



Ohio Climbers Coalition

Courtney Curtner
President



- Established in 2013
- All volunteer run organization led by a seven person Board of Directors and four regional coordinators
- There are currently 177 Access Fund/ Ohio Climbers Coalition members

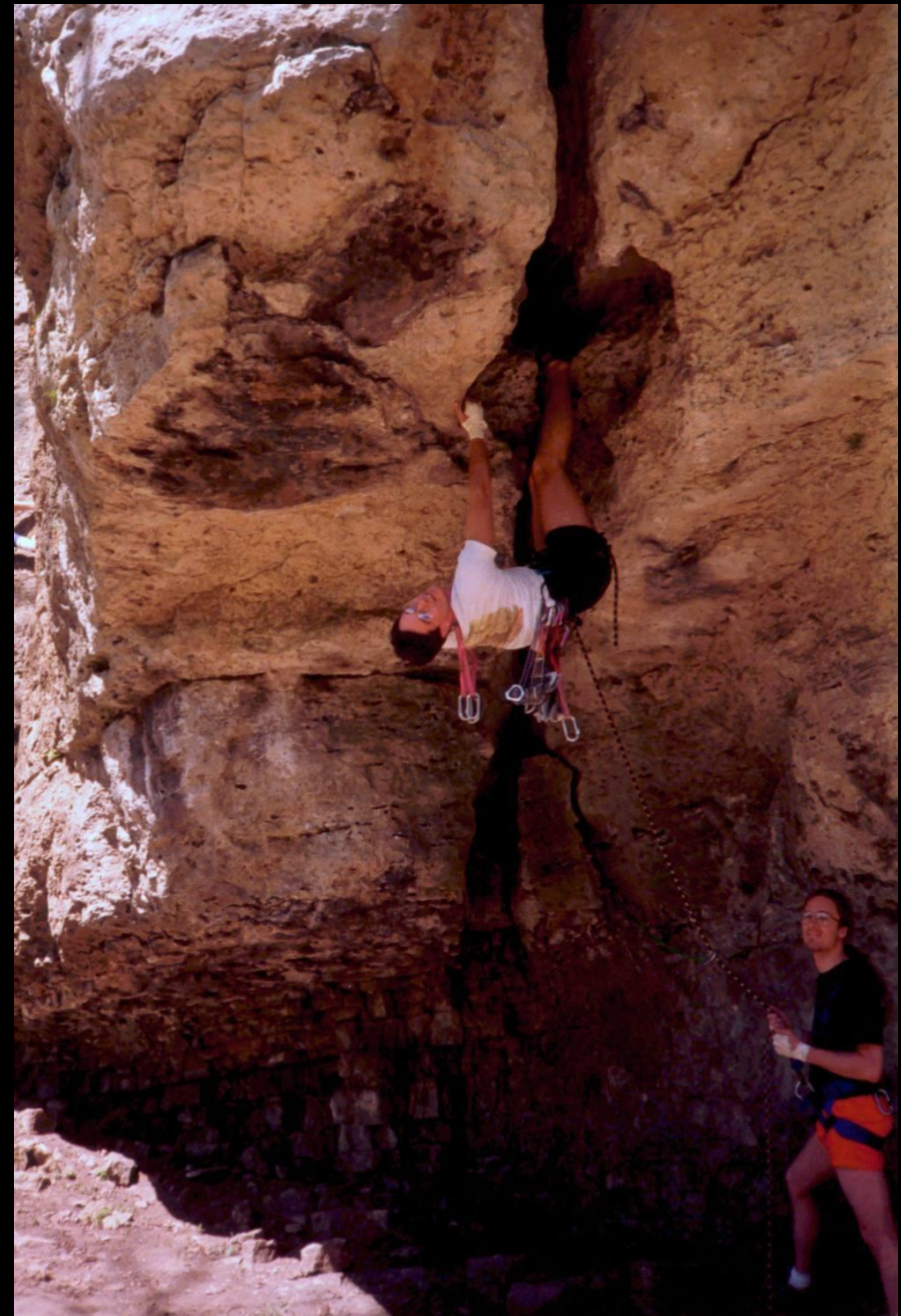
Mad River Gorge & Nature Preserve

- Located in Springfield, Ohio
- Property owned by the Clark County Park District
- Opened May 21, 2017
- 91 acre property that includes cliffs on the north and south side of the Mad River
- There are currently over 130 sport, trad, and bouldering routes established on the Southside



Brief History of the MRG

- Though the MRG is now protected for generations to come, portions of the property used to be an illegal dumping ground for many in the area.
- Climbing was popular at the old “Springfield Gorge” from the 70s- 90s until an accident caused property owners to restrict access to the walls on the Northside



*Photo from Mountain Project user Tony B.

