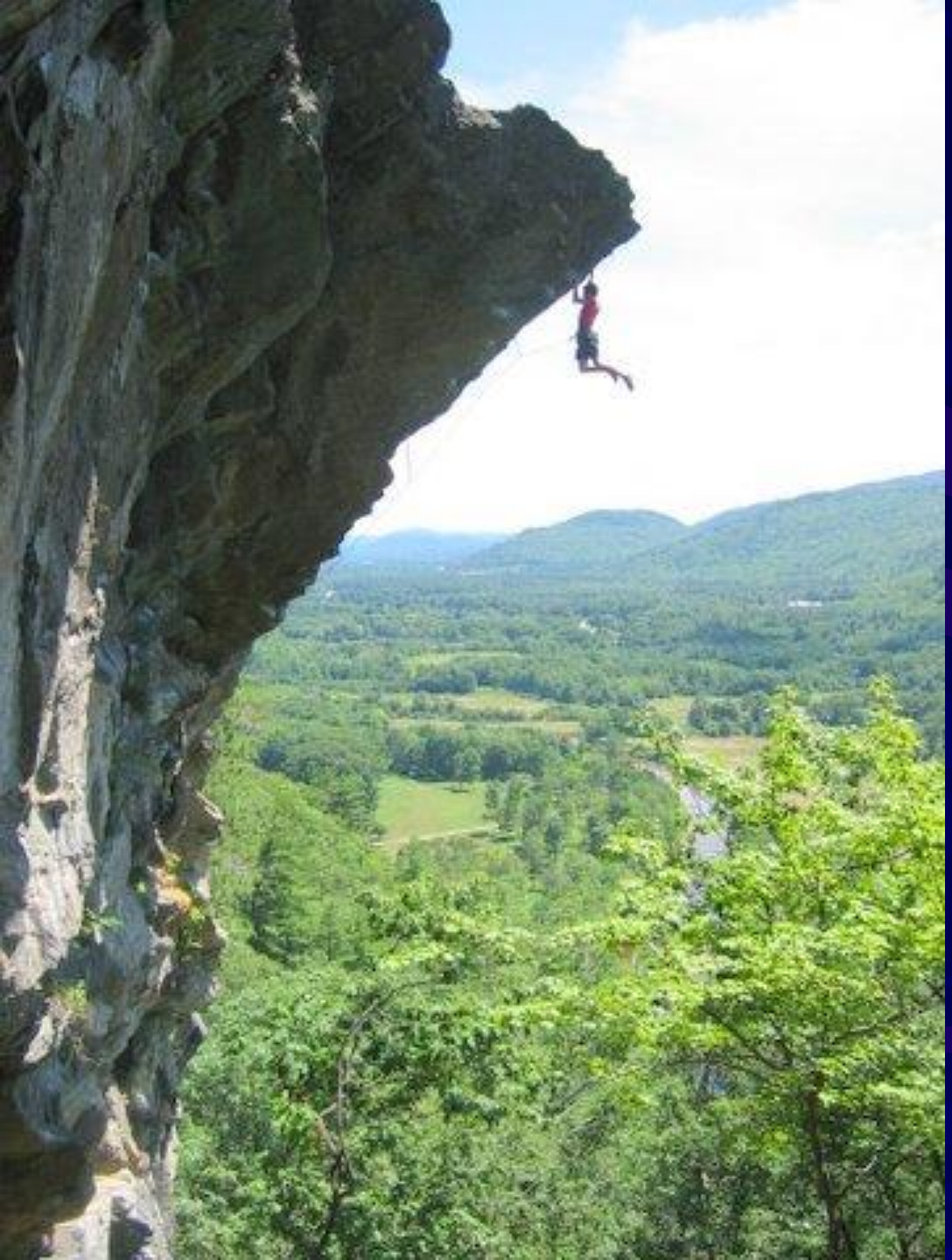
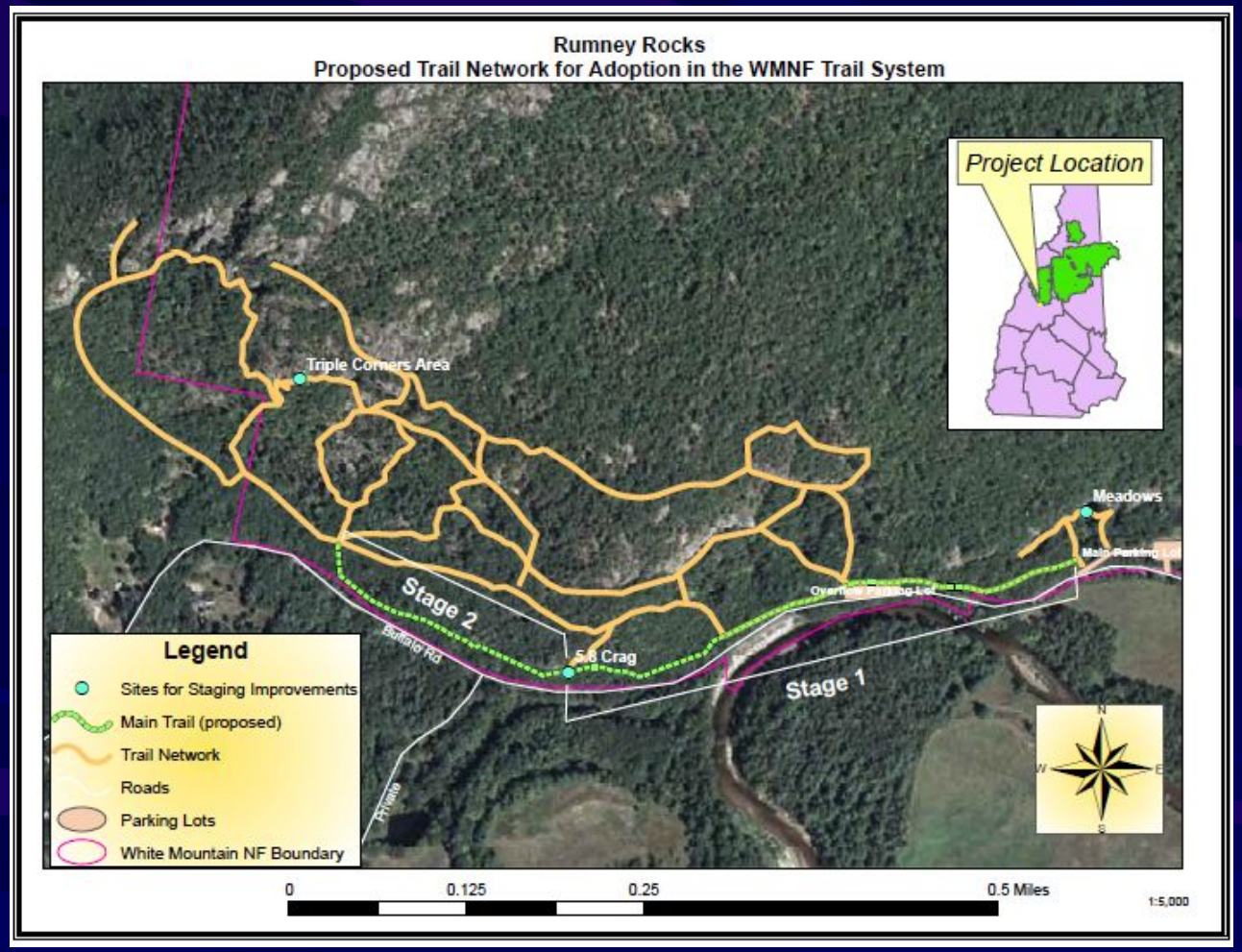
Climbing Trails and Infrastructure

Projects, Partnerships, and Pick Mattocks



What do you think of when you think of climbing at Rumney?

