art protection, TPWD has more or less said that climbers aren’t welcome there.

But back to the Huco files, Michael, Larry and I met in El Paso, with no prospects for climbing, to find out what TPWD officials did and said in public and in private, during the process of developing the Public Use and Resource Management Plans for Huco over the past several years. We wanted to know.

On the second pitch of Thistle’s Hump on the Front Side we loced and

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**Leading out on the second pitch of Thistle’s Hump on the Front Side as locals look on.**
What does climbing mean to you?

Isn't it worth preserving?

Our climbing future is under attack.

Help us fight back by investing in the future of climbing.

Give an end-of-year gift to the Access Fund.

If your gift is $10,000 or more, you may designate it for one of the following categories: Acquisition, Advocacy 
& Activism, Membership/Trail Education, Climbing Preservation Projects or Unrestricted.

For more information on any of these options, contact Sonya Levin in the Access Fund office at 303-545-6775, ext. 102.

Fall 1999 Climbers Rendezvous

The Access Fund's fall board meeting at the New River Gorge in West Virginia was complemented by some fine weather and several fun social occasions, giving directors, regional coordinators and staff ample opportunity to mingle with guests and the New's spectacular Nuttall Sandstone. Unfortunately, the event would not have operated smoothly without the immense effort and graciousness put forth by our local hosts, Gene and Maura Kistler.

Awards given at the fall Rendezvous

- Bobbie Award given for the single most outstanding contribution to access, conservation and grassroots activism: Leslie Brown
- Sharp End Awards given for notable support of our mission to keep climbing areas open and to preserve the climbing environment: Pat Justice, Becky Ball, Chris Wharton, Shannon Stuart-Smith
- Regional Coordinator of the Year given to the most outstanding commitment shown by a regional coordinator: Gene Kistler
- Partnership Awards given for outstanding local stewardship: Southwest Climbers Coalition, Friends of Seneca, Coopers Rock Foundation
- Departing Board Member Award given for distinguished volunteer service upon departing the Board of Directors: Barry Gilbert
- Land Manager of the Year: Tom Skinner, Cochise Stronghold, Ariz.

Department of Corrections

Mike Lewis of the AAC writes us that he is not, in fact, a charter member of the AAC (as reported in 69 Spire; vol. 30), which was founded in 1902, which would make him 97 years old. On the contrary, Lewis reports his age as a youthful 39.

Wiscosin Regional Coordinator Steve Frye alerts us to two corrections in our recently published Member Handbook: first, his last name is indeed spelled with an "e" at the end; and second, his correct e-mail address is rykerod40@sidnet.com.

Point and click Christmas shopping benefits the Access Fund

Unsure on what to get your climbing partner this holiday season? Running out of time to get those last-minute gifts? Along with our Climber's Christmas Survival Kit of Access Fund merchandise on page 8, you might want to check out the deals to be had on the world wide web from some of our corporate partners.

If you do, you'll benefit the Access Fund as well. Several Access Fund Corporate Partners are donating a percentage of the purchase price of all goods ordered from their on-line retail sites directly to the Fund. Before you rush to your computer, though, be sure to use the preset connections found on the Access Fund's Web site at www.accessfund.org/you.html. Look for and use the following logos and hyperlinks in order to direct a portion of your purchase price to the Access Fund.

Another interesting choice on the Web allows you to designate a percentage of your purchases to the Access Fund, too. Visit www.iqiva.com, an on-line shopping mall with select savings on office supplies, books, CDs, video, toys, flowers, sporting goods, gifts, groceries, gardening supplies and more. Before you can begin shopping through this merchant, you must register as a member (for free) and indicate that you want to designate the Access Fund as your non-profit of choice. Follow the directions that are clearly stated on iqiva.com's website.

Don't have a computer? You can still go shopping the traditional way and support the Access Fund's Corporate and Retail Partners. If you have questions about our on-line partnerships or need to find one of our retail partners, please call Anika at 303-545-6772 ext. 107.

Regional Coordinator update

The Access Fund's Regional Coordinators (RCs) are the cornerstone of our support for grassroots climbing activism and are one of our most valuable resources for keeping climbing areas open. As trained experts in access issues, RCs are the Fund's principal liaisons to local areas and represent climbers' interests on both private and public lands.

The Fund would like to extend a welcome and thanks to these new RCs for volunteering their time to fight for climbing access in their areas: Richard Droucette, New England region; Terry Kerby, Hawaii; Kerry Nomad, Northern Arizona.

The Fund is also looking for volunteer RCs to coordinate local access efforts in the following areas: Iowa; Great Basin; Nevada and Alaska.