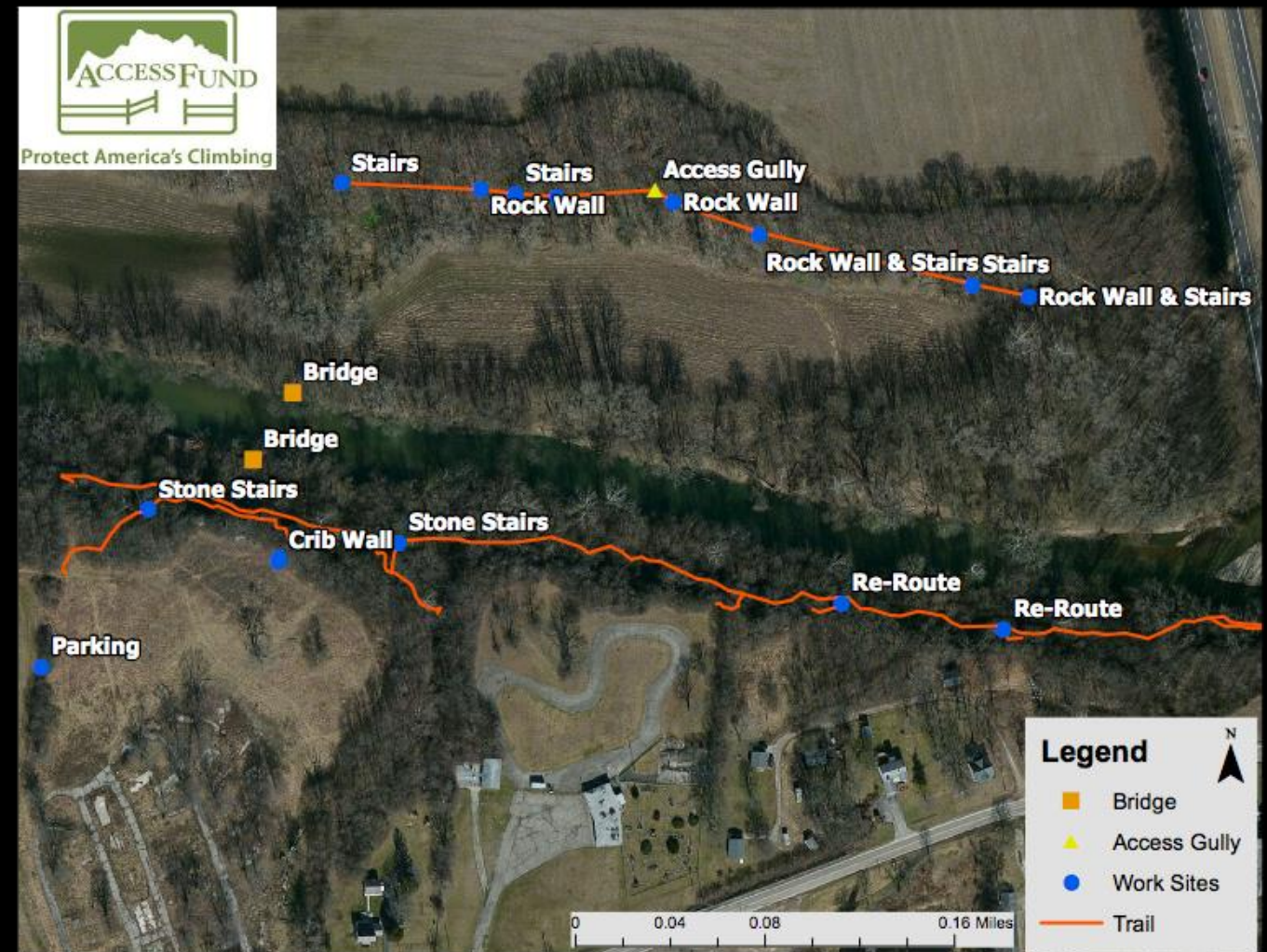
Purchasing Land for a New Park

- Clark County Park District received an \$800,000 Clean Ohio Conservation Grant to purchase land and remove invasive honeysuckle from the park
 - 25% match of funds necessary for the grant to be approved
- The Ohio Climbers Coalition has committed to provide at least 2,400 volunteer hours to help with the improvements at the Mad
 - 1 volunteer hour = \$15 in matching funds