What do land managers think of when we think of climbing at Rumney?

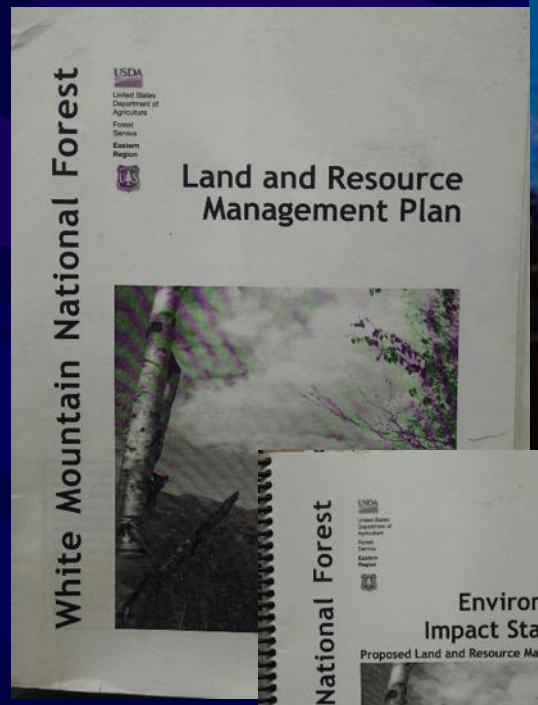


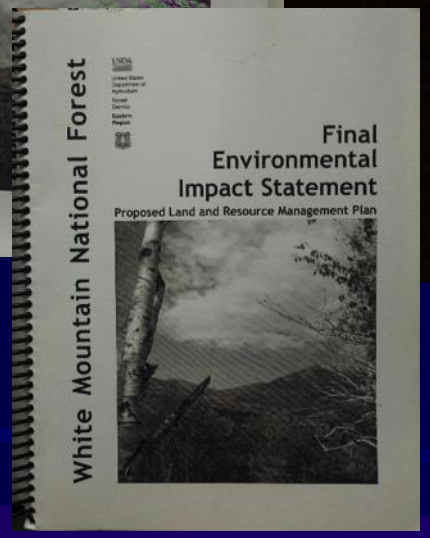
- Incidental trails
- Erosion and compaction
- Neighborly relationships
- Parking
- Crowding
- Poop
- Trash
- T&E Species
- Law and Policy
- SAFETY

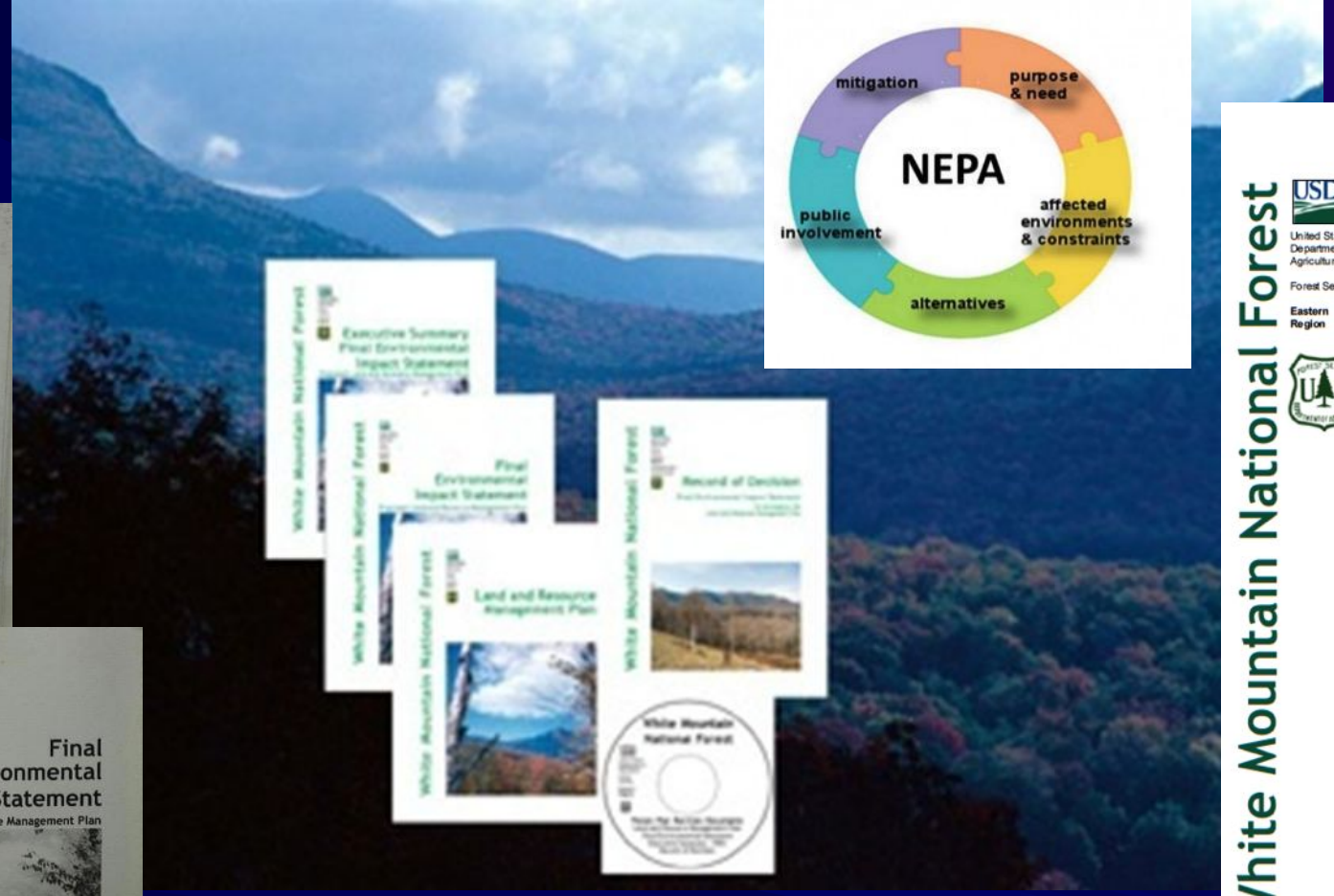
(Preserving YOUR experience!!)

