ACCESS FUND NATIONAL TRAILS INITIATIVE

This year, the Access Fund will invest $52,000 in its third annual National Trails Initiative. This program that began in 1998 is one of the most high-profile methods used by the Access Fund to invest critical resources back into the climbing environment.

This year is no exception. All told, 15 climbing areas will undergo improvements this year, with the $52,000 going to make climbing areas more accessible and sustainable for future generations of climbers!

The Access Fund will be funding trail design and construction projects so that our members and other climbers can get to their favorite crags easily and with less impact. The major benefit derived from this essential work rests in the removal of erosion-prone social trails that scar the landscape and denude vegetation. Another benefit of the National Trails Initiative is the vivid reminder to land managers from local, state and federal lands that climbers care about their environment and that they are willing to invest critical financial resources (that the parks do not have) on trail projects.

Under the leadership of Jim Angell, the Fund’s nationally recognized trail designer, the 2000 National Trails Initiative will span the country. Throughout the year, Jim and his tool cache will cross the nation from the state of Washington to Georgia. Volunteers will provide crucial “sweat equity” that will double the value of each of these projects.


- See related article on pg. 12
The week before the first class, I started lining up additional adult climbers to act as volunteers and help with knot checking, belay watching, and traffic control. Now I had a half dozen organizations and at least that many individual climbers who were committed to the project. I just hoped that the kids would show up.

The first class was "ground school" consisting of rope handling, knots, and safety and was held at the Tribal gymnasium. A dozen eager 8- to 12-year-olds listened with rapt attention as Tim Villanueva and Don Lussia explained the principles of climbing, tying Swiss seat harnesses, and belaying.

The next day, we met at 9:00 a.m. to go up to Iris slab. The young students quickly jumped into their harness and showed remarkable facility in tying the complicated set-up. Initially, they were frightened to be up on the rock, and some ascended only five or six feet before wanting to be lowered. A couple of intrepid models climbed all 80 feet to the top of the crag and were looking for more. At the end of the day, we had a hard time persuading them to leave.

The second day was even better. The kids raced up to the crag and eagerly grabbed the webbing to tie their harnesses. They challenged each other to see who would climb first. Nearly all made it to the top. Eight-year-olds belayed nine-year-olds, backed up by ten- and eleven-year-olds. They fell and lowered each other. Through it all the instructors and volunteers couldn't stop smiling. Nobody wanted to go home at the end of the day.

SENeca FALLS, June

After being closed for a variety of reasons for the past three years, Seneca Falls has reopened to climbing. Seneca Falls lies on land owned by Native Americans. Seneca Falls was originally envisioned as a fee-based recreation area for climbers, hikers and paddlers, with the tribe hiring area climbers to establish and maintain routes there. Since Seneca Falls' reopening, paying entry fees and securing use permits has become much easier—climbers can now do this at the convenience store on the way in to the park, instead of having to drive out of their way as in the past.

JAILHOUSE ROCK, CALIF.

Jailhouse Rock is a steep sport-climbing crag in the foothills of California's Tuolumne County, roughly one hour west of Yosemite. The volcanic cliff offers superlative stamina climbing in the 5.12- to 5.14 range, and continues to be regularly visited by climbers from across the country and around the world.

The Access Fund has worked to protect climbers' access to the cliff since the early '90s. The cliff had been owned by a family of local ranchers, but a real-estate developer attempted to subdivide 1,400 acres of the property in the mid-90s. The developer had offered climber permanent access to the cliff as part of his development. Unfortunately, the access easement never materialized, as the developer failed to attract purchasers and ultimately went bankrupt.

Roughly a year ago, a 1,200-acre parcel including the cliff, the mile-long approach, and the parking area were purchased by a businessman moving to the area from Seattle. He has begun construction of a home on the property, and has retained local counsel to represent his interests in his interactions with the county, state, and federal government. The Access Fund has held limited interactions with his attorney, and has offered our services and resources to both the attorney and her client. At this point, it is not clear what position the owner will take on the climbing occurring on his property.

Thus, climber access to Jailhouse is more tenuous than it had previously been. The Access Fund asks that all visitors act responsibly and maintain a low profile. You can help preserve access to this special crag by:

- Never camping in the area, including in or near the parking area.
- Never lighting fires on the property (a wildfire this past summer started away from the cliff by non-climber burned a significant acreage and had substantial costs).
- Keeping the area spotless and pick-up any litter you see.
- Parking only by the bridge over the reservoir (either side is acceptable, although some cars have been vandalized while parked on the cliff side).
- Not disturbing the cattle, and keeping dogs leashed while hiking to the cliff (most of the cliff land continues to be leased to ranchers).
- Not leaving human waste near the cliff or in the talus, and packing out your toilet paper.
- Not publicizing the climbing, either with guidebooks, topos, or magazine photos and stories.

If you have questions about the status of access and negotiations, contact Tom Addison by calling 510.559.9666 or writing 727 Kollus Ave., El Cerrito, CA 94530.

BRIDAL VEIL FALLS, CALIF.

The Bridal Veil Falls have proposed a development for the area in the box canyon below Bridal Veil Falls near Telluride. For the most part, the proposed development seems well thought out, providing affordable housing that blends in with the environment while maintaining access trails to the high country and Marshall Basin.