If you're interested, or know someone who would be good at the job, contact the Fund at 888-865-6237.
Conservation
By Kath Pyke, conservation director

PEREGRINE FALCON DELISTED
On August 25, the Department of the Interior announced that the Peregrine Falcon has been removed from the Threatened and Endangered species list. The Access Fund has been closely following the delisting proposal since it was announced 12 months earlier (see Vertical Times, vol. 23, July 1998, available on our web site). Our submissions have focused on how a change in status might affect existing sector climbing restrictions currently in place at over 90 US climbing locations.

Despite delisting, Peregrine Falcons remain protected under the Migratory Bird Act, individual state laws and local authorities. As with Golden Eagles and Prairie Falcons, the Access Fund continues to support arrangements that provide the necessary protection for these cliff-nesting birds. However, there may be some situations where it is timely to review changes in nest-site location, extent of closure boundaries. The Access Fund provides advice and a framework for discussions in our special handbook Raptors and Climbers—guidance for managing climbing to protect raptor nests and. This is available free to those in land management or education. If you have any questions about the situation in your area, call or e-mail Kath Pyke at the Access Fund.

FROM SCIENCE TO TIME—ACADEMIC DEBATE SPREADS INTO CLIMBING AND POPULAR PRESS
The academic debate first started in Science by an article on cliff climbing impacts (see Vertical Times, vol. 28, May 1999, available on our web site) and shows no signs of dying down. First, the Access Fund had a response letter published in the next issue of Science (vol. 284). Next came articles in Nature (April 98), Biodiversity (July 99) and American Scientist (Sept-Oct 99). Publications as small as local newspapers like western North Carolina’s Watauga Democrat (Friday, Oct. 22) have gotten into the act.

Fortunately, these articles have presented a more sophisticated analysis. Climbing magazine (Oct. 99) picked up on the debate with Willis Young's Access column, and this is followed up by a letter from the Access Fund in the December 15 issue. The popularization of climbing even reached new heights with a front cover shot on Time magazine (Sept 99). The ultimate result of all this publicity has been to raise the profile and debate on a science-based approach to climbing management. Access Fund staffs Sam Davidson and Kath Pyke will be speaking on this subject at the 1999 Congress on Resource and Recreation Carrying Capacities on Dec. 2 at Snowmass, Co.

PARK SERVICE SAYS YOSEMITE'S BEAR PROBLEM DECREASING
The National Park Service released sharply lower figures for vehicle-break-ins by black bears at Yosemite for the recent summer season. In 1998, bears broke into 1,541 vehicles causing $657,110 in damage. As of mid-September this year, break-ins were down to 506 and damage had decreased to $177,000. If the current trend continues, break-ins for 1999 will be one third those in 1998.

Park Service officials have a major part in reducing bear conflicts in the park. Rangers took a one-time congressional appropriation of $500,000 and hired staff to keep the valley cleaner and fower of trash. In the evenings, a group of volunteers actively follow bears to discourage them from breaking into cars. Park security runs them off from hotel and campground parking lots. Yosemite has also implemented a new registration system that allows rangers and security staff to identify cars that appear likely targets for break-ins. Then the guests that own the cars and warn them of the potential for problems.

In addition, rangers have continued to speak to bear problems and relocation to other parts of the park. This strategy is only unsuccessful, as the bears have a very strong ability to navigate their way back to their former stomping grounds. In the worst cases, when bears have lost their fear of humans and become threats to safety, they are killed by rangers. Three bears were killed in 1998, and two have been killed so far this year.

Events

Hot Projects and events

OVER THE RAIN CLEANUP
About 80 folks from the Arizona Mountainmeeting Club (AMC), Central Arizona Mountain Rescue Association and Southern Arizona Rucksack Association rendezvoused on Sept. 25 at the South Rim of the Grand Canyon to rappel over the rim and clean up the area. This event was the 11th annual clean-up and was held in cooperation with AMC and the National Park Service.

CLIMB SMART 3
by Tareen Nihari
So now we've done it three times, and even this climb Climb Smart 3 has improved. Once again this year we headed for Joshua Tree with rags packed with the gifts with participant packets, water, water, raffle prizes, Climbing magazine, campgearing, banes, etc. Climb Smart began as an instructive event in which people could pass through different climbing clinics and fun activities like raffles, meals and slide shows. This year's line up included Jeff Cooper, Michael Frenzer, John Jacobson, Steven Carre, Kevin Thue, Linda Nguyen, Dean Potter and John Watson.

In the end we treated over 100 enthusiastic clients to 18 clinics and raised $5,118 for the Access Fund. Each person who attends Climb Smart automatically becomes a member of the Access Fund through his or her clinic fee. Special thanks to Adventura, Bla, Black Diamond and Patagonia for making this event happen.