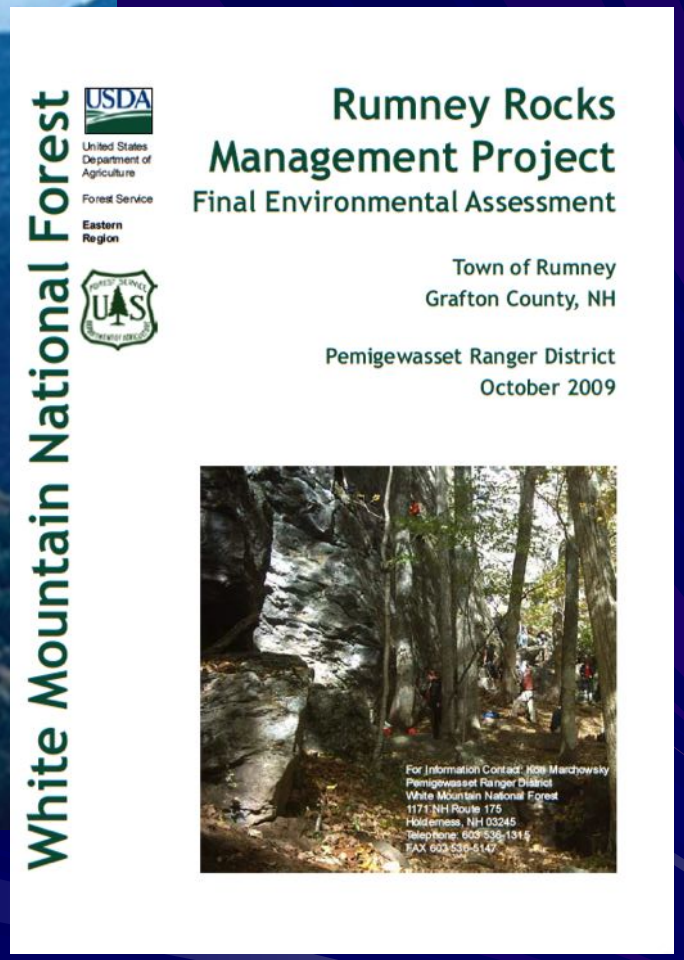
Rumney Timeline

- **1980s-2005**: Increase in rock climbing prompted need for more active management.
- **2005**: Revised WMNF Forest Plan (addresses rock and ice climbing)
- **2007**: Schedule of Proposed Action (SOPA)
- **2008**: Climbing Management Plan (addresses parking, safety, trail access, staging areas, T&E species, partnership roles)
- **2009**: Rumney Rocks Environmental Assessment (made the projects outlined in the CMP legal)
- 2015: Updated Climbing Management Plan signed
- **2016**: Allocated $60k (watershed funded) to Rumney trailwork, USFS trail crew spent 6 weeks at Rumney; cost-share agreement with Rumney Climbers Association
- **2017:** Neighbor situation gets interesting!
- **2018**: Land acquisition super close! Cost-share agreement with Access Fund.









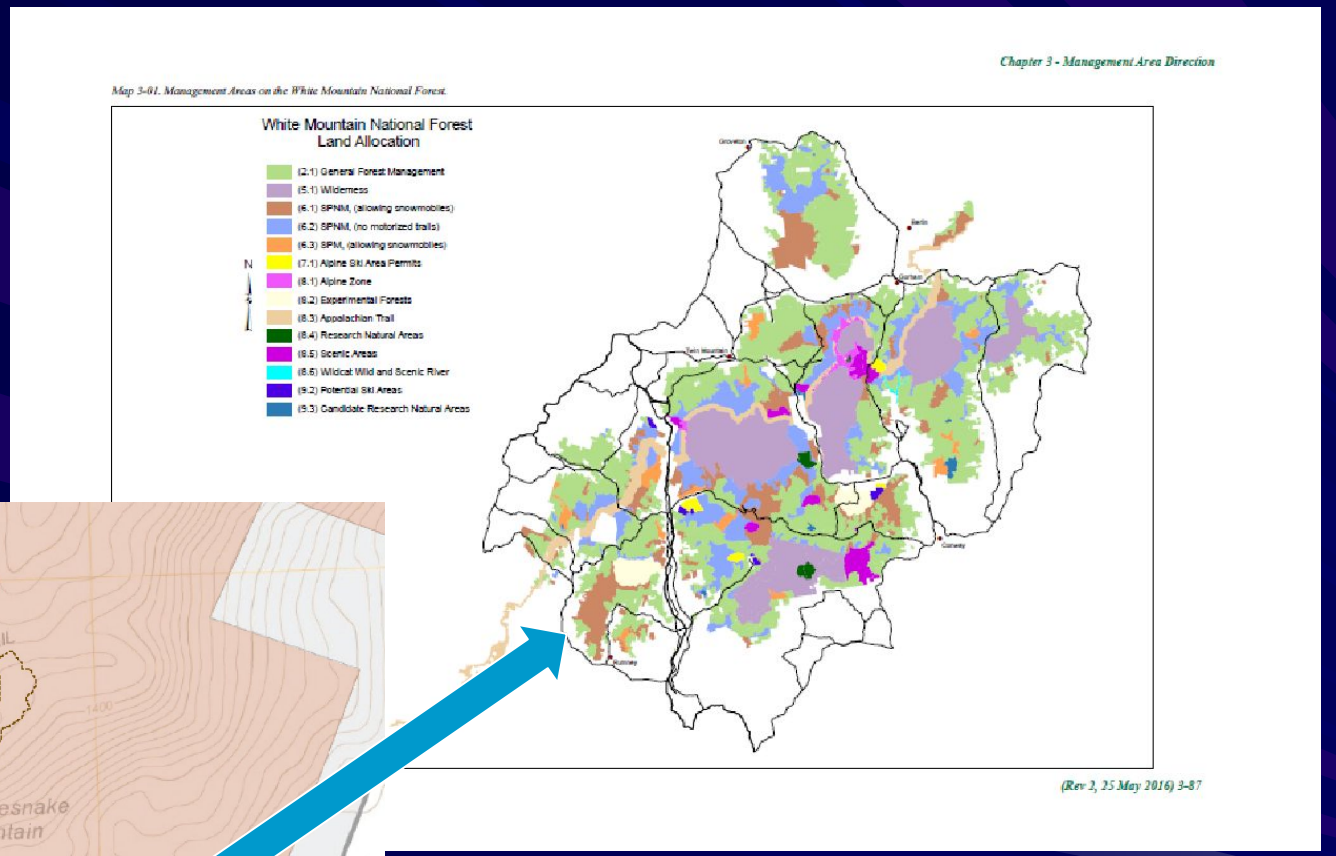
RUMNEY ROCKS CLIMBING MANAGEMENT PLAN

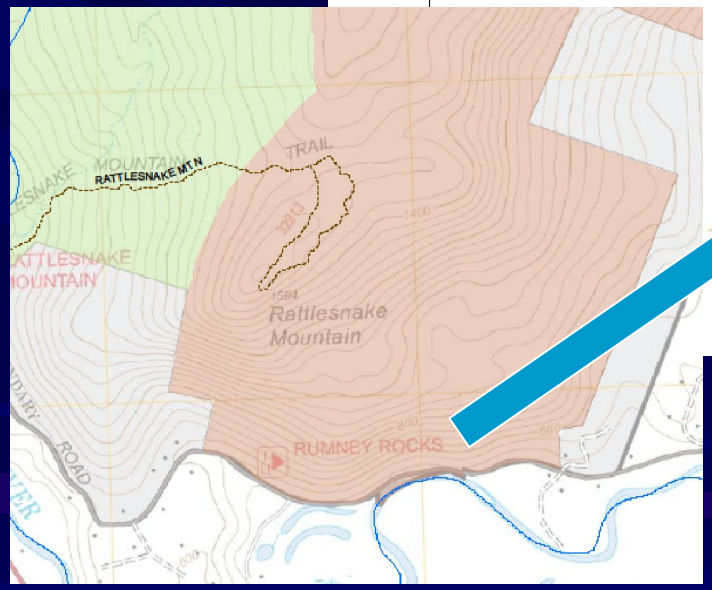
White Mountain National Forest
Pemigewasset Ranger District
July, 2008

Introduction

The Rumney Rocks Climbing Area encompasses approximately 150 acres on the south-facing slopes of Rattlesnake Mountain on the White Mountain National Forest in Rumney, New Hampshire. Scattered across these slopes are approximately 28 rock faces known by the climbing community as “crags.” Rumney Rocks is a nationally renowned sport climbing area with a long and rich climbing history dating back to the 1960s. This unique area provides climbing opportunities for those new to the sport as well as for some of the best sport climbers in the country. The consistent and substantial involvement of the climbing community in protection and management of this area is a testament to the value and importance of Rumney Rocks.