Access Fund Regional Coordinator Steve Johnson and Telluride Mountain Club President Josh Borof have seized upon the development plan as a chance to resolve several access issues around the base of Bridal Veil. For ice climbers, these issues include making the existing recreation easement permanent, opening access to the ice flows left of the main falls by installing a mandatory rappel descent below the power plant, and creating an access trail to the ice routes like Acid Bath south of the tailing holes. Rock climbing has also recently emerged as a summer use of Bridal Veil's box canyon. Local climbers see the Ildaro proposal as a possible means to secure permanent access easements to the Falls Wall and Seal Wall areas on the south side of the box canyon, to the Ajax cliffs on the north side and to the Mine Boulder near the county road.

For more information, contact Steve Johnson at 970.728.4300.
Area Reports Continued...

The Mega Traverse at Sandwich's Deep has been added, at least for the time being.

HORSETOOTHE RESERVOIR, COLO.—TROUBLE AT THE TROPICS

The four dams that form Northern Colorado's Horsetooth Reservoir are undergoing study in preparation for major modernization work. For climbers, this means temporary closures and other forms of inconvenience while crews operate big drill rigs do their work. The biggest impact so far has been the surprise placement of fill dirt that effectively buried the Mega Traverse at the Tropics, which lies on the side of Soldier Canyon Dam, during construction of an access road for heavy equipment.

Unfortunately, we don't yet know whether the area will be permanently altered by the renovation.

The good news is that local climbers including Access Fund board member Ken Cline and the Fort Collins Climbers Coalition (FCC) have established a constructive dialogue with the Bureau of Reclamation and the Northern Colorado Water Conservation District. We have explained climber's interests, given tours to agency representatives, and expressed our desire to support a climber-friendly management plan. Because of the good will we have conveyed, drilling at Soldier Canyon Dam is currently being expedited and plans have been made to dig out the Mega Traverse as soon as this is completed in early March.

Thanks to all the climbers who attended meetings and submitted written comments. Be prepared for some inconvenience at all Horsetooth areas during the renovation, and let's hope we don't have to fight for the Tropics.

To comment on the work at Horsetooth, contact Kara Lamb, public information coordinator for the Bureau of Reclamation at 970.667.4410, or Brian Warner at the Water Conservancy District at 970.667.2437. For more information about the Horsetooth work's impact on climbing access, call Ken Cline at 970.407.9776.

ILLINOIS

Eric Ulmer, the Access Fund’s Southern Illinois regional coordinator, and Steve Pyke, the Fund’s Wisconsin RC and Wisconsin Outdoor Access spokesperson, are organizing a new Illinois climbers association to promote and protect the interests of Illinois climbers. The first organizational meeting took place Saturday, Feb. 26.

The group will be named the Illinois Climbers Association. The association has a strong Illinois focus and will have some overlap for the Wild Town and Paliades areas. For more information, call Ulmer at 618.995.1427.

RED RIVER GORGE MOU SIGNED CEREMONY

On Feb. 7, 2000, the Red River Gorge Climbers’ Coalition (RRGCC) and the US Forest Service signed a Memorandum of Understanding during a brief, but historic ceremony attended by over 25 climbers. Before a TV news crew and an enthusiastic crowd, Ben Worthington, Forest Supervisor, and Shannon Stuart-Smith, executive director of the RRGCC and Access Fund regional coordinators, signed the agreement culminating nearly four years of negotiations. The signing ceremony was held in the headquarters of the Daniel Boone National Forest in Winchester, Ky. and jointly sponsored by the Forest Service and the RRGCC.

A Memorandum of Understanding, or MOU, is a contract-like document that creates an official alliance with the Forest Service and provides a formal agreement to work towards common goals. Local climbers from as far away as Columbus, Ohio, made the drive to attend. RRGCC co-founder Kris Snyder made special arrangements to attend the MOU signing ceremony while visiting from Alaska.

The signing of this MOU represents a significant breakthrough for Red River Gorge climbers and the Forest Service after years of skepticism, mistrust, and alienation. Originally, the Stanton Ranger District that manages the Red River Gorge had offered their MOU version to the local climbing community as part of a rock climbing management guide in January, 1996. Soundly rejected by the local climbing community for its overemphasis on fixed anchor placement and non-existent climber input, the Forest Service’s MOU version was never seen again.

After the formation of the Red River Gorge Climbers’ Coalition a year later, climbers drafted a version of their own based in large part on the Rummey Climbers Association’s MOU. The RRGCC version emphasized climbers involvement while still recognizing the Forest Service’s authority. Climbers were willing to accept responsibility for their climbing, but in exchange wanted a more equitable relationship with the Forest Service and a greater say in the management of climbing. The key provision was that climbers assist the Forest Service in drafting, reviewing, and approval of a rock climbing management plan. With the signing of this MOU the Forest Service and climbers had not only pledged themselves to work together, but finally to manage climbing together in their respective roles as climbers and land managers.

Thus, the signing of this MOU actually helps repair a nasty rift opened years ago and provides the mechanism to overcome some serious differences that have lingered. With this document now in place, climbers will be involved in every step of the process of producing a comprehensive climbing management plan that will govern the entire Daniel Boone National Forest some day.

