

VERTICAL TIMES

The National Publication of the Access Fund
Winter 16/Volume 107
www.accessfund.org

Expanding the Tribe
page 8

25
YEARS
ACCESS FUND
Protecting America's Climbing

ORGANIZING BOLT REPLACEMENT 6
THE FIGHT FOR BEARS EARS AND AMERICA'S PUBLIC LANDS 11
INTRODUCING DENNY COVE 12



“We will continue to expand our regional offices and our Conservation Team program to ensure that when an access issue or opportunity arises, we have qualified local staffers there to support local advocates.”

Last year, Access Fund sent a survey to our membership to solicit input for our five-year planning process. Over 4,600 of you responded (wow!), and I spent days going over your answers and am incredibly grateful to those of you who took the time to respond. We’ve relied heavily on your insights as we put together our plan. Your responses to one question in particular—what you think will be the most pressing issue facing our climbing community over the next five years—were instructive. See the word cloud for an overview of your thoughts.

It’s clear that the growth of our sport is both the greatest opportunity and the greatest threat we face. With more climbers in the mainstream come more resources, political influence, and acceptance by policy makers and landowners. However, the physical impacts associated with climbing are on the increase in many areas and need to be addressed. This is one of the key insights that drove our planning process. There are also social impacts to consider, and we’ve dedicated our feature article in this issue of *Vertical Times* to exploring some of the unexamined baggage that many of us (myself included) have around climbing going mainstream.

As we approached our strategic planning process, we were proud to note that our mission has not wavered in the last quarter century. We are still keenly focused on keeping U.S. climbing areas open and conserved. And we continue to envision a world where climbing is an accepted, authorized, and valued activity on all public and private lands; closures and restrictions are well justified and appropriately scaled; climbing areas and environments are protected, conserved, and well stewarded; and climbers are responsible users and stewards of the outdoor climbing environment. We’ve made significant gains toward realizing that vision, but the world is changing and it is essential that we change with it. As we embark on the next five years of climbing access and advocacy work, we have a few overarching strategies to achieve our vision.

First, we will strive to increase our support of local climbing organizations and advocates. All access issues are local. And local issues are best dealt with by local people who are on the front lines. Supporting and enabling the success of local climbing organizations (LCOs) is crucial to our mission. But the United States is a big country, and we can’t cover everything from our national office in Colorado. We have been working hard to expand our regional presence, and, in addition to our national office, we now have offices in Arizona, Washington state, Tennessee, Washington, DC, and California, as well as two Conservation Team crews on the road full time. Over the next five years, we will continue to expand our regional offices and our Conservation Team program to ensure that when an access issue or opportunity arises, we have qualified local staffers there to support local advocates.

Next, we will aim to provide comprehensive climbing management services. When Access Fund was founded 25 years ago, our primary concern was preventing bans on climbing access. At the time, climbing was a fringe sport and we had little political clout. Land managers confronted with user or resource conflicts could close areas to climbing with little concern about organized opposition. A lot has changed. Today, most land managers are generally supportive of climbing and other forms of recreation but may not know



ACCESS FUND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OFFICERS

President, Kenji Haroutunian, CA
Vice President, Jonah Harrison, WA
Treasurer, Jeff Buhl, CO
Secretary, Alex Kutches, WA

BOARD MEMBERS

Elaina Arenz, WV
Mark Baum, VA
Peter Croft, CA
Ryan Gellert, Amsterdam
Hilary Harris, CO
John Winsor, CO
Jessica Yates, CO

HONORARY BOARD MEMBERS

Rick Accomazzo, CO
Larry Gustafson, TX
John Juraschek, NC
Michael Kennedy, CO
Armando Menocal, WY
Dave Rosenstein, NJ
Bill Supple, VT
Randy Vogel, CA

ACCESS FUND STAFF

Michael Allen
Development Director
michael@accessfund.org

Lindsay Anderson
Conservation Specialist
conservationteam2@accessfund.org

Jim Chase
Operations Director
jim@accessfund.org

Sam Claassen
Digital Marketing Manager
sam@accessfund.org

Peter Dodge
Membership Manager
peter@accessfund.org

Danielle Estabrook
Bookkeeper
danielle@accessfund.org

Travis Herbert
Education Director
travis@accessfund.org

Jason Keith
Sr. Policy Advisor
jason@accessfund.org

Zachary Lesch-Huie
National Affiliate Director & Southeast Regional Director
zachary@accessfund.org