WMNF Management Areas (MA)





Land Management at Rumney Rocks

- MA 6.2 Semi primitive non-motorized recreation
- Timber harvest is prohibited.
- Motorized use is prohibited (except for projects and emergency use).
- Emphasis on non-motorized, dispersed, “foot trail recreational opportunities, providing a relative sense of isolation and remoteness in a predominantly natural or natural-appearing environment.”
- Portions may be high use, others may be low use.
- Use is concentrated to trail corridors.

Three Types of Analysis

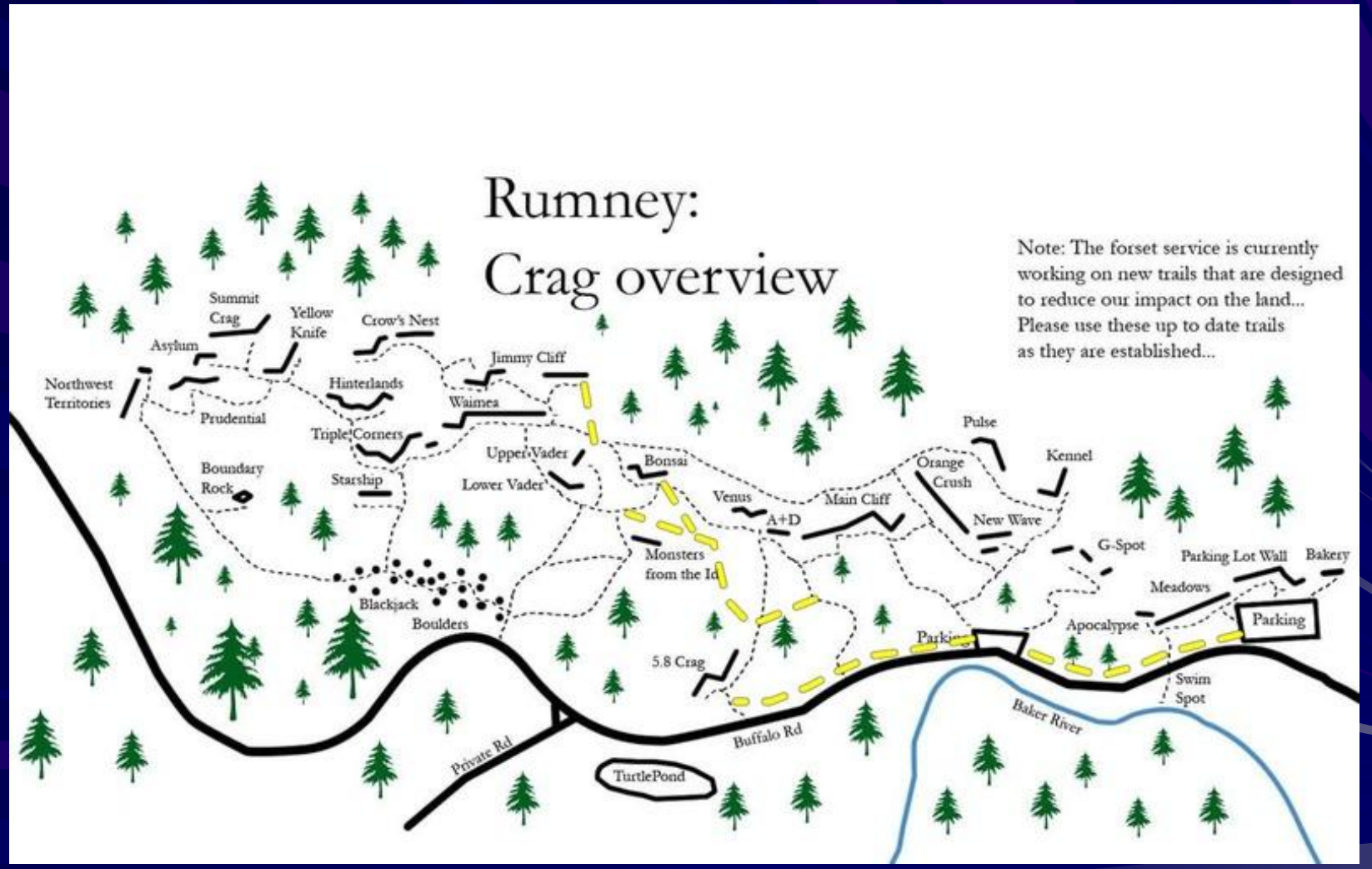
Simplest ⇒ Most Complex

- Categorical Exclusion
- Environmental Assessment
- Environmental Impact Statement

NEPA – What and Why

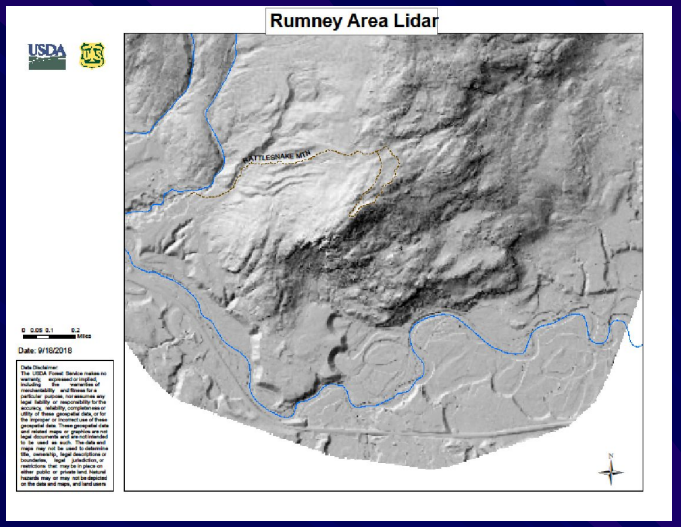
Process to:

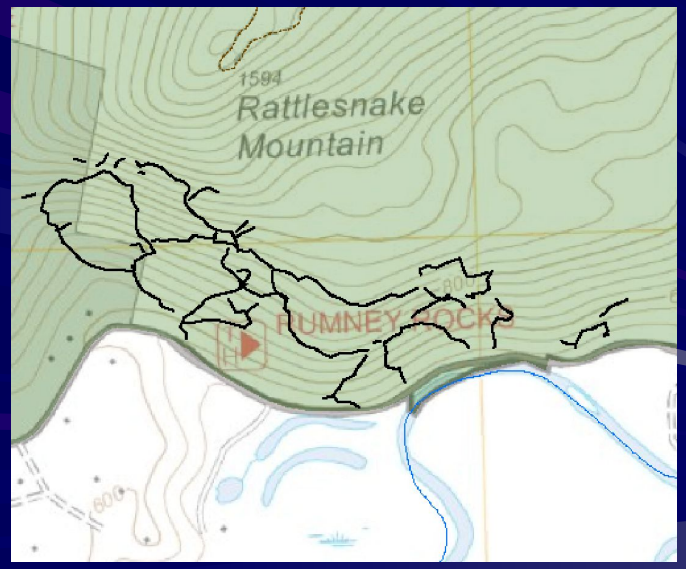
- Consider potential effects
- Inform deciding official and public
- Enable best decision and on-the-ground work



Resources and Uses

- Air Quality
- Education
- Fire
- Geology & Minerals
- Heritage Resources
- Invasive Species
- Lands
- Native Americans
- Rare Plant Communities
- Recreation
- Riparian Habitats
- Roads
- Scenery
- Ski Areas
- Soils
- Timber Harvest
- Water Resources
- Wildlife
- Wilderness





Climbing Management at Rumney

- Objective: “FS will work closely with the climbing community to locate new and developing rock climbing areas in order to address emerging issues…”

What we need to know

- Purpose and Need
  - Why is work needed?
- Proposed Action
  - Specifically what do you want to do?
- Potential effects
  - General to start
  - From resource specialists