FA T CR A C K F E S TIVAL
by Wade Griffith
On Sept. 25, despite 40 mph winds, the second-annual Fat Crack Fest was a great success. The day started with a trash clean-up that filled a trailer with old times, corrugated metal and hobo cups. Afternoon activities included a shoe demo by Scarpa, a crack climbing comp, barbecue and Access Fund raffle. The crack climbing comp consisted of climbing a 5.9 hand-crack/offwidth while wearing mad-calz swim goggles and being augmented by three Supernova sponsor. The raffle brought in $852 and 35 Access Fund members. No reports on the post-comp physical and psychological condition of the fat-crack competitors were available at press time.

FIXED ANCHOR SURVEY AND REPLACEMENT CONTINUES AT DEVILS TOWER NATIONAL MONUMENT
by Dennis Hoening and Rollis Marriott
An inventory of fixed anchors was initiated at Devils Tower National Monument in 1998, under the guidance of Chief Ranger Jim Schlunkmann of the National Park Service. The work has been done by Dennis Hoening, long-time area climber and author of the Poorperson's Guidebook to Devils Tower. Hoening has been assisted by various friends, including Rollis Marriott, Dan Brown, Ryan Laird, Mark DeWelt, Joe Ishu and Dave Larsen. The project is funded by the Devils Tower Natural History Association.

The two basic objectives of the survey are to determine the number of bolts and other hardware on the Towers, and to find and replace dangerous anchors. In keeping with Monument policy, these have been no new increase in the number of anchors. During the 1998 and 1999 climbing seasons, Devils Tower was surveyed from the ground by using a spotting scope, and by climbing routes in areas with significant numbers of anchors not visible from the ground. Suspect bolts were removed and replaced where appropriate. Bad anchors were replaced by pack staff or other climbers. Bolts of at least 3/8 inch in diameter were in use for replacement, along with camouflaged hangers or welded chains or welded cold-shots. A total of 65 old bolts were removed, and 99 new replacement anchors were installed. Survey and replacement of bolts at Devils Tower should continue in the future. 1/4-inch bolts were often removed or broken off with little effort, confirming the suspicion that they are quite dangerous.

PERE BEACH TRAIL PROJECT, RED RIVER GORGE
Over the weekend of Oct. 23-24, close to 50 volunteers showed up in crisp fall weather at the Red River Gorge to complete a new trail to the Pebble Beach crack. The new 1,700-foot trail represents the successful completion of the second-annual trail building project jointly sponsored by the Red River Gorge Climbers' Coalition, the Access Fund, and the US Forest Service. Jim Angell, whose presence was funded by a grant from the Access Fund, once again provided invaluable trail building expertise, experience, and all the necessary tools.

Brawling Offwidths and Super Lookers at Wedena's Fat Crack Festival.

Plates 2a-23: LARGE PHOTOS WANTED
The Access Fund has received a number of requests for large format photographs of your favorite routes. We plan to gather a collection of these and produce a small book. If you have photographs you would like to contribute, please contact us at the Access Fund. All contributors will be credited in the book.

Plates 24-25: CONSERVATION CUP 1999
For those who climb for fun and respect their environment, the Access Fund is pleased to announce the Conservation Cup 1999. The Conservation Cup is awarded to the best paper on climbing and the environment published in Vertical Times. The winning paper will be recognized at the 1999 Conservation Awards Banquet in December.

Plates 26-27: WINTER BINDS
Winter climbing is here! Find out how to stay warm and save fuel with these tips and techniques from our friends at Reel Warm.

Plates 28-29: 1999 DIRECTORY OF SUPPORTING MEMBERS
The Access Fund is grateful to all of our supporters. Please take a moment to list your name in our directory.

Plates 30-31: 1999 DIRECTORY OF ACCESS FUNDS
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Climbing Preservation Grant

PROSPECT HEIGHTS MIDDLE SCHOOL
At the fall Climbers Rendezvous at the New River Gorge, the Access Fund’s Board of Directors approved a Climbing Preservation Grant for the Discovery Program at Prospect Heights Middle School in Orange, VA. The grant is $15,000 to help fund the Discovery Program’s next generation of outdoor enthusiasts. Prospect Heights Middle School is currently the only public school in the country to offer this type of program to students. In the Discovery Program, North Carolina Outdoor Bound instructors teach students beginning climbing skills, wilderness safety and environmental ethics.


The following people extended their time and effort to help the Access Fund’s mission of outdoor education, accessibility, and stewardship. We appreciate and thank each and every one of you.

-Jeffrey Reaves, Access Fund Staff

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November
20 Las Vegas, NV—Steve Schneider Slide Show, Desert Rock Spots, Las Vegas, Mike & Jim Wood 702.394.3163
20 Bloomington, IL—6th Annual Hangdog Jam, Upper Limits, Jennifer Hawksby? JDI Rigger 800.964.7814
20 Cleveland, OH—Climbing comp.