Mike Morin
Conservation Specialist
conservationteam@accessfund.org

Erik Murdock
Policy Director
erik@accessfund.org

Amanda Peterson
Conservation Specialist
conservationteam@accessfund.org

Chip Powell
Conservation Specialist
conservationteam2@accessfund.org

Brady Robinson
Executive Director
brady@accessfund.org

Joe Sambataro
Access Director & Northwest Regional Director
joe@accessfund.org

Curt Shannon
Policy Analyst
curt@accessfund.org

Holly Smolenski
Communications & Marketing Director
holly@accessfund.org

Jenna Snyder
Office Manager
jenna@accessfund.org

Anneliese Steel
Development Associate
anneliese@accessfund.org

Ty Tyler
Stewardship Director
ty@accessfund.org

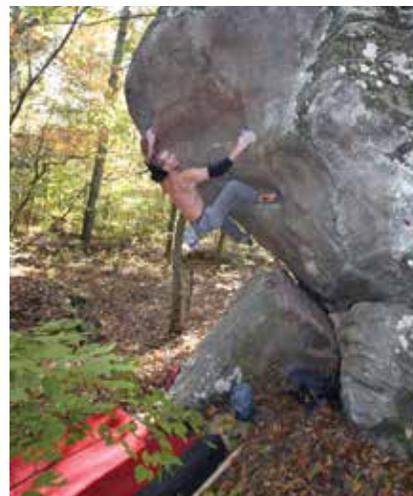
GENERAL COUNSEL

Chris Archer



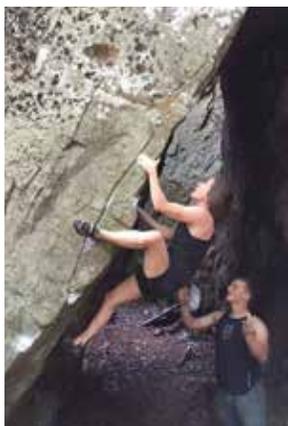
Washington Climbers Step Up Stewardship

Washington Climbers Coalition (WCC) knocked out four major stewardship projects this season. They kicked off with 1.8 miles of trail work and 75 volunteers at Gold Bar Boulders with the Conservation Team in April. Then, teaming up with the Mountaineers, WCC improved trails to Three O'Clock Rock in Darrington. In July and August, they partnered with Mountains to Sound Greenway to work on the Dirty Harry trail reroute, creating a more sustainable approach for Exit 38 Farside. Lastly, they took on Little Si as part of the Seattle Reel Rock Fest with a big coalition of groups, restoring trails and controlling erosion at Blackstone, Mid Walls, and World Wall.



A Long-Term Home for Holy Boulders

We are pleased to announce that we have secured a long-term owner and caretaker for the Holy Boulders in Southern Illinois. After extensive collaboration with local climbers, BETA Fund, and Illinois Climbers Association (ICA), Access Fund transferred the 46-acre bouldering area to ICA for long-term ownership and management. Access Fund secured temporary ownership of the Holy Boulders in 2012 when the landowners decided to sell their 80-acre farmstead, which included some of the best sandstone boulders in the Midwest. To prevent an indefinite closure, Access Fund purchased the property using over \$300,000 from our Climbing Conservation Loan Program, with the long-term plan of transferring the property to a nonprofit organization or public agency. ICA has assumed full management responsibility of the Holy Boulders. Access Fund maintains a permanent conservation and recreation easement to back up ICA's long-term commitment, ensuring continued conservation and climbing access at the Holy Boulders. BETA Fund will continue to manage the medical kit and assist in stewardship.



New Boulders Open in Southwest Virginia

In September, the Southwest Virginia Climbers Coalition (SVCC) teamed up with the town of Norton to build an access trail to the Labyrinth boulders, opening the area to the public for the first time. The maze-like sandstone formations sit within the Flag Rock Recreation Area and offer dozens of quality boulders at all grades. Access Fund has been working with SVCC and the town for several years to open this and other climbing areas in the Flag Rock Recreation Area.

New Joint Membership Options in TN, NY, and WI

Access Fund now offers joint membership with over 30 LCOs. We're excited to welcome East Tennessee Climbers Coalition, Thacher Climbing Coalition, and Wisconsin Climbers Association to the joint membership program, which allows climbers to join their local and national climbing organizations with a single membership. See if there's a qualified LCO in your region by visiting www.accessfund.org/join.





ORGANIZING BOLT REPLACEMENT

As bolts around the United States begin to age, more and more LCOs are tackling bolt replacement. Learning how to replace a bolt correctly and with the least impact—or supporting others' efforts to replace bolts—is critical to sustaining crags and maintaining access. Accidents caused by bolt failures could endanger access, just as replacing bolts without regard for the best practices in a particular area can endanger it. Here are some tips for organizing bolt replacement at your home crag.

Get funds for hardware. The climbing community is stepping up to support bolt replacement. Set up a donation form on your website to raise funds for new hardware. PayPal or other services offer easy platforms for accepting donations. Don't forget that Access Fund offers funding through our Anchor Replacement Fund grant program.

Manage risk and stay safe. Protect your volunteers and your organization by making sure that volunteers have extensive experience and that everyone signs a waiver. Keep people away from the work area in case someone drops a tool or there's rock fall. Use only the most corrosion-resistant metal, like stainless steel or titanium, and follow the manufacturer's guidelines. If you're paying for the replacement work, insurance and worker's comp coverage are highly recommended.

Follow local ethics and policies. Ensure that your work is fully supported by sticking to the land manager's policies and the local climbing ethic. Consult with your LCO, land manager, and/or Access Fund *before* you begin work. Remember that you can only use a hand drill in Wilderness, even for replacement. A good rule of thumb is like-for-like replacement of fixed anchors. Adding new bolts where none existed before may get you in trouble. On the other hand, a

new top-anchor or belay station may be a welcome addition. Bottom line: Always vet your plans with the climbing community and local land manager.

Don't put in junk! Use only stainless steel hardware or titanium in the most highly corrosive environments, like coastal areas. Never mix metals, as it accelerates corrosion. Ideally, place a 1/2" bolt for strength and replaceability. Softer rock may require a glue-in bolt. Consult your LCO and Access Fund's resource site (www.accessfund.org/fixedanchors) for hardware standards.

Reuse the old hole. Nothing's worse than clipping a new bolt and seeing three old bent studs sticking out nearby. We can't keep placing new bolts next to old ones—it's ugly and lazy and damages the rock. Sustainable bolting and rebolting is the future, and it's easier and faster than ever. New methods and technology make it feasible to remove just about any kind of bolt and pop a new, longer-lasting version in the same spot. When you can't reuse the hole, cut or hammer it flush to the rock and patch it so future climbers won't even notice.

Keep a record. It's essential to track your work so that anchors can be monitored and future volunteers know what you've done. Make an ongoing record of what routes have been replaced and when, as well as what kind of bolts were installed. Some LCOs publish these records on their website, alongside a place for local climbers to report a bad bolt. Badbolts.com is also a useful bolt maintenance database worth checking out. ■

Get more information on techniques at
www.accessfund.org/fixedanchors



CHATTANOOGA

THE INSIDE SCOOP: BOULDERING

If you're like most climbers, you pore over guidebooks for weeks or even months when planning a climbing trip. You educate yourself on routes, descents, gear, and camping. But what about the local ethics, issues, and challenges at your destination crag? Part of being a responsible climber is knowing how to tread lightly—both socially and environmentally. In the *Inside Scoop* series,

we connect you with local climbing access leaders at some of the country's top climbing destinations for valuable insight into local ethics and issues.

Destination: CHATTANOOGA, TN

Local expert: JIMMY WEBB, PRO CLIMBER AND CHATTANOOGA LOCAL

Why is Chattanooga the perfect base for a Deep South bouldering trip?

There's an enormous quantity of world-class, sandstone boulders—a lifetime's worth. There are too many areas to list, but the big hot spots are Rock Town and Stone Fort (aka Little Rock City). Dayton and the Cumberland Boulders are also popular and close by. Alabama's Horse Pens 40 and Hospital Boulders are only an hour or two away, so Chattanooga's a great home base to check those out.

What does the access situation look like around Chattanooga?

A lot of climbing around Chattanooga is on private property, so climbers are really at the mercy of these landowners. Most people around here, including landowners, are pretty laid back and just looking for mindful people who respect them and their land.

How can climbers best respect these private and public lands?

Be mindful of reducing your impact. When you're out, keep tick marks to a minimum. Use them if you need to, but be courteous and brush them off when you're done. Don't drag your pads—pick them up and set them down when moving from problem to

problem. Also, dogs can get a little crazy at places like Rock Town, so keep your dog under control or think about leaving him at home.

What's the best way to dispose of human waste?

If there's a bathroom nearby, walk a few minutes and use it. Don't just scramble behind a boulder and do your business—it ruins the area for everyone. If there isn't a restroom, pack it out.

Is overcrowding an issue?

Our climber-to-rock ratio is mind blowing. There's more rock here than we know what to do with, so overcrowding does not need to be an issue if climbers are conscious of spreading out. However, the more popular areas—like Stone Fort and Rock Town—can get crowded.

What's the lodging/camping situation?

Lots of traveling climbers choose to crash in the city while they're here. There's a rad hostel called The Crash Pad that's conveniently located in the heart of the southside, just walking distance from great restaurants, bars, and live music. If camping is more your thing, you can camp at T Wall, the state campground at Foster Falls,

or Chester Frost, which is north of town and close to bouldering areas.

What are the local ethics in Chattanooga?

The local ethic around here is summed up in one phrase: low profile. Because of the massive amount of private land here, local climbers have learned that they can't afford NOT to think about landowner relationships and climber impacts. Not every area should be widely publicized. That doesn't mean the culture is secretive, but it is über responsible. If you want beta on an area, just connect with one of the super-friendly locals.

Any words of wisdom for folks visiting Chattanooga for the first time?

Enjoy it! The climbing is amazing, the people are friendly, and the food is incredible.

What's the best way to support local climbing access and conservation?

Support the Southeastern Climbers Coalition (SCC)! The SCC works hard to preserve access, purchase new crags, organize rebolting initiatives, and host trail days. You can make a donation and learn about ways to get involved at www.seclimbers.org. ■



expanding the tribe

BY JEFF ACHEY

Climbers have called themselves a tribe for as long as I can remember. It sounds good — soulful and close to the earth. We are wild and free, a little lighter, faster, stronger than the masses. Around the campfire, with the day's adventures behind us, we share personal bonds few mortals know who are not part of the tribe.

And, in part, that's all true. But along with the friendly welcomes and invitations, and the common language of sharing beta, our feelings come with some unexamined baggage. We consider ourselves exceptional. We fear invasion. We are hostile toward agents of change.

Consider our history, how we've treated members of our own tribe. Pure rock climbers who lacked aspirations to climb high peaks used to be treated as outsiders among the true tribe of mountaineers. Sport climbers got a similar treatment when they appeared on the rock-climbing scene. Today, it's gym climbers.

Forget that Chris Sharma and Alex Honnold are “gym climbers” — gyms are our biggest source of problems, according to many. Gym climbers are too urban, dress funny, and are clueless about the outdoors.

More likely, the real problem is boulderers. They’re as urban as gym climbers and don’t even own climbing ropes. What kind of climber doesn’t clip chains? And what’s with those mattresses? Back in the day, the tribe never carried those things.

Okay, and how about all those dogs? Back when climbers actually got off the ground more than 100 feet, no one brought dogs to the crag. Having a dog was a sign of conformity, like wearing a tie, washing your car, or spending Thanksgiving with your family instead of in the desert. No real climber should have a dog.

Actually, come to think of it, it’s the Sprinter vans that are ruining climbing. Those things are cushier than my old apartment. They hog all the crag parking and make climbers soft. Sprinter climbers are soft. It’s not a real road trip if you’re traveling in one of those mobile hotels. Sprinter vans will destroy climbing.

And so on. Who doesn’t talk and think like this sometimes? It’s entertaining and makes us feel just a little bit better about ourselves.

But it’s bullshit. It’s all too easy to blame this, that, or the other thing for the disappearance of our fantasy Golden Age, which in fact never existed. Climbing is growing and changing, like it always has. Climbing is on the public radar right now, for sure, and it’s time to appreciate what’s going on, even if that’s a little less entertaining and harder on our egos.

Mainstream media coverage has been gradually building. In 2014, we had the film *Valley Uprising*, which got passionate and mixed reviews among

climbers and significant play among general audiences. Then there was the *Dawn Wall*. By the time coverage peaked, many climbers were in an altered state, and many were upset. Dark-horse champions were hurt by how many other worthy achievements disappeared in the Dawn Wall’s glaring light. Purists were offended, once again, by the commercial exploitation of climbing. The story blew up so big that even President Obama sent his congratulations.

But here’s what you might not know: At a time when Yosemite National Park was reviewing its Wilderness policies, a little Presidential love for climbers went a long way. In the not too distant past, our relationship with the Feds was far less friendly. Access Fund sued the federal government (twice!) over public land managers banning climbing on public lands. Back then, policy makers didn’t understand climbing, and climbers were fighting just to get a seat at the table in decisions about our public lands.

It’s all too easy to blame this, that, or the other thing for the disappearance of our fantasy Golden Age, which in fact never existed.

And today? We may still argue and discuss, but climbers are at the table—visible, respected, and at least somewhat understood.

Still psyched on Tommy and Kevin’s Dawn Wall feat, the White House allowed a group of pro climbers to take over its Instagram feed to promote the 100th anniversary of

the national parks. We’ve come a long way, in large part because of climbing’s growth and increasing public visibility.



Overcrowding? Sure, some front-country crags are busier, but if you want to have a Wilderness experience, walk an hour from the road at any climbing area in the country and you’ll still find it, regardless of how many new climbers are showing up at the most popular crags. Don’t want to walk? Then stay on the front line and enjoy the show. Represent the tribe. Interact with whomever you meet at the crag. Most newbies in all sports are looking for guidance—it is the

rare case who shows up with so much attitude that she/he is a nuisance who can’t be placated. If you see someone disrespecting the resource or being unsafe, talk to them. Talk to them even if they seem polite and competent. See if you can genuinely respect whatever upbringing they came from.

Feature Story

And the reality is that we have more new places to climb than ever. Access to many older areas has become easier and more secure. Significant amounts of private land have been purchased and preserved for public use with climbing as a priority. Access Fund and its network of local climbing organizations have established channels to encourage hesitant landowners and land managers to take a climbing-positive view and to head off potential closures.

Climbing introduces us to people from all over the world and helps us appreciate each other through a common bond. What better way to build bridges across our nation's troublesome divides than by sharing a rope?

Another great benefit that has come out of the growth of climbing: Towns and cities all over the country are getting involved in developing new climbing areas. Word is out about the economic benefits of climbing, and communities want in.

I asked Zach Lesch-Huie, head of Access Fund's national affiliate network, for some highlights, and he had plenty. Climbing areas create centers of interest far from population centers or other attractions. This has brought money into many local communities—more than you'd think. A recent study found that climbing tourism brings \$3.6 million annually to communities surrounding the popular Red River Gorge, Kentucky. The economy of Fayetteville, West Virginia is greatly boosted by climbers visiting the New River Gorge, and the nearby town of Oak Hill is in the process of establishing a 300-acre municipal bouldering park to get a piece of that action. Thacher State Park in New York is paying for the hardware and time needed to develop the park's climbing. In Ohio, the Clark County Parks Department is pitching in to help buy Springfield Gorge and create a climbing park. The North Dakota Department of Tourism is giving climbers a matching grant for climbing development at Square Butte. And the list goes on. Climbers are always sniffing out new areas to climb, but now communities are getting involved in increasing climbing opportunities. A decade ago, this was unthinkable.

Money isn't the only objective for creating climbing parks. State and national objectives, such as fighting chronic obesity and increasing the diversity of the people using public lands, also factor in. It's about time that the climbing

tribe became more diverse. One of the best things about climbing is that it introduces us to people from all over the country, all over the world, and helps us appreciate each other through a common bond. What better way to build bridges across our nation's troublesome divides than by sharing a rope? Climbing gyms in urban areas all over the country are introducing climbing to a more diverse population. As outdoor crags begin to attract more new climbers, our political base deepens.

And as the number of climbers grows, the simple math of it sees climbers infiltrating the ranks in all sorts of beneficial places. Access Fund Policy Director Erik Murdock, based in Washington, DC, has met climbers in many such places — administrators at federal land management agencies, staffers on the Senate Natural Resources Committee, and even members of Congress. More and more, climbers are not some fringe group struggling to make their activity understood by policy makers. They are in the offices making policy. As the number of climbers goes up, so does the chance that someone making decisions about recreation management or environmental protection is part of the tribe. At a time when the future of our public lands and vast outdoor landscapes is threatened, we need more climbers in the ranks, more people deeply connected to our climbing areas, more people willing to fight for their protection.

We're at a good place for a change. Now that 5.15+ is the standard, we can all relax in the knowledge that even if we climb 5.13 or whatever, we are totally unexceptional. There's no more justification for elitism at the crag. If we really want to be different, if we want our tribal identity to stand for something, then let's focus on being more magnanimous than the herd. Why fear invasion when it only makes us stronger? There's plenty of self-righteousness and us-or-them thinking among the masses. Climbing changes people. It teaches them a higher level of discipline and respect. Let's show that off.

There's only one certainty about the future of climbing: change. Regardless of how we feel about it, it's inevitable that our community will grow. It will increase in diversity. It will require more communication to preserve the best of the old and merge it with the best of the new. The greatest cost? With a bigger tribe, the feeling of exceptionalism will not come so automatically. We each will have to earn it with our actions, just like every other human. The greatest benefit? As our community grows, so does our influence, our core values, and our ability to protect the experiences we hold so dear. ■

THE FIGHT FOR BEARS EARS AND AMERICA'S PUBLIC LANDS

An interview with Access Fund Policy Director, ERIK MURDOCK

What's the most important policy issue facing the American climbing community? The future of our public lands. Over 60% of the climbing in this country is located on federally managed public lands. And right now there is a strong movement to transfer these lands to state control.

Wouldn't states manage these lands similarly for public access? Some might, but others are looking to make money through resource extraction and development opportunities. Even if an individual state didn't choose to cash in, economists assert that states can't afford to assume responsibility of these public lands. A single wildfire would bankrupt most state budgets, resulting in closures and/or sell-offs. If you want to understand the implications of public land transfer, simply look at history—it's not a pretty picture.

How real is this threat to public lands? The movement to transfer public lands to states is not new, but it is gaining steam as it is promoted by the GOP platform, Congressional think tanks, the American Lands Council, and grassroots militia groups. The 2016 Republican platform states, "Congress shall immediately pass universal legislation providing for a timely and orderly mechanism requiring the federal government to convey certain federally controlled public lands to states." The threat is real.

Is this what's happening at Bears Ears in Southeast Utah? Utah is the petri dish for growing ideas on transferring public lands from federal to state control. Southeast Utah is a current battleground of this issue. Utah lawmakers are proposing the transfer to state control of not only public lands, but also mineral, gas, and grazing rights. This is not good news for conserving the climbing environment because some states are more interested in development than recreation and conservation, despite the well-substantiated economic benefits of recreation.

What's likely to happen in Southeast Utah? Well, there are two scenarios on the table. Congress is considering the Utah Public Lands Initiative (PLI), a bill that would transfer

large blocks of federal land to Utah and, on remaining federal lands, hand over control of energy leasing, roads, grazing, and other forms of land management to the state. On the other side, the President is considering whether he should use the Antiquities Act to designate Bears Ears as a National Monument, which would prohibit new mining operations, protect Native American sacred sites, and conserve a vast landscape. Considering the political climate and the remaining time in the current Congress, a National Monument designation is likely.

Which outcome is more favorable for climbers? Of these two options, Access Fund supports designation of the National Monument because it protects the climbing environment, favors conservation values over development, and supports our Native American partners. There are some potential shortfalls associated with a National Monument, and we advocate for rock climbing to be noted in the monument proclamation so that climbing is acknowledged as a legitimate activity.

If the Monument is declared, what's the impact on climbing access? We will need to negotiate climbing management details during the multiyear process to develop a Monument Management Plan. Access Fund will, as always, support the protection of cultural resources, and we are grateful that the Inter-Tribal Coalition supports climbing access. In fact, they sent a letter to the U.S. Department of Interior in October expressing support for the climbing community.

How is our relationship with the Tribes? Climbers are aligned with the Inter-Tribal Coalition in this fight. We are committed to continued discussions with the Inter-Tribal Coalition. We are grateful that a bad bill and decades of conflict over the control of Utah's public lands has also resulted in a burgeoning friendship.

Is the battle for Bears Ears important on a national scale? Yes. All Americans, including climbers, should be watching closely, because whatever happens in southeastern Utah will undoubtedly have cascading repercussions for public lands across the entire country. ■

INTRODUCING DENNY COVE

Long before he found his way to the Sierra and Yosemite, John Muir discovered the Cumberland Plateau: “the first real mountains that my foot ever touched or eyes beheld ... stretching over hill and valley, adjusted to every slope and curve by the hands of Nature—the most sublime and comprehensive picture that ever entered my eyes.”

This sublime and comprehensive landscape is home to Tennessee’s newest climbing area: Denny Cove. In early August, Southeastern Climbers Coalition and Access Fund secured Denny Cove, a 685-acre property west of Chattanooga, near the popular and well-known Foster Falls climbing area. Denny Cove already offers approximately 150 climbing routes, with potential for many more on nearly three miles of cliff line. The unique multicolored sandstone offers routes of all grades and ability levels and boasts a wide variety of terrain—from long overhanging walls to massive roofs, slabs, cracks, and corners.

Five years ago, a local ranger tipped off Chattanooga climbing guidebook author and advocate Cody Averbeck about the area’s potential for climbing. The property was owned by a multinational timber company, and, at over 600 acres, was likely to hold a million-dollar price tag. Undiscouraged, Averbeck rallied Access Fund, SCC, Land Trust for Tennessee, The Conservation Fund, and South Cumberland State Park to see if the coalition could help secure this property for conservation and climbing access.

After booting up negotiations with the timber company, the coalition partners cast out in search of funding, and SCC and Access Fund began discussions with Tennessee State Parks to gauge their interest in being the long-term climber-friendly owners of Denny Cove.

“The state was excited about the prospect of adding a major new climbing area to the region,” says Access Fund Affiliate Director Zachary Lesch-Huie. “Part of their interest was pure economics: More visiting climbers means money into the local community. But they’ve also had a really positive experience working with climbers on stewardship at Foster Falls. So climbing really became one of the most important reasons for protecting this piece of land.”

Incrementally, the coalition began piecing together funding and a long-term climbing management plan.

“It was like projecting a hard route for about five years! We slowly pieced together the moves—the funding, the negotiations, our climbing stewardship commitments with the state—dealing with some cruxes along the way. But eventually, climbers and all the partners managed to put it together, and we sent it,” says Lesch-Huie.

Access Fund, SCC, and the park are in the process of building out the area’s parking lot and trails. Since the purchase was completed, and at the time of this writing, an estimated 70 volunteers have given an estimated 576 hours, over six weekends to building the area’s hiking and climbing access trails.

“It’s been amazing to see the community step up and help build this place out. We’ve even had climbers come from out of state to join in the work. While there’s more to do, it’s amazing what we’ve accomplished thus far,” says Cody Roney of the SCC.

The purchase is done, with SCC holding the property until it can be transferred to the state by year end. But fundraising for the purchase isn’t over. SCC currently has a fundraising goal of \$200,000 to pay off the loans—the real finish line for the project. They still need help, so please make a donation to www.seclimbers.org/dennycove. ■



The base of the cliff or boulder is almost always the most impacted area of a climbing site, simply because it's where we hang out and put our stuff. These affected areas quickly lose vegetation and soil, causing erosion that destabilizes the area. Land managers are quick to notice these impacts and raise access alarms.

HERE ARE A FEW WAYS TO REDUCE YOUR IMPACT:

- 1 Belay and place your gear as close to the base of the cliff as possible to prevent impacts from spreading over time.
- 2 Avoid belaying or placing gear on exposed roots or at the edge of the impacted area near the vegetation line.
- 3 Pad conservatively and make sure you are not crushing vegetation.
- 4 Keep your stuff organized and contained.
- 5 Be considerate to other users by keeping your gear off the trail.

Corporate Partners

The Access Fund–Jeep Conservation Teams live on the road 10 months a year and are grateful to have the comfort of a Therm-a-Rest tent and sleep system to come “home” to each night. Therm-a-Rest’s unwavering commitment to comfort stems from the belief that the better you rest, the better you play. Therm-a-Rest is committed to building what it makes with its own hands whenever possible. It has been a proud supporter of Access Fund since 2009 and has been providing our Conservation Team crews with a comfortable night’s sleep since 2013.



These partners are businesses that put their money where their mouth is to support the future of climbing. Please consider the important contribution these partners make to your climbing future. They support the Access Fund and you. We encourage you to support them!

ABOVE THE CLOUDS - \$100,000+

Black Diamond Equipment, LTD
Jeep® Brand/ Fiat Chrysler Automobiles, LLC

TITANIUM - \$50,000+

Clif Bar & Company
Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI)

DIAMOND - \$25,000+

Outdoor Research
Patagonia
Petzl
Planet Granite
The North Face
Touchstone Climbing, Inc.

PLATINUM PLUS - \$15,000+

Archer Law Offices, P.C.
Earth Treks Climbing Centers

PLATINUM - \$10,000+

eGrips Climbing Holds
Google
Jason Keith Consulting
Mountain Project
Osprey
Stonewear Designs
Therm-a- Rest
Trango

GOLD PLUS - \$7,500+

prAna
Sea to Summit

GOLD - \$5,000+

Falcon Guides
FrictionLabs
La Sportiva
Metolius
Mountain Gear
Phoenix Rock Gym
Seattle Bouldering Project
Sender Films
Sender One Climbing Gym
The Spot Bouldering Gym

SILVER - \$2,500+

1908 Brands
adidas TERREX
Avery Brewing Company
BlueWater Ropes
Clif Family Winery
ClimbTech
Drive Current
EVO Rock + Fitness
Five Ten
GORE-TEX® Products
Louder Than 11
Mammut
MARCAT Group, LLC
Marmot
Movement Climbing + Fitness
Omega Pacific
Outdoor Retailer
Pacific Edge Climbing Gym
Peter W Gilroy
Phoenix Climbs Events
SCARPA North America
Sterling Rope Company

MAJOR - \$1,000+

Advanced Specialty Care, PC
American Alpine Club
American Mountain Guides Association
ASANA
Ascend Pittsburgh
CAMP USA
Carhartt
Evolv Sports
Flash Foxy
Goal Zero
Grivel
High Point Climbing and Fitness
Kingflyer Collective

Liberty Mountain Climbing
Maxim Ropes
Mick Tresemer Rope Art
MojoTech
Mountain Tools
New Belgium Brewing Company
Onsight Gear
ORU Kayak
Polar Bottle
RESTOP
Rock and Resole
Stone Age Climbing Gym
SuperTopo.com
The Crash Pad
The Good to Great Project
The Warrior’s Way
Treasure Mountain Inn
Upslope Brewing Company
Vertical Endeavors
West Arete

CONTRIBUTING - \$500+

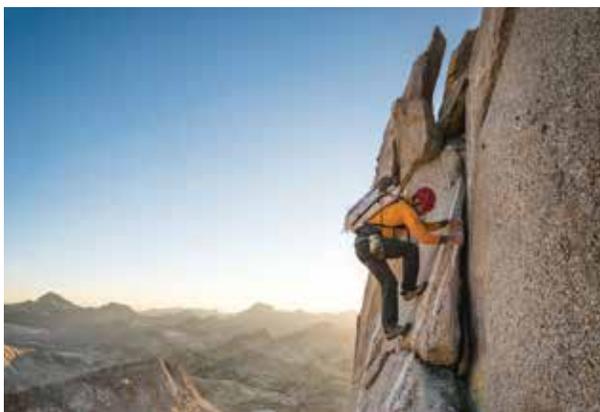
Aiguille Rock Climbing Center
DMM Excalibur
E&J Gallo Winery
Fixed Pin Publishing
Golden Mountain Guides
Green Peak Promotions
Hapa Sushi
KNS Reps, Inc.
Little Rock Climbing Center
Lost Soles Climbing
Michael Green Architecture
MPHC Climbing Gym
MyClimb App
NOCO Gear
ROCK AND SNOW
Rok Haus Indoor Climbing Gym
Sabaku Sushi
Sharp End Publishing
Slo-Op Climbing
Travel Country Outdoors
TRUBLUE Auto Belays
Vertical Dreams
W.W. Norton & Company
Xcellence