These situations will prompt the WMNF to ask more questions and need more information

- Cutting trees other than hazard trees
- Working in or crossing streams or wetlands, including replacing bridges
- Working in Wilderness or the alpine zone
- Altering vegetation above 2800’ elevation
- Cultural resources are present
- Ground disturbance outside an existing trail corridor

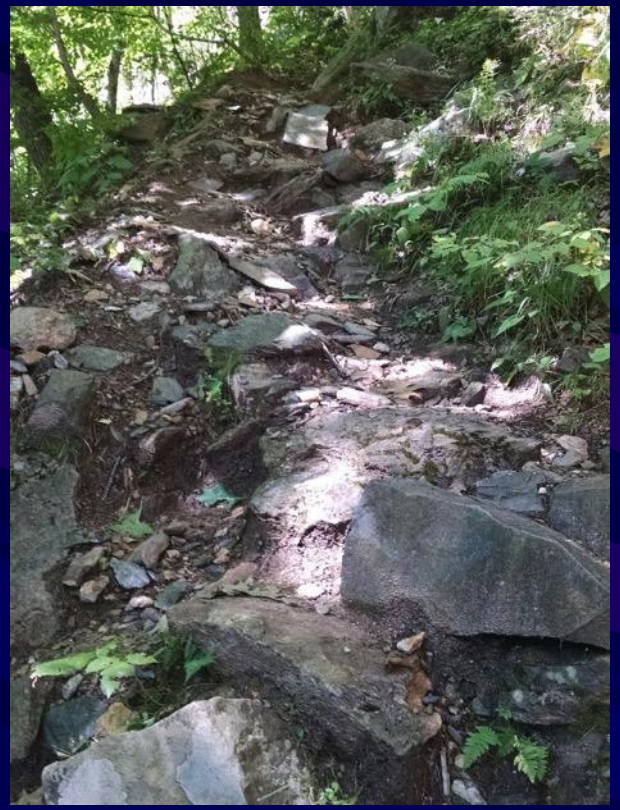
Routine Maintenance

- Basic in-tread or facility work done regularly to keep infrastructure functional. No NEPA!
  - Examples: normal annual trail maintenance

- CE: Repair & maintenance of trails and facilities (36 CFR 220.6(d)(4,5))

- Talk with District staff to ensure common understanding of what is approved and what needs more discussion
  - Examples: replacement of this belay pad, trail relocation

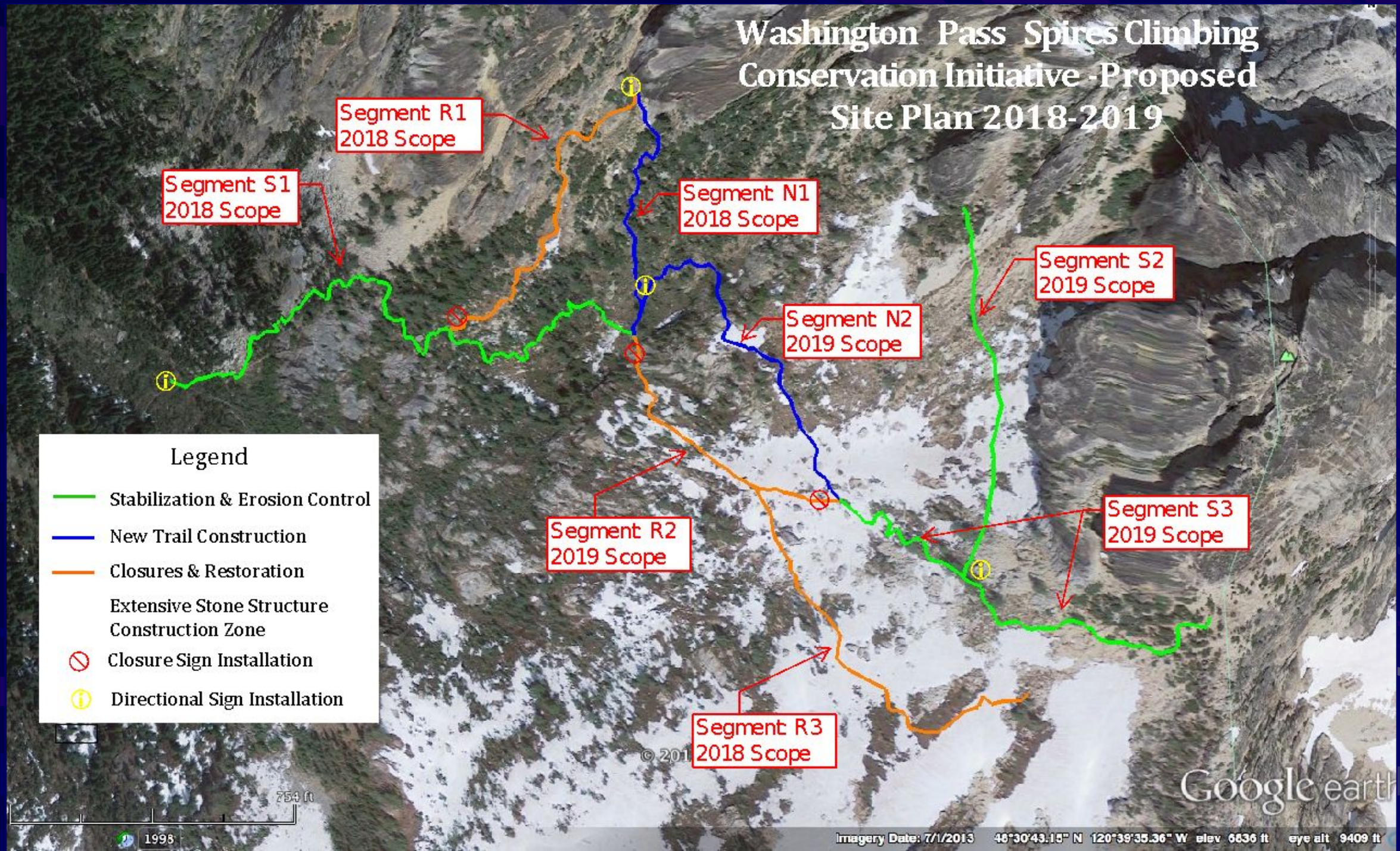
Small Projects Day



- Form submitted early March / September
  - Need all info in February / August
- Specialists review projects; ID need for additional info or analysis, such as:
  - Plant surveys – rare and invasive
  - Biological Evaluation / Consultation
  - Cultural resource surveys
  - Engineering designs
  - Hydrology review; permits
- Follow-up may prompt adjustments/mitigation

Why partner with us?

Washington Pass Spires Climbing Conservation Initiative Access Fund 2018-2019


Washington Pass Spires Climbing Conservation Initiative -Proposed Site Plan 2018-2019
Segment R1 2018 Scope
Segment S1 2018 Scope
Segment N1 2018 Scope
Segment S2 2019 Scope
Segment N2 2019 Scope
Segment R2 2019 Scope
Segment S3 2019 Scope
Segment R3 2018 Scope
Legend
Stabilization & Erosion Control
New Trail Construction
Closures & Restoration
Extensive Stone Structure Construction Zone
Closure Sign Installation
Directional Sign Installation
Google earth
Imagery Date: 7/1/2013 48°30'43.15" N 120°39'35.36" W elev 6636 ft eye alt 9409 ft

LIBERTY BELL NEEDS CLIMBERS' SUPPORT

2.2k Shares

The Liberty Bell Group, a cluster of five granite spires at Washington Pass outside Mazama, is home to some of the most popular and iconic alpine climbing in Washington State, including classic routes on Liberty Bell and South Early Winter Spire. Over the last decade, the area has become increasingly popular among alpine climbers. This rapidly expanding use has led to deteriorating trail conditions, severe erosion, and unsafe approaches.