Getting the Park Ready for the Public

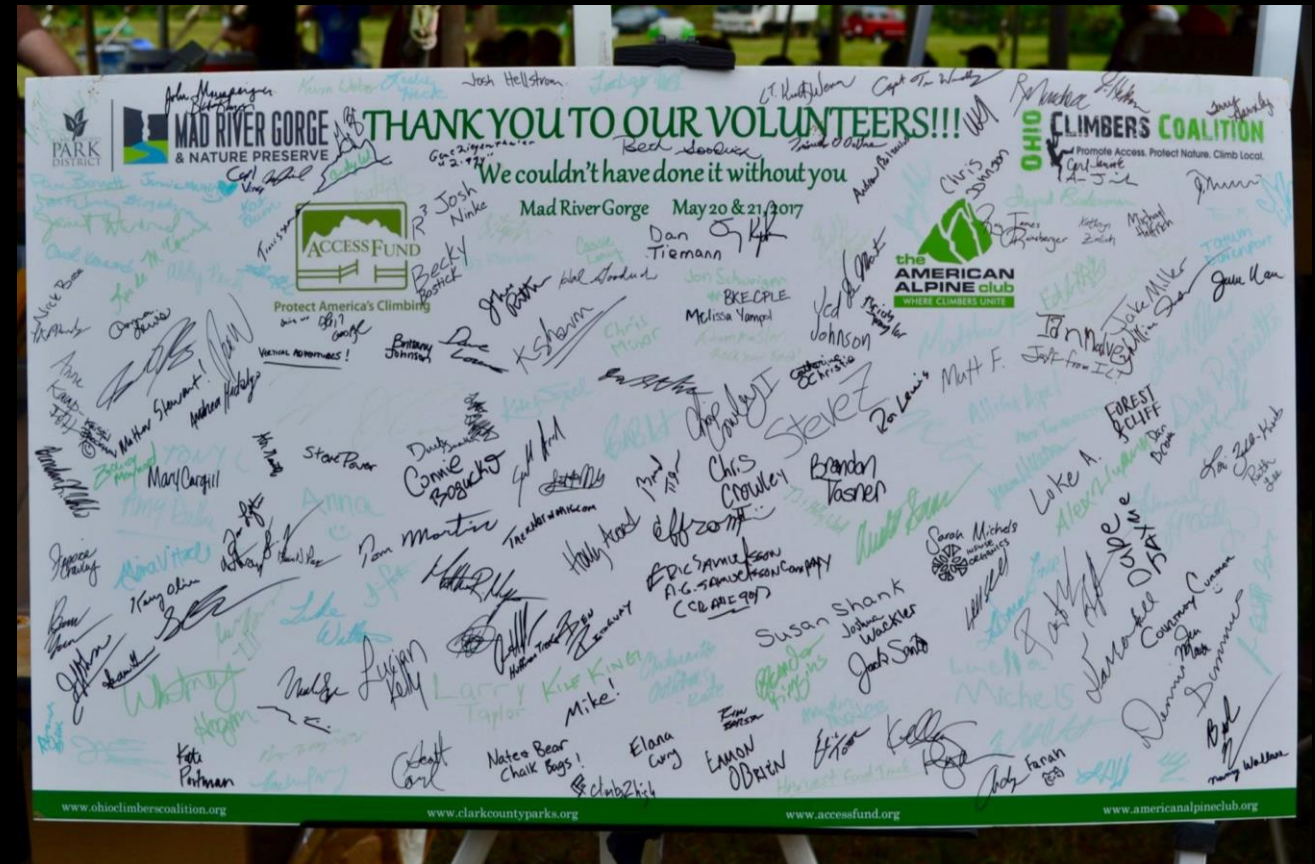
- With help from the Access Fund, we created a plan for the park that included locating access points and retaining walls
- Our workdays before the park opening focused on the following:
 - CLEANUP!
 - Main stairwell construction
 - Trail development
 - Rebolting and new route development





2017 Mad River Gorge Adopt-a-Crag

- At our 2017 Adopt-a-Crag event, over 200 volunteers and the AF Conservation Team East:
 - Helped remove over 125,000 pounds of trash
 - Developed trails to climbing areas
 - Removed invasive honeysuckle plants
 - Continued work on the main stairwell
 - Constructed a kiosk to help guide visitors at the park
- In this one work day, we put in 1365 volunteer work hours
 - $1,365 \text{ hours} \times \$15/\text{hour} = \$49,500$ towards the grant match for the Clark County Park District!





Before (Winter 2017)



After (Summer 2017)



Mad River Gorge Grand Opening

May 21, 2017



2018 Mad River Gorge Projects

- In 2018, we've continued our work at the Gorge, hosting smaller monthly Adopt-a-Crag events.
- In April, we finished our first retaining wall to help with erosion issues at the popular Amusement Wall.
- On September 29th- 30th, we are hosting our next major Adopt-a-Crag event at the Mad River Gorge as we continue our stewardship work at the park.



Summer 2017



Spring 2018



Future of the Mad River Gorge

- In August, the Clark County Park District officially acquired the Northside property, doubling the size of the Mad River Gorge
- After a pedestrian bridge is constructed over the Mad River, the OCC will be working to install anchors and bolts to reopen climbing in this area
 - Estimated opening for Northside- November 2019
- We will continue to maintain trails, assist with trash cleanup efforts, and monitor all climbing areas at the Gorge.

What have we learned?

- Developing strong partnerships can help get a lot of work completed
- Grant money + dedicated volunteers = Big changes
 - We have received grants from the Access Fund, American Alpine Club, and Patagonia to fund a variety of projects at the Mad. These funds have been used to:
 - Rebolt historic routes at the Gorge
 - Build retaining walls to improve erosion issues
 - Construct stairs to minimize damage to the area and provide easier access to climbing walls (This project will be happening September 29th)
- Never lose sight of the end goal
 - Ohio climbers had been working to get this climbing area opened since the early days of the Springfield Gorge
 - Though it has taken decades to accomplish, we now have this beautiful area for all to enjoy