SUPPORTING - \$250+

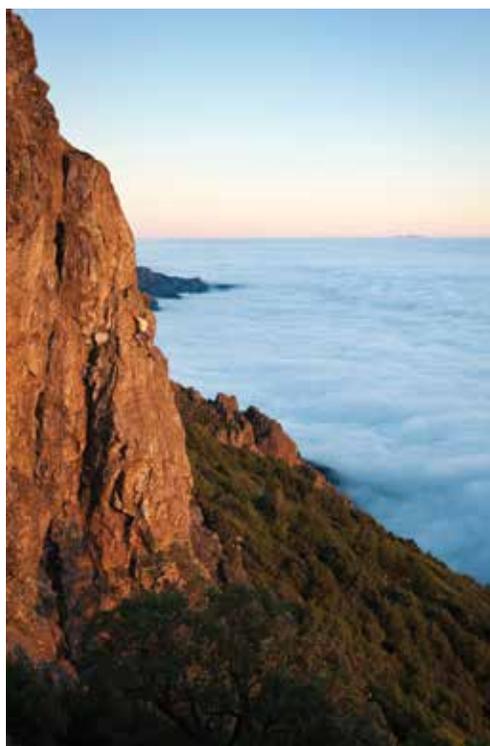
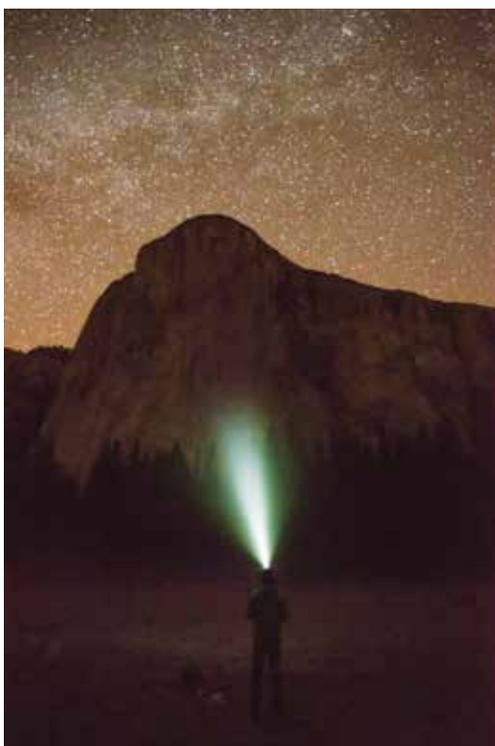
AHS Rescue
Amarillo Rock Climbing House
Backbone Media
Bliss Bouldering and Climbing Complex
Boulder Adventure Lodge
Cadillac Mountain Sports
Call of the Wild Adventures
CamelBak
Climbingweather.com
Doylestown Rock Gym
First Ascent Mountain School
Forest Oil Corporation
Forte Creative Media
Full Contact
Gneiss Apparel Supply Co.
HARNES Marketing
Idaho Mountain Guides
Joshua Tree Skin Care
Level8Sales
Moosejaw
Nadia von Magdenko & Associates, PLLC
Neptune Mountaineering Network For Good
New Orleans Bouldering Lounge
Rock Fitness
Tent.net
The Armaid Company
The Gravity Vault Indoor Rock Gyms
The Law Firm for Non-Profits
Vertical Adventures Ohio
Your Cause Sports
Zen Lizard Systems

IN-KIND PARTNERS

Alpinist Magazine
Climbing Magazine
Dead Point Magazine
Rakkup
Rock & Ice Magazine
Schoeller
The Climbing Zine
Wolverine Publishing



From top: Evolution Traverse, Sierra Nevada, CA; Kevin Jorgeson stands under the stars in Yosemite's El Capitan meadow, contemplating the Dawn Wall; Climber above fog, Napa Valley
© Jerry Dodrill



Jerry Dodrill

Jerry Dodrill is an adventurer and award-winning photographer who has traveled to remote corners while questing for wild experiences. An expert mountain climber with degrees in fine art and photography, Jerry is passionate about preservation and was a protégé of legendary Galen Rowell in the late 1990s. Today, he resides in the Sonoma Coast town of Bodega, California, focusing on assignment photography, writing, exhibitions, and sharing his vision and expertise with others. Jerry's work is represented by the stock agency Aurora Photos. He is a senior contributor to *California Climber Magazine* and has been published in *Sierra*, *Orion*, *Vanity Fair*, *World of Fine Wine*, *Wine Spectator*, *Men's Journal*, *Smithsonian*, *Outside*, *Alpinist*, *Rock & Ice*, *Climbing*, and many other magazines. He was fundamental in product development and creation of the exciting new backpack company MindShift Gear, serves as vice president of the Rock Ice & Mountain Club, and sits on the board of directors of the B-Rad Foundation. ■



The Access Fund
PO Box 17010
Boulder, CO 80308



HOLIDAY ITEMS NOW ON SALE!

The wait is over! Access Fund Holiday Packs and dozens of other climber gifts are now available in our online store. This year's Holiday Pack is better than ever, featuring:



- A one-year Access Fund membership
- 2017 Access Fund member t-shirt
- Osprey Daylite Plus backpack
- Goal Zero Flip 10 portable phone charger
- ASANA travel mug
- Polar Bottle Ergo water bottle
- Beanie from Outdoor Research
- Carabiner coffee
- Therm-a-Rest UltraLite Pillow Case
- Omega Pacific Tephra Trapwire Quik-Lok locking biner
- Friction Labs chalk
- Seasonal CLIF bars

Visit www.accessfund.org/store and check out our exciting new line of products.