The *Liberty Bell Conservation Initiative* will address these critical issues, and we are shovel-ready. But the project needs $130,000 to cover two seasons of professional trail crews and supplies to address critical stewardship and conservation needs. In the first eight months, climbers and organizations have raised close to $110,000, allowing us to start work in August 2018.

Support Liberty Bell Conservation Initiative

We need your help to raise $130,000 to fully fund this critical stewardship initiative.

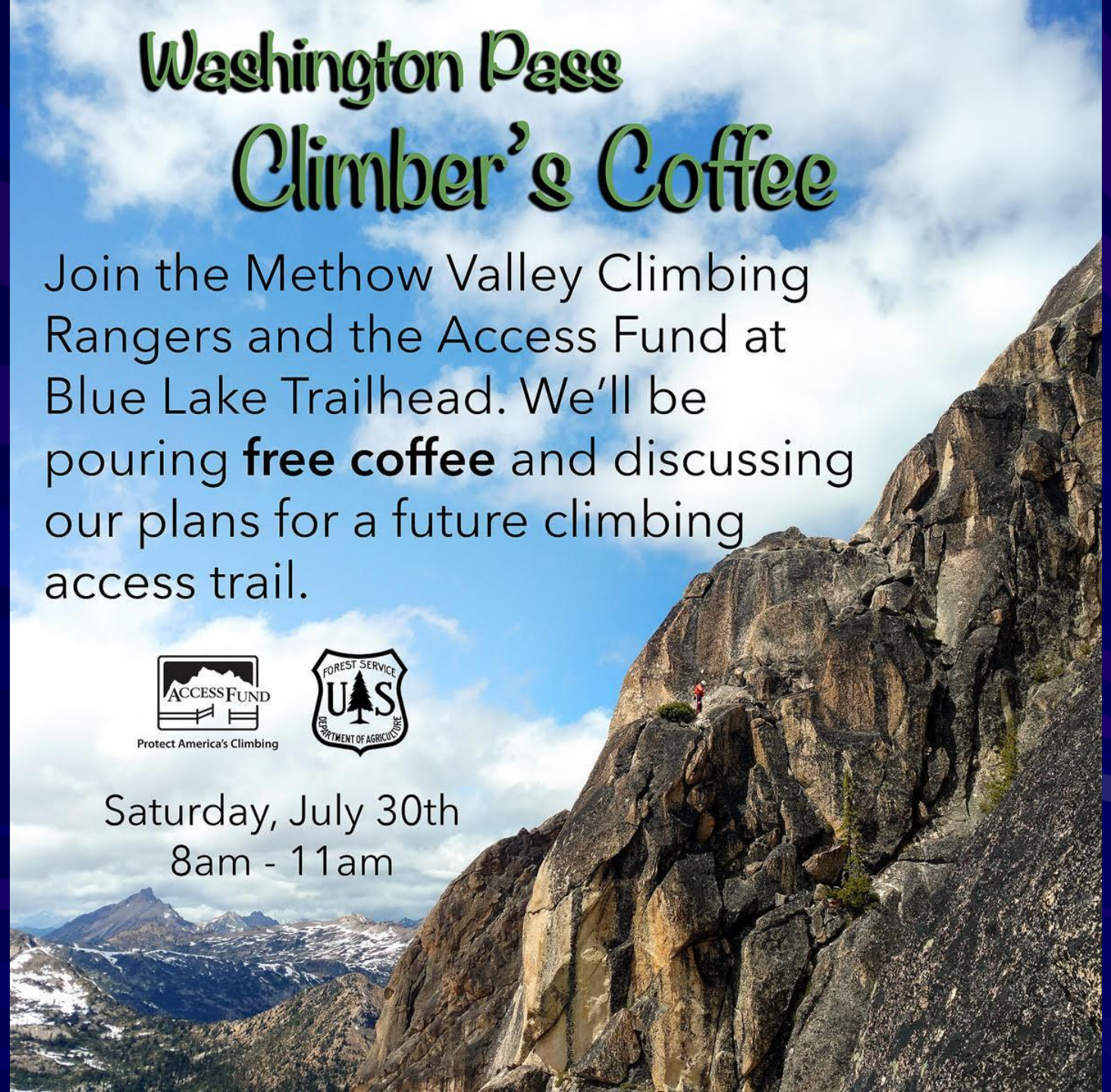
Washington Pass
Climber's Coffee

Join the Methow Valley Climbing Rangers and the Access Fund at Blue Lake Trailhead. We'll be pouring **free coffee** and discussing our plans for a future climbing access trail.

ACCESS FUND
Protect America's Climbing

FOREST SERVICE
US
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Saturday, July 30th
8am - 11am



2018 - 2019 Liberty Bell Climbing Conservation Initiative

Funding Source

	Petzl Foundation	Fundraising Campaign/Local Partners	AF In-Kind	National Forest Foundation	Puget Sound REI	The Mazamas	AAC Cornerstone Grant	Mountaineers
2018	$ 5,000.00	$ 25,000.00	$ 3,000.00		$ 5,000.00	$ 7,500.00	$ 4,000.00	$ 10,000.00
2019	$ 5,000.00	$ 36,500.00	$ 3,000.00	$ 33,000.00				
					Total Funding			$ 137,000.00

Trail Stabilization Construction and Rehabilitation Expenses	**Total**
Access Fund Regional Director - volunteer recruitment, partner outreach (in-kind)	$3,000
Access Fund Stewardship Director - crew resource & field management (in-kind)	$3,000
Access Fund Conservation Team - consruction activities, volunteer & crew leadership	$30,000
AmeriCorp Youth Crews - crew labor, field operations	$96,000
USFS Blasting Crew	$2,000
Miscellanious Expenses: tools, vol supplies	$1,000
Field Travel Expenses	$500
Purchase and installation of signage	$1,500
Total Project Cost	$137,000

Organizational Donors to the Liberty Bell Conservation Initiative

Donors $10,000+
National Forest Foundation ($33,000)
The Mountaineers ($10,000)
Washington Climbers Coalition (grants awarded and $2,500 in events)
Access Fund (in-kind)
USFS Methow Valley Ranger District (in-kind)

Donors $5,000+
The Mazamas ($7,500)
Petzl Foundation ($6,000)
REI Puget Sound Market Grant ($5,000)

Donors $1,000+
American Alpine Club Cornerstone Grant ($4,000)
North Cascades Conservation Council ($3,000)
Seattle Bouldering Project ($1,970)
Washington Alpine Club ($1,662)
American Alpine Institute ($1,000)
American Mountain Guides Association ($1,000)
Goat's Beard Mountain Supplies ($1,000)
The Mazama Store ($1,000)

Vertical World ($1,000)

Donors $100+
Seattle Arc'teryx Brand Store/Arc'teryx ($807)
Mountain Madness ($500)
North Cascades Mountain Guides ($500)
Leavenworth Mountain Association ($300)
Duct Tape Then Beer ($250)
Mountain Bureau ($100)

and hundreds of individual donors and climbers!

During the summer of 2018 and 2019, the Access Fund – Jeep Conservation Team and Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest will be working to create a more sustainable trail network to access the climbing areas on the west side of the Liberty Bell Spires. These climbing resources continue to grow in popularity, degrading the sensitive alpine and sub-alpine environments that make the area such an attractive destination. Expanding social trails are destroying sensitive plants, creating safety concerns, increasing navigation struggles and diminishing the quality of experience for future visitors.