NEW JERSEY

Paul Nick, the New Jersey Guidebook author, has taken the initiative to solicit interest in developing a New Jersey Climbers Coalition (NJCC). Several active NJ climbers foresee a number of potential access issues developing in the not too distant future that will require a cohesive and organized response. It’s expected that the coalition will work in conjunction with Access Fund to deal with pending and future access issues.

The NJCC will be primarily internet-based. If there is enough interest, Nick would like to launch the group’s web site in mid-2000. Those interested should e-mail Nick at nick2000@earthlink.net. In the e-mail, include your full name, address, number of years climbing and the area(s) in New Jersey of most interest/care.

MOUNT BALDY, OKLA.

The Access Fund has entered into negotiations to purchase Mount Baldy, a 300-foot granite dome located near Quartz Mountain State Park in Oklahoma’s Wichita Mountains.

Baldy’s location makes it one of the most extensive collection of high, quality, granite slabbin’ between the Mississippi River and the Rockies. Abundant classics—like S-Wall (5.9) and Last of the Good Guys (5.10a)—provide some of the finest face climbing in the region. Well-known climber Ed Outside Magazine contributor Doug Robinson has referred to Baldy Point as the “Holy Grail of the Midwest,” a flattering complement to Baldy’s outstanding friction climbing and high quality stone.

Under the Access Fund’s proposal to purchase Mount Baldy, the property and a trailhead parcel would be acquired for the purpose of conveying to the State of Oklahoma, and then integrated as part of nearby Quartz Mountain State Park. The managing agency of the state park has already reviewed this opportunity and agreed to accept long-term ownership and management responsibilities should the Access Fund’s acquisition efforts succeed.

The Fund’s proposal targets the long-term protection and preservation of one of the most important climbing resources in the Midwest. Of the many tangible and measurable benefits that would result from the acquisition of Baldy Point, two distinct aspects exemplify the importance of this opportunity. First, acquisition would provide immediate protection of the area from the threat of closure or potential development due to the probable sale of the property by the current private landowner. Second, our acquisition would facilitate a subsequent transfer of ownership to an agency that will ensure the area remains open to the public, while providing for long-term preservation, stewardship, and management of this area’s spectacular climbing resources.

For more information, see the Wichita Mountains Web site at www.wmumps.org, or contact Regional Coordinator Marion Hutchinson at 405.364.9390 or marionhutch@aol.com.

CONTINENTAL II RANCH, TX

Texas limestone aficionados are getting excited about the March 11 opening of Continental II Ranch, an area just west of the existing Pecos River climbing. This developing climbing area covers 17 miles of canyons on the beautiful lowes Pecos River, and contains the same high quality limestone found on nearby, established crags. The opening of Continental II Ranch is significant because it provides the potential for a brand new climbing area with extensive rock resources.

Currently the area is in its infancy and contains about four or five dozen routes. While Continental II Ranch is now open under an interim agreement with the private landowner, the Access Fund will be working with the Central Texas Mountainies and other local climbers to establish a long-term access arrangement. Given the interim nature of access at present, climbers...
Area Reports Continued...

are encouraged to minimize impacts and climb responsibly.

Continental II Ranch's setting resembles a desert oasis with the emerald-green Pecos River at the base of the climbing walls. The daily entry fee of $15 (about the same amount charged for entry and camping at any Texas state park) will cover both climbing and camping.

REIMERS RANCH, TEXAS

Austin area climbers are reminded that Reimers Ranch closes when it gets dark—not at 7 or 8 p.m. Owners Mrs. Reimer recently had an episode where climbers tried to leave after the gate was locked. The climbers had to drive back to the house and notify Mrs. Reimer that they couldn't get out. Mrs. Reimer had to get out of bed at 9 p.m. to let them out—she was not happy! Pass the word: dark is closing time at Reimers.

NEW RIVER GORGE, W.V.A.

The New River Alliance of Climbers is a newly forming organization with the mission of preserving and promoting climber access and conserving climbing resources in the New River Gorge and surrounding area. The annual New River Climber Rendezvous scheduled for the weekend of April 22-23 will be used as the official kickoff for the Alliance.

Volunteers are needed for the following committees:

- Fixed anchors—to ensure the safe placement and maintenance of fixed anchors.
- Trails—to maintain and build trails that mitigate impacts.
- Advocacy—to advocate for climbers' positions to governmental authorities and the local community.
- Outreach—to disseminate local climbing news to users and acquire funding to support the entire organization.

For more information about the Alliance, e-mail Dan Hague at danhague@erosls.com.

Something to climb on and Native Americans view it as a sacred place. World views collide and Native Americans may regard climbers as ruthless exploiters of the land while climbers may see the Native American as an obstacle on the way to a first ascent. It doesn't have to be this way.

As recent experience in Malibu Creek State Park shows [Spray, vol. 32], the Native American perspective can enhance climber experience on and around the rock. I know that classes like the one in Bishop can foster understanding. Tribes often have very limited resources for their youth sports activities, and kids are always looking for new and exciting experiences. In any case, its a great opportunity to have a heck of a lot of fun on a sunny day in an enchanting setting. The key is to respect each other's perspectives. My personal belief is that both the climber and the kids were enriched by the experience and had a good time to boot.