Events

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$5,115 Climb Smart 3 at Adventure Consultants, Indianapolis, IN
$2,060 Oregon Country Club, Eugene, OR
$1,000 Month long member campaign (posted later)
$1,200 Northstar, Lake Tahoe, CA
$945 6th Annual Board Bound Bouldering Camp, Wallhogs, Boulder, CO
$873 Pat Craft Fest Xmas, Raleigh, NC
$856 Steve Chavez/Climbing Instruction Clinics, San Diego, CA
$500 Oregon Country Club
$500 Tuck, Burlington, VT
$350 Joe Johnson slide show slide show, Black Diamond, NY
$306 Show Climbing Annual Gathering 3 Boulder, CO
$300 Clark Climb, tent project & BBQ, Boulder, CO
$300 Steve Schneider Slide show Phoenix Rock gym, AZ

Cleveland Rock Gym, Wendy Atkins 216.692.3300
20 Seattle, WA—Seattle Bouldering Challenge, Stone Gardens, Daniea Stude 206.781.6818
20 Flagstaff, AZ—Campusriling Climbing Competition, Vertical Relief Rock Gym, Hwy 520.556.9009
20 Las Vegas, NV—Red Rocks Climbing Project Day, sponsored by the Las Vegas Climbers License Council and the BLM, Mark Linnage 702.233.4356
25 El Peerto Chico, Mexico—H Portal Trip, Projects & Cliffs, Kurt Smith & Mike Lillis 512.432.1370
27 New Paltz, NY—Big Up Productions Chris Sharma video release party, Rock & Snow, 212.774.7418

December
4 Allendale, MI—Youth & Adult Indoor Climbing Competition, Grand Valley State University, Michelle Hendrickson 616.895.6611
4 Newark, DE—Climbing comp, Univ. of Delaware Climbing Club, Fred Bohan 302.831.2606
4 Asheville, NC—5th Annual Fall Flashfest, CUMMEX, INC, Andrew Kocera 828.252.9996
10 Seattle, WA—Carlos Rohler slide show sponsored by Outdoor Research, REI 206.213.1944
11—Enchanted Rock, Texas—Enchanted Rock Trail Project, Central Texas Climbers Coalition, Michael Lewis 210.695.304
12 New Brunswick, NJ—Holiday Hang, Rutgers Uni, Rock Gym, 908.522.5811
29 Cincinnati, OH—Eastern Bouldering Series Regional comp, Climb Time of Cincinnati 513.801.4509

January
1 Berkeley, CA—Fifth Annual Youth Climbing League Aspilng Heights Alliance Levy 510.558-5106
1 Jackson, WV—Abby Watkins first ascent of Chasing Tower Skinny Socks (307) 733-6094

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ENVIROMENT

Climbing and Bouldering Competitions

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Vertical Times is the membership newsletter of the Access Fund and is published six times a year in January, March, May, July, September and November.


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Exceeds 50 percent recycled content

Our Goal: 100,000 Actions in 2000

From the desk of the Executive Director

Dear Friends:

Late July in Rocky Mountain National Park I had the worst epic of my climbing career. “Highlights” included rappelling 800 feet in lightning, thunder and pouring rain; getting the ropes stuck; leaving lots of gear; hypothermia setting in—all the standard epic elements. The outcome was definitely uncertain which, someone told me, is the definition of a true adventure. I’ve never been so grateful to be back on the ground.

The freedom to seek an adventure is a fundamental reason why we climb. It’s also a basic principle guiding the Access Fund’s advocacy efforts. We are committed to preserving opportunities for adventure, especially those that challenge us to the fullest.

Since the Forest Service began its efforts to ban all use of fixed anchors in Wilderness more than 10 years ago, our most important fight has been to establish the legitimacy of climbing and the most basic tools we require on our public lands. We’ll represent your interests in the upcoming Negotiated Rulemaking, which will develop a policy on fixed anchors for the Forest Service. The result will affect how other federal agencies manage climbing.

It’s crucial that you get involved in preserving climbing opportunities for the future. Everyone can help, whether it’s a donation of time or money, writing a letter, meeting your local land manager, or simply renewing your membership to the Access Fund. In 2000 the Access Fund will be unveiling a public awareness campaign directed at inspiring the entire climbing community to take actions such as those listed above. If we succeed, American climbers will take 100,000 actions on behalf of the vertical world we cherish. We hope to radically raise the level of activism and foster a new ethic of climbing stewardship, one in which we take care of our crags, design our own fates, and define our own adventures.

Don’t forget your prussiks!

Sally Moser, Executive Director