Above Map:
BLUE LAKE TRAIL
INTENDED ACCESS TRAIL
REDUNDANT TRAILS FOR CLOSURE & RESTORATION

Goals of this project include:

- Close & restore redundant social trails
- Create an easily navigable trail system to improve safety, decrease visitor navigation errors and avoid rock fall zones.
- Develop a trail system that encourages native plant re-growth and protection.
- Create a navigable access system that becomes available quickly once seasonal snows melt
- Provide volunteer opportunities for the entire Washington climbing community
- Host volunteer events every **Saturday**, through **September 22**
    - Meet the AF Conservation Team at **8:30am** at the Blue Lake Trailhead. Email

ACCESS FUND

PLEASE LEAVE ANY TOOLS, FLAGGING, MATERIALS, ETC.

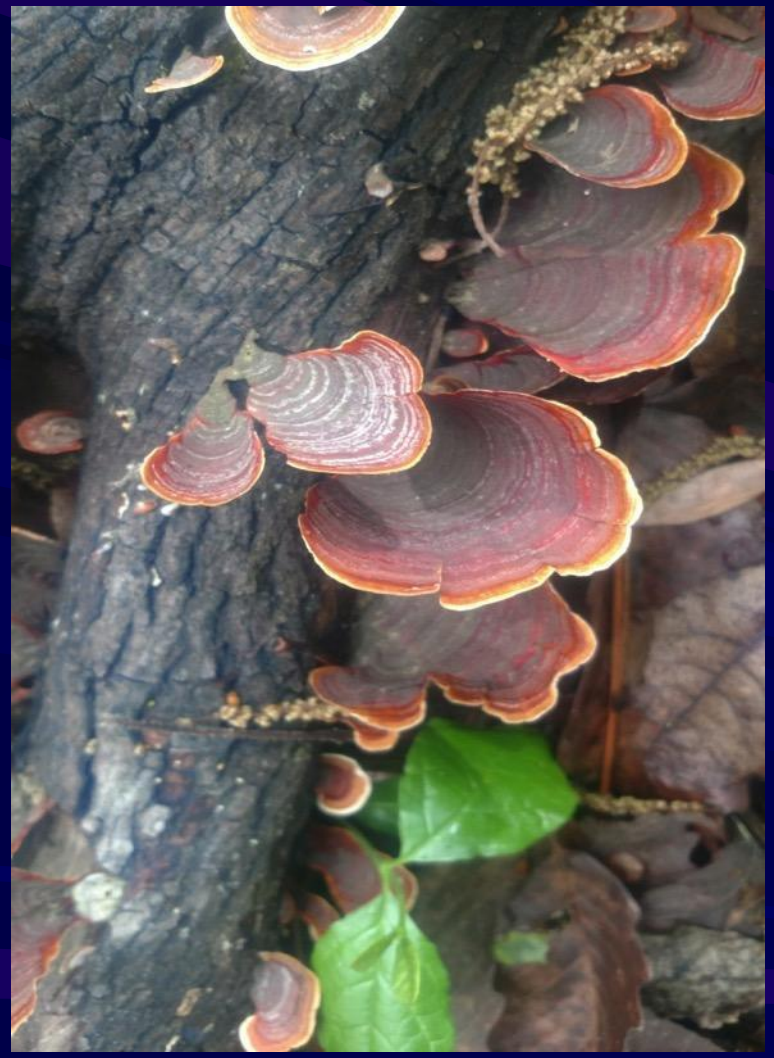
BE AWARE OF TRAIL CREWS AND VOLUNTEERS AHEAD – ANNOUNCE YOURSELVES AND GIVE THANKS!

FOREST SERVICE US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Stewardship and Trails

Resource Protection

Flora



Fauna

Water Impacts

Recreation Management

Climbing-Specific Impacts

- Shortest, most direct path
- Extended use in limited areas
- Generally focused on “send”
- Gear sprawl
- Social aspect with groups
- Develop climbs first, address access later

Controlling Water and People

Basic Tools

- Pick Mattock
- Hoe
- Shovel
- Hand Saw
- Loppers
- Bars
- Slings

Advanced Tools

- Griphoist & Highline
- Hammer Drill
- Feathers & Wedges
- Rock Shapers

Many Hands, Light Work!