Toni Richards assistant administrator

Bishop Paiute Tribe

The views expressed in Spray are not necessarily those of the Access Fund.

A LETTER TO MEMBERS FROM ACCESS FUND VICE PRESIDENT PHIL POWERS

Editor's note: Phil Powers has been climbing since the 1970s on everything from 8,000-meter peaks to hard sport routes near his home in Lander, Wyo. He is the author of Wilderness Management and is a director at Jackson Hole Mountain Guides and Mammoth Mountain Institute.

The Access Fund, much like the sport it protects, typically focuses on the problems immediately before us. As with the master boulderer, possessing such focus allows us to direct our energies fully at such problems, and we often succeed.

I place great faith in the current staff and board of directors at the Access Fund. They are hard-working and concerned. More importantly, our board is constantly becoming more representative of American climbing and climbers. The board contains members ranging from full-time sport and traditional climbers, to active mountaineers, to leading big-wall experts. The board also contains part-time climbers and "lifers" like me—folks who will be climbing, one way or another, until their dying day.

Philosophically, the board is also diverse. We run the spectrum from those who aggressively battle against any person or group that would harbor the slightest inclination to close a climbing area, to others who tend to dislike conflict and hope for solutions borne of long compromise and education. The Access Fund has succeeded with both tactics, and failed by both as well. I hope that in the future we can consistently find the middle ground between these extremes. As the Access Fund consistently provides solutions to access problems, we will be invited to the table earlier, and gain a greater influence over the policies that affect us all.

It is clear that the problems we face in the future will become more complex: more like giant alpine faces than the boulder problems we've confronted in the past. These future challenges include the increased crowding of Wilderness lands, front-country crags and National Park summits. Land managers, faced with strong preservationist mandates and ever-decreasing budgets, will have an increasingly difficult time finding and reaching compromises with climbers.

With these challenges in mind, what attitude can we adopt—what strategy can we employ over the long haul that will cause us to be integral to the thinking behind land-management policy in the future? Perhaps we will find ourselves advocates for access not specifically limit-
HUECO TANKS: MORE CLOSURES POSSIBLE; CLIMBER ADVOCACY STRONG

by Sam Davidson

Late last year the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) released its review of the year-old Public Use Plan for Hueco Tanks. This assessment concluded that the current management strategy—making the park into an "outdoor museum"—was basically successful but could use some adjustments.

TPWD claims that the present policy—mandatory reservations to enter the park, access to areas other than North Mountain by guided tour only—is working to protect rock art, prevent erosion, and stop graffiti. Visitations to Hueco have declined by nearly 70 percent since the management plan was adopted.

TPWD's proposed adjustments to the Hueco plan include closing the popular Dragon's Den area, eliminating all camping from the park, and levying a $4 "reservation fee" to discourage visitors from making reservations, then failing to show up.

Access Fund accepted feedback from the public on its proposed changes to the Public Use Plan, but only after climbers reminded the agency that it had promised to do so a year earlier. The Access Fund, El Paso Climbers Club, and other Texas climbing groups submitted comments. The Access Fund argued forcefully for a complete overhaul of the climbing management strategy. We offered to pay for or subsidize training and support of seasonal climbing tour guides and volunteer rangers, trail improvements, and additional archeological surveys.

In January, Sam Davidson, Access Fund senior policy analyst, met local activists Jeff Drucker and Mike Lewis in El Paso for a short-notice meeting with TPWD officials and members of the Sunset Advisory Commission, a body charged with doing performance evaluations of state agencies (TPWD is going through a "Sunset Review" now). Our presence kept TPWD honest, and the Sunset Commission was concerned to learn about the proposed ban on camping.

Furthermore, there has been an important change in park personnel: Butch Farabee, former Superintendent of the Glacier National Park, is now interim park manager. The Access Fund has worked with Farabee before and hopes his appointment is a sign that TPWD is ready to get serious about managing Hueco Tanks for both its archeological and climbing values.

The Access Fund also learned that all of the effort we've put into improving the access picture at Hueco has had some effect. The State Parks Commission has been leaning on TPWD staff to work out something at Hueco which is acceptable to climbers.

The Access Fund joined local climbers in responding to the latest development at Hueco: an alternative management plan for the park developed by the Tigua Tribe. Native Americans are also dismayed at the Public Use Plan, which inhibits visits to sacred sites and free practice of their religion. The Tigua plan reflects the ongoing dialogue between climbers and Native Americans at Hueco.

The Access Fund continues to examine the internal records of TPWD to determine if the preparation of the Public Use Plan followed proper procedure. If the agency did not, it may be necessary to respond with a legal challenge.

BABAQUVARI PEAK, ARIZONA

The Bureau of Land Management is currently holding public hearings on the preparation of a Wilderness Management Plan for the Bababqvvari and Coyote Domes Wilderness areas in Southern Arizona.

Access Fund Regional Coordinator Dave Turner calling down at Hueco before the hearing. Access Fund Regional Coordinator Dave Turner calling down at Hueco before the hearing.

We are pleased to report that the President's new budget for 2001 does raise funding for recreation. However, we must fight to keep

According to the new management plan for Sun, most climbs would require a permit.

At Zion, a proposal would designate management zones throughout the park. Most climbing would occur in the "Pristine Zone." The park proposes to reduce group encounters in his zone and to require a permit for climbing. For more information, contact Darla Sidles, planning coordinator, at 435-772-0211. At Devils Tower, the Park Service is currently accepting public comment on three "possible alternative concepts." One would emphasize resource protection and reducing visitor congestion through possible reservations required to enter the park, and use permits for "certain activities." Another alternative would emphasize visitor services (possible reservations and/or a shuttle system); the third would generally maintain current conditions.

Impacts of climbers" is one issue to be addressed. Contact Devils Tower at 07-671-5283, ext. 12 or e-mail eotplanning@np.gov.
Government policy pertaining to climbers

Hueco Tanks: More closures possible; climber advocacy strong

by Sam Davidson

Late last year the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) released its review of the year-old Public Use Plan for Hueco Tanks. This assessment concluded that the present management strategy—making the park into an "outdoor museum"—was basically successful but could use some adjustments.

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Policy Update Continued...

Others in attendance wanted the government to retain control over the area and access to it, and wanted to continue to practice traditional recreational activities. Most people agreed that the beliefs and religion of the Tohono O'odham should be recognized and respected within the framework of the Wilderness Plan.

The Access Fund will continue to work closely with local climbers to make sure climbing access is not compromised at these fine areas. Climbers are urged to contact Catie Fenn at the BLMAc Kenedi Field Office at 520.722.4289 or e-mail Catie_Fenn@BLM.gov. Tell Ms. Fenn you support a cooperative management strategy for Baboquivari and the Coyote Domes Wilderness areas, similar to that in place at Devils Tower National Monument. That is a promising step, and the other existing recreational activities should be specifically allowed under the new management plan.

[Wayne Schroeter of the Arizona Mountain-Neering Club contributed to this article.]

Recreation Funding

Consistent with our opposition to use fees and their role in supplementing or replacing public land management agency budgets, the Access Fund has committed to working with Congress and others in the outdoor recreation industry to boost annual funding for recreation and resource management on federal lands.

Last fall the Access Fund met with federal land managers to identify recreation funding needs. Afterwards, we co-signed a letter with the Outdoor Recreation Coalition of America, the American Hiking Society, and other groups to the Office of Management and Budget which proposed specific increases in land management agency budget line items for FY 2001.

We are pleased to report that the President's new budget for 2001 does raise funding for recreation. However, we must fight to keep these increases in the final budget agreement with Congress.

In addition, when Congress approved the 2000 budget last December, it authorized a big increase in funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which can be used for land acquisition and resource protection. (LWCF money may help the Access Fund complete our Castle Rock Ranch, Idaho, deal, for example.) We are also supporting a bill which has now passed the House Resources Committee which would provide permanent funding for LWCF.

The debate continues over the role of use fees in funding for public lands administration. Congress will vote later this spring or this summer on whether to make the Fee Demonstration test program a permanent funding source.

The AF continues to work to stop "Fee Demo" and ensure that fees for access to public lands are minimized and distinguished from fees for facilities and services (e.g. campgrounds), which we have not opposed.

Take Action!

It is a crucial time for this issue, and timely action by climbers is needed. All Access Fund members are encouraged to write their congressperson and senators, asking them to vote NO on making use fees a permanent funding mechanism and to vote YES on raising land agency budgets for recreation and resource protection. Go to the government Web site http://thomas.loc.gov/ for the names, addresses and phone numbers of your Congressional delegation, or contact Sam Davidson, senior policy analyst, at 831-770-1523 or sam@accessfund.org for assistance.

Management Plans Out

The National Park Service is preparing new general management plans for two major climbing areas: Zion National Park in Utah and Devils Tower National Monument in Wyoming. The Access Fund has been working with the Park Service at both of these areas and will actively contribute to these planning efforts.

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"Impacts of climbers" is one issue to be addressed. Contact Devils Tower at 307.447.5283, ext. 12 or e-mail devto_planning@nps.gov.
Consortium:
Everything you ever wanted to know about climbing research—but were afraid to ask
by Keith Pyke

The Access Fund and North Carolina State University (NCSU) have joined together to create a publication that for the first time pulls together all studies, research, reports, and articles on climber effects on natural resources. Climbing and Natural Resource Management contains more than 150 citations of published, unpublished or internal agency documents and literature articles. The publication is designed to serve anyone carrying out literature searches, and assist resource professionals and researchers with additional information sources in their development of research methods and management approaches.

Copies will be available from the Access Fund after publication in March 2000. There will be no charge to those in education and land-management roles, but additional copies will cost $10 including postage.

Climbing and Natural Resource Management will give instructions on how to obtain hard-to-get documents, and lists items that are not identified throughout conventional literature searches. The project was carried out during 1999 by Keith Pyke (Access Fund) and Azam Atasci (NCSU), for more information, e-mail kath@accessfund.org or call 303.545.6772 ext. 104.

1999 Conservation Report

Besides the common love climbers share for our natural environment, the Access Fund employs a full-time staff biologist and operates an extensive conservation program for a very simple reason: preserving the climbing environment today is the key to access tomorrow. Here are the highlights of what the Fund’s conservation program accomplished last year.

1. Revised and updated Access Fund database listing more than 90 raptor-based climbing restrictions nationwide; published this information in newsletter and on Web site.

2. Created annotated bibliography with North Carolina State University on research studies about climbing and environmental impacts as a resource for professionals.

3. Made presentations at Congress ’99 Carrying Capacity Conference at Aspen, Colo. on climber and natural resource interactions and management.

4. Provided comments to guidebook authors requesting access and conservation information.

5. Provided responses to academic debate on climber effects on natural resources to the science journals Science, Nature, Bioscience and American Science, as well as to Climbing magazine.

6. Submitted comments on how the removal of the peregrine falcon from the Endangered Species List might affect raptor restrictions on climbing access.

7. Cochise Stronghold, Ariz.—Facilitated Forest Service and Southern Arizona Climbers Coalition efforts to better monitor peregrine falcons. As a result, raptor restrictions were lifted early at Cochineal Dome, Loom’s Quarzite, Saguaro and Waterfall Dome.

8. Joshua Tree, Calif.—Partnered with Park Service and California Native Plant Society to fund study on climbing impacts on desert vegetation. A major goal of the study is to develop a trails network to protect desert vegetation from trampling.

9. Sierrita East Side, Calif.—Worked with Crag, the local climbers group, and BLM at Happy Boulders on raptor monitoring and resource protection efforts.

10. Boulder Canyon, Colo.—Provided grant funding for signs with information on raptor restrictions in cooperation with Colorado Division of Wildlife.


12. Shuman Cave, Nev.—Worked with US Fish and Wildlife Service to analyze wildlife issues at Shuman Cave and to get agreement on climbing access at other nearby crags.

13. Spring Mountains, Nev.—Provided a $10,000 grant for interpretive signs and programs to protect environment at Trail Canyon, Fletcher Canyon and Robbers Roost.

14. Linnville Gorge, N.C.—Worked with Carolina Climbers Coalition to support a visitor use study to gather data on climber visitation.

15. Cumberland Plateau, Tenn.—Provided partial funding for study to provide base-line information on climbing impacts to cliff-edge soils.

Letters

COUNTERSPAT: REMOVABLE BOLTS MAY BE THE ANSWER
I am surprised and concerned to read Mr. Hutchison’s negative view of the hole-wedge/cam concept (Spray, Vol. 31). I’m extrapolating here, but I think Marion made his comments because a lot of people must have been using his new device under his nose and claimed “Our problems are solved!”

That could get a little old, considering that not only the device, but the concept, too, are not perfect. But let’s face it—half of pioneering new things is expanding on existing ideas and running with that until someone figures out something better. Hemp rope is far from perfect for modern climbing standards, but when it was developed it was the best tool available. What I’m leading to is the fact that while the hole-wedge/cam products on the market now, such as the Climb Tech Removable Bolts and the Nick O’Times, are not THE answer, with some tweaking they could be another answer to our very moral, political and old anchor debate. Why put RBs down? These devices work and are a notch closer than the other options we have.

When I first saw a prototype hole-wedge, I toyed with it and dreamed about the possibilities and options it might bring. Two years later, Removable Bolts (RBs) were produced and I got my chance to try them out on a new line at Mount Charleston, Nev., an alpine limestone area. We started off with two good pitches, but the pitches above turned out to be loose. In the 370+ feet we did establish, we used cans, nuts and 12 small holes for RBs. We did use bolts for the belay/rap stations, but our experience soon led us to agree that RBs could have been used instead.

I don’t believe Marion Hutchison has actually seen a real manufactured slot for a nut placement, but I have. Why the negative and ridiculous comparison between such slots and RB holes? A manufactured slot is not typical at all for half-three-quarters of an inch wide by two inches tall. These slots leave scars that are ridiculous compared even to the visual impact of a bolt and hanger. An RB hole is five-sixteenths to a half-inch wide by one-quarter-inch deep. Also, for those of you inexperienced with drilling or bolting, a bolt hole is drilled perpendicular to the immediate surface so the hanger lays flat. These holes can collect water and with time can corrode metal.

An RB requires an down-angled placement hole that doesn’t collect anything except spitter webbs. Yes, one still must make a hole and the holes are harder to see than a hanger, but this is a good way to do away with unsightly fixed anchors.

Where RBs will best serve is up for grabs. I think they will best be used for backcountry/alpine trad climbing. But by far this device, its concept and all the people involved get my applause for trying—and in this case making changes for the better or at least giving us options.

David Tishwell
Mammoth Lakes, Calif.

COUNTERSPAT: NOT ALL Aid ROUTES CAN BE SUSTAINABLE
Chris McNamara’s March 1999 Spray article’s opening statement (“The day of the Yosemite big wall nallup is dead”) makes a good point: the era of the traditional Yosemite big wall is fading. Hopefully no one will disagree with his belief that routes should be climbed hammerless when possible. However, the article’s conclusions about what constitutes a good or bad first ascendant invites a retreat from greatness rather than a positive step forward in climbing ethics.

What is a good big wall first ascent? To McNamara, it is a sustainable route, one that requires little rock destruction or future maintenance. His criteria (for example, long camming cracks connected, if necessary, by short ladders of beefy bolts) is similar to the capstone that is comfortable for your specialty is breaking big wall speed records rather than pushing the limits of hard aid. Unfortunately, the irrepressible ramification of this notion is that there shouldn’t be a grade VI wall on El Capitan! Why? Because there is no El Cap route that, when first done, was anything close to being sustainable.

The reason that Yosemite’s great hard-man walls like Pacific Ocean Wall are going hammerless is not because of ingenuity and modern aid racks; it’s because these routes have been fixed to the point that the original experience, commitment, and greatness are gone. Contrary to the opinion expressed in this notion is that there will always be a route among the hundreds of good routes that sprouts so many fixed heads and pins that it goes hammerless, because this marks the route’s final passage from its origins as a classic test piece to the graveyard of just another casual clip up.

The point is that nearly all hard aid big walls, such as those on El Capitan, cannot be put up as sustainable routes. The notion that “sustainability” should be the criterion for judging the quality of a new route is misguided. Our focus should be on preserving all types of climbing—including hard, technical aid so that future generations can choose from the same set of climbing experiences available to us.

• Continued on pg. 14
National Trails Initiative Report Card

SUMMARY OF VITAL STATISTICS 1990-1999

Total length of trails designed and/or built: 80,400 lineal feet (15+ miles)
Total value of trail work and kiosks: $361,670
Volunteer hours that supported this work: 23,500 hours
Number of climbing areas where we’ve worked: 35

YEARLY ANALYSIS

Year | Project Locations | Trail built/RESTORED | Value
---|-------------------|---------------------|-------
1990 | Joshua Tree, Calif. | 2,000 lineal feet | $0.00
1991 | City of Rocks, Idaho; Pahautsin Pinnacles, Wash.; Dinosaur Mt., Colo. | 10,500 lineal feet | $0.25
1992 | Yosemit, Calif.; Mississippi Palisades, Ill. | 2,300 lineal feet | $6.125
1993 | Eldorado Canyon State Park, Colo.; Washoeveep Canyon, Colo.; Castle Rock Canyon, Wash. | 7,000 lineal feet | $31.50
1994 | City of Rocks, Idaho; RaggedMt Mt., Conn. | 1,100 lineal feet | $0.20
1995 | Seneca Rocks, W. Va.; Sunset Rocks, Tenn.; New River Gorge, W. Va.; Little St. Wash. | 2,500 lineal feet | $5.25
1996 | Golden Gate, Cal.; Seneca Rocks, W. Va.; Frenchman Coulee, Wash.; City of Rocks, Idaho; Canyon Rock, Md.; Reister’s Ranch, Texas; Backcountry State Park, Iowa | 5,000 lineal feet | $25.00
1997 | Wichita Wildlife Refuge, Okla.; Society Turn Crag, Colo. | 1,100 lineal feet | $6.50
1998 | Red Rocks, N.Y.; Eiffel St. Wash.; Little St. Wash.; Le Petit Verdon, Ariz.; Williams Rock, Calif. | 8,000 lineal feet | $65.00

SPRING TRAIL PROJECTS COMING UP!

We’re not resting on our laurels—i.e., the 76,000 feet of trail work that we built last decade. No way we’re stopping now.

This spring, we’re planning three more trail builds at climbing areas that will create trails that are easy to use and that will help preserve fragile soils and plants. We’re looking for a few good volunteers—if you’ve got a spare day this spring, consider lending a hand to help out your local climbing org.

Believe it or not, Access Fund trail projects can be a lot of fun. You’ll get to meet a bunch of potential climbing partners and get a chance to score swag like water bottles, energy bars and raffle items.

Trail Up White

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**Spring Trail Projects coming up**

- **Tieton River Cliffs (The Bend):** Wash. - 4 days of trail building, April 8-9, 21st (Earth Day).® Replace and restore social trails, rock walls and eroded staging areas. Contact Andy Fritz at 253.761.8766 or titlan@seanet.com.
- **Sheep Road, Colo.:** 2-day trail project, April 20-23. Help us complete the new Cactus Cliff/Gym trail started last November. Contact Rick Thompson at 503.545.6772 ext. 105 or rick@accessfund.org.
- **Wichita Wildlife Refuge, Okla.:** 2 days of trail work at the Marrows, May 14-15. Contact Martin Hitchcock at 405.364.9390 or marishutch@aol.com.

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**April**

- **March 6, Bighorn, Wyo.:** Mike Libecki expedition slide show, Cliff Spots, 303.781.7070.
- **March 15, Mt. Rainier, Wash.:** Mike Libecki expedition slide show, Outdoor Recreation, 435.797.2426.
- **March 24, AB: 10th Annual Flatiron Climbing Competition, AB Rock Gym, John Schiller, 602.283.1232.
- **April 7, Cherry, Ill.:** 8th Annual Flatiron Climbing Competition, IL Rock Gym.
- **April 8, Red Rocks, Colo.:** 10th Annual Flatiron Climbing Competition, CO Rock Gym.
- **April 8, Golden, Col.:** Mike Libecki expedition slide show, Flatirons Climbing.
- **April 8, Eldorado Canyon, Colo.:** Mike Libecki expedition slide show, Eldorado Canyon.
- **April 13, Anchorage, Alaska:** Mike Libecki expedition slide show, Alaska Mountain Club.

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**May**

- **May 5, Colorado, Colo.:** Mike Libecki expedition slide show, Colorado Mountain Club.
- **May 19, Illinois, Ill.:** Mike Libecki expedition slide show, Chicago Climbing Club.

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**June**

- **June 8, Mount Rainier, Wash.:** Mike Libecki expedition slide show, Pacific Northwest Mountain Club.
- **June 22, Bighorn, Wyo.:** Mike Libecki expedition slide show, Wyoming Mountain Club.
- **June 8, Eldorado Canyon, Colo.:** Mike Libecki expedition slide show, Eldorado Canyon.
- **June 16, Red Rocks, Colo.:** Mike Libecki expedition slide show, Eldorado Canyon.
- **June 16, Golden, Col.:** Mike Libecki expedition slide show, Flatirons Climbing.
- **June 22, Chicago, Ill.:** Mike Libecki expedition slide show, Chicago Climbing Club, 773.728.7100.
- **July 1, Anchorage, Alaska:** Mike Libecki expedition slide show, The Alaska Mountaineering Club.
- **July 1, Golden, Col.:** Mike Libecki expedition slide show, Summit County Mountain Club.
- **July 1, Bighorn, Wyo.:** Mike Libecki expedition slide show, Bighorn Mountain Club.
- **July 1, Red Rocks, Colo.:** Mike Libecki expedition slide show, Eldorado Canyon.
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Tick List cont. from back page

climbing area in a way that is not listed on the TICK LIST, tell us about it—everything counts! Can I really make a difference with the TICK LIST? The Access Fund will spend a year recording all of the important things climbers do on behalf of access and conservation. If enough of us achieve 10 goals, we’ll have the ability to hold up the climbing community as a model steward of our climbing resources. With enough climbers committed to Leave No Trace practices as well as packing out a little trash, we may see noticeable differences in the way your climbing area looks. If enough people commit to just 10 ticks on the list, we can better negotiate for climbing access with public land managers and private land owners, and can gain unparalleled political leverage.

Sure, I’ll feel good about myself, but can I WIN AMAZING OUTDOOR GEAR? Satisfaction is an essential, sometimes intangible, motivator. Winning great gear on the other hand, can go a long way to motivate just about anyone. In the second half of 2000, the Access Fund will complete four drawings from the pool of TICK LISTS sent to the national office.

That’s right—you can have up to FOUR CHANCES TO WIN! The drawing deadlines are: July 1, Sept. 1, Nov. 1 and Dec. 31. The sooner you enter, the more chances you’ll have to win! The earlier you complete your TICK LIST, the more drawings you can be eligible for. The gear we’ll be giving away comes from the gamut of Access Fund Corporate Partners (see page 15) and includes: tents, ropes, climbing shoes, sleeping bags, stoves and more loads. Winners will be notified after each drawing and will be listed on our Web site at www.accessfund.org.

Why Now? The TICK LIST is part of Kickin’ Access—the Access Fund’s 10th anniversary celebration. And now that we’ve surpassed 10,000 members, it’s time to shoot for 100,000 actions and make climbers’ voices heard everywhere.
Inside

THE BIG STORY:
Access Fund National Trails Initiative set to kick off this spring ........ p.1

SPRAY:
It doesn't have to be climbers vs.
Native Americans ..................... p.2

AREA REPORTS:
The beta on access in your region . p. 3

MEET THE ACCESS FUND:
A letter from Phil Powers, Access Fund vice president .............. p. 7

POLICY UPDATE:
Hueco, Babo, recreation funding, management plans ............. p. 8

CONSERVATION UPDATE:
Biology bibliography out, annual report .................. p. 10

LETTERS:
Our members cut loose ............... p. 11

TRAIL UPDATE:
1999 wrap-up, 2000 schedule ...... p. 12

HOT PROJECTS AND EVENTS:
Fun Access Fund events and projects in your area .......... p.13

The Access Fund is a national, non-profit dedicated to keeping climbing areas open &
conserving the climbing environment.

Since its incorporation in 1990,
the Access Fund has provided more than $1
million for climbing conservation and education across the US. We've paid for land
purchases, climbers' campgrounds, educational
brochures, toilets and signage, and scientific
research on climbers' impact on birds of prey
and cliff-dwelling plants.

For more information

CALL US AT: 303-545-6772

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COMMlT RANDOM ACTS OF ACTIVISM
SCORE COOL GEAR AND BETTER ACCESS
WITH THE TICK LIST INSIDE

What's the Tick List?
The TICK LIST, found at the center of this newsletter, is a compilation of simple things
you, your climbing partners and friends can do
to help preserve climbing access in 2000. The TICK LIST will help you be more politically,
socially and environmentally active to preserve climbing's future.

You bet we did the math!
If 10,000 climbers commit just 10 simple, random acts of activism this
year, the net result of 100,000 actions will thunder across the country. This
is the most forward-thinking, preventative measure that the climbing community,
as a whole, can take to support the sport.

What do I do with the TICK LIST?
Choose 10 of the 14 listed actions, commit your random deeds, mark them
down and send the tick list to the Access Fund office (mailing info is on the
tick list). If you have been active on behalf of your

*Continued on pg. 14