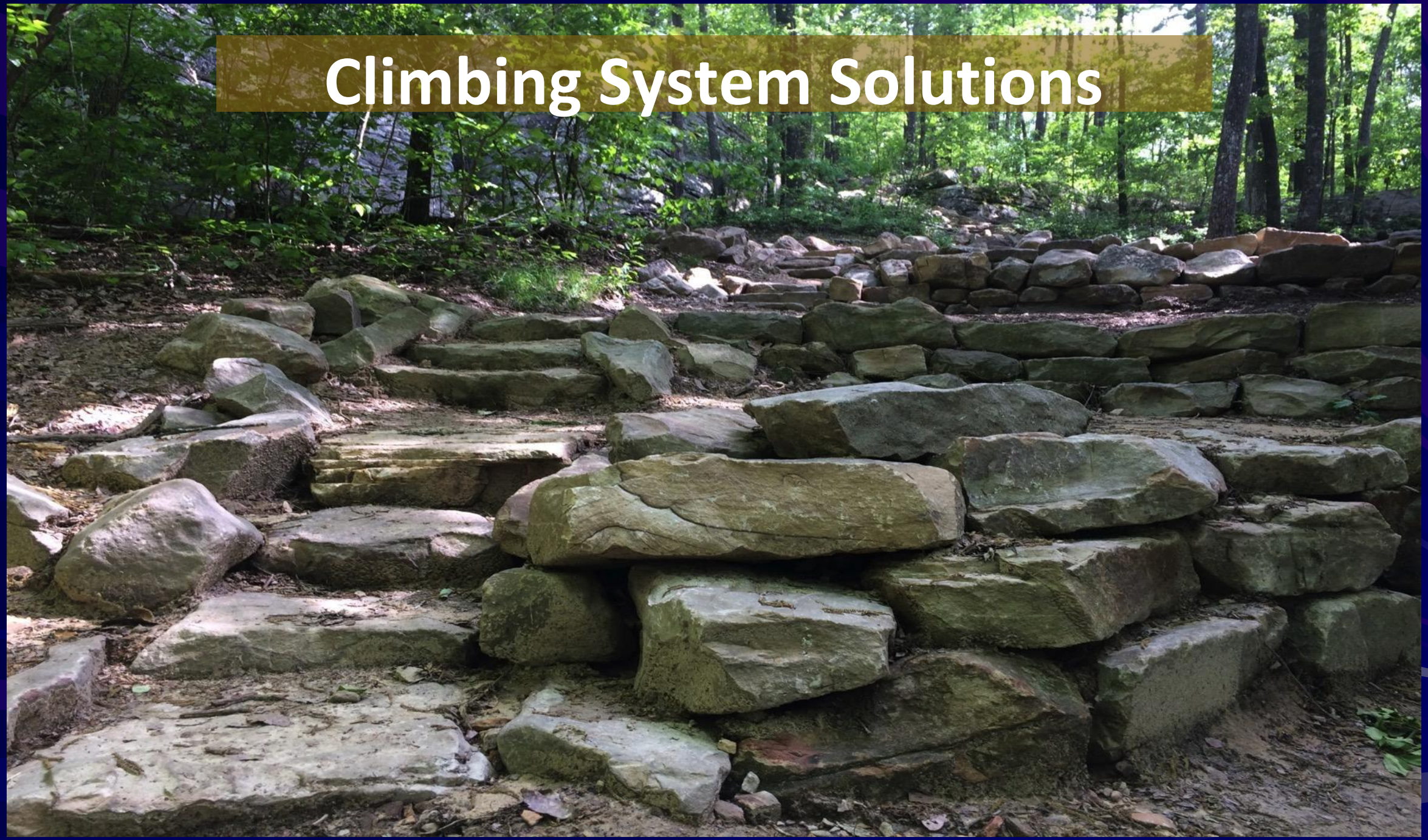
Contracted Crews

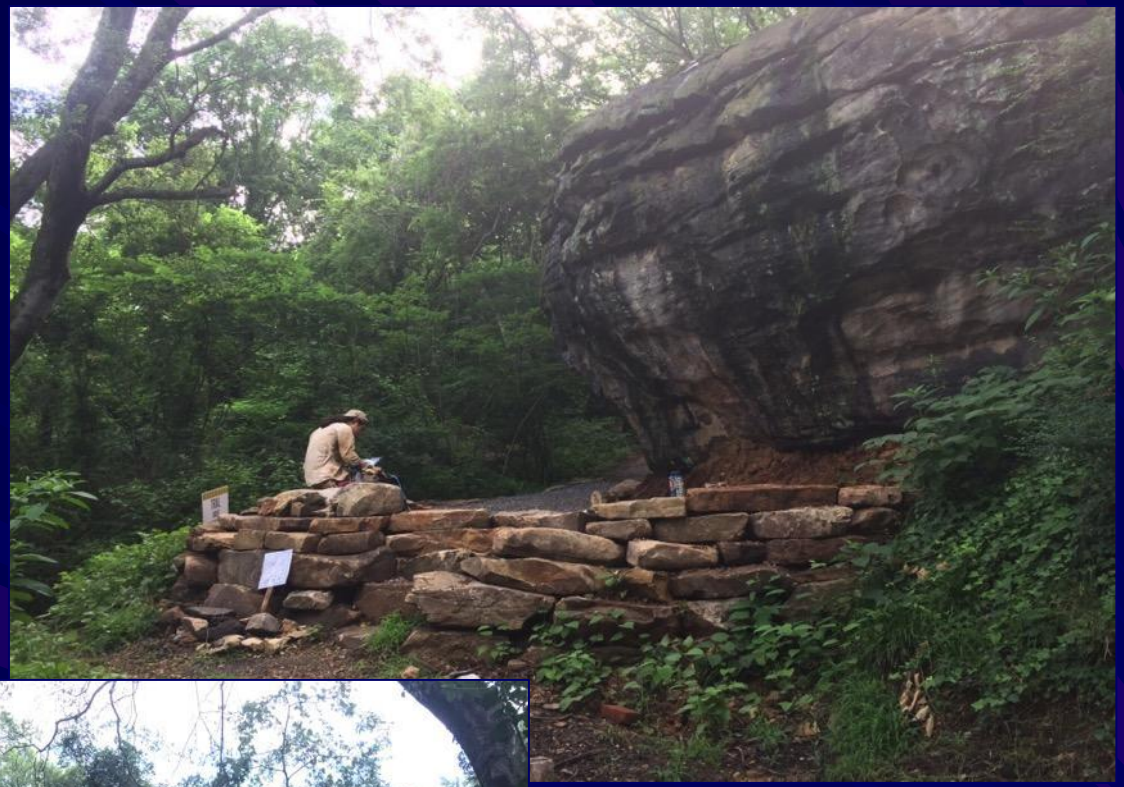
Structures

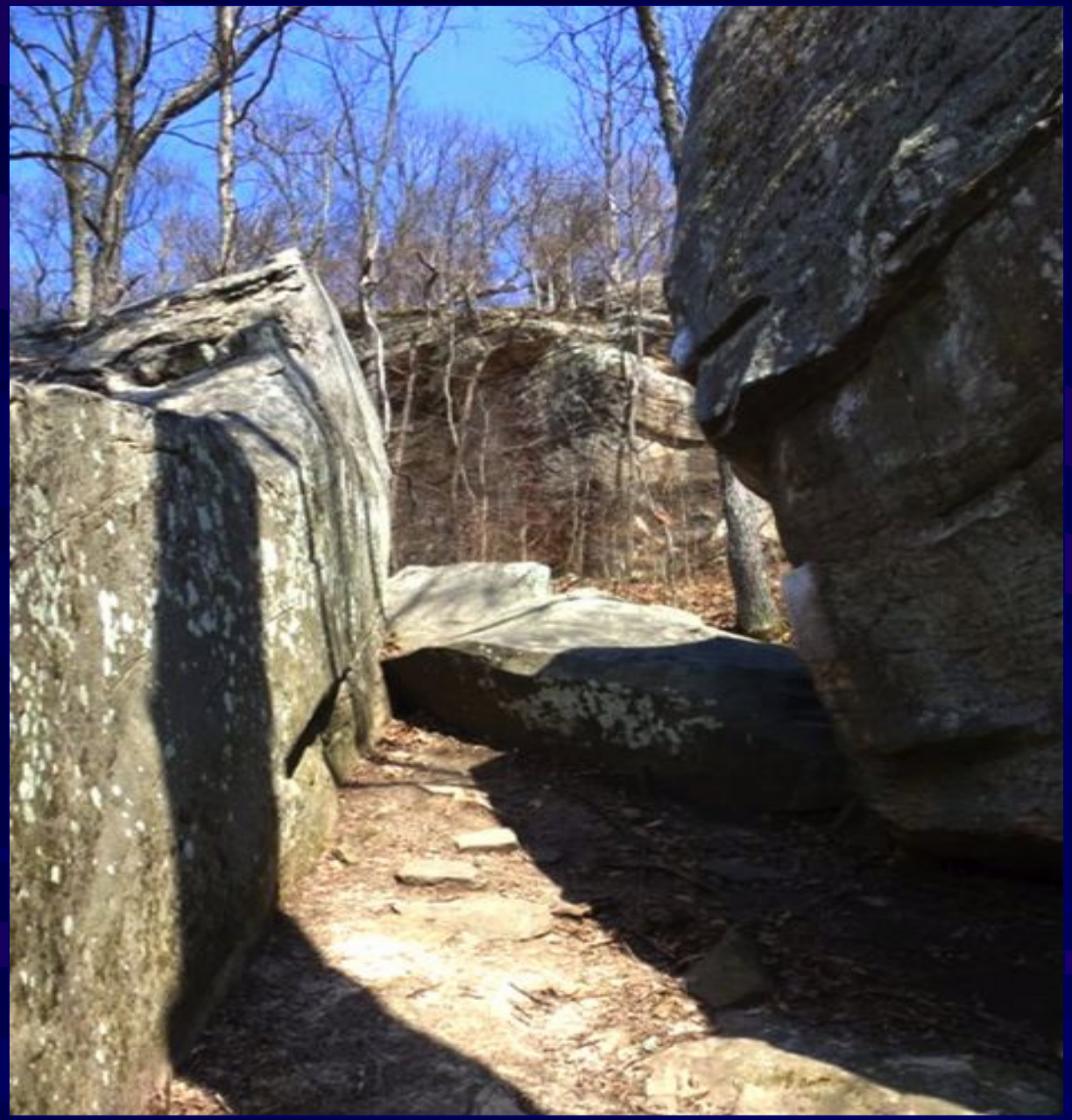
Successful Trails

- Direct, efficient, obvious
- Sustainable and/or hardened
- Well-drained
- Leveraging established use patterns: triage vs. reroute
- Plays into a complete system: express trails and cliff trails

Climbing System Solutions







Take Your Time,
Do It Right

Size Matters

Be Safe Out There!

RUMNEY CLIMBERS ASSOCIATION

ACCESS FUND

ACCESS FUND Jeep

CONSERVATION TEAM

FOREST SERVICE
U S
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE