

# VERTICAL TIMES

NEWS FOR  
CLIMBING  
ADVOCATES

FALL-WINTER 2020 | VOLUME 118

# THE GREATEST THREAT TO CLIMBING YOU'VE NEVER HEARD ABOUT

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THE NATIONAL PUBLICATION OF



Protect America's Climbing



2020 has been one long year of suck. A pandemic, racial injustice, fires, and hurricanes. We were locked down for weeks or months on end, unable to spend time with the people who we care for the most. And we've lost many friends and icons who've passed on.

These challenges take a toll that can sneak up on us over time. Even though we might feel like our strength is waning in these uncertain times, I know we're resilient. Many of us have turned to climbing and outdoor recreation over the last few months to manage stress and focus on our physical and mental health. Millions of people all over the country have embraced the outdoors like never before, and climbing is a big part of that picture.

Maybe more Americans are venturing outside simply because we can't sit at a bar or spend time in the climbing gym, but I believe there is something else going on. When it feels like the world or our lives are spiraling out of control, climbers often throw ourselves at big objectives—because we know our ultimate success or failure depends on our own strength and resilience. When we're 20 miles in the backcountry on an alpine face, we have to rely on ourselves, and the world around us fades into the background. When we're topping out a highball boulder problem, we don't have time to think about the latest news cycle. We're ultimately in control of our own fate, and we have to focus.

We can bring those lessons home and put them to work as we look to the future. With a bit of focus and commitment, we all have the power to contribute to a better world. Even small gestures, small action steps, renew our sense of hope and create momentum in our community.

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Right now, there are some concrete things we can all do as climbers to make a difference. First and foremost, we can't blame new climbers for wanting to share in the experiences we love. We all need to be kind to each other at the crags. We feel the profound, transformative impact that climbing can have on our lives, and that experience doesn't belong to us alone.

We also need to recognize that our climbing areas are buckling under the pressure as so many people enjoy them. And we have to step up to protect the places we love. That means we have to pick up more trash, and we have to be more vigilant about staying on the trails, spreading ourselves out, and minimizing our own personal impacts on the environment. And we need to volunteer our time and energy to make sure we all enjoy access to these amazing places in the years to come.

At the end of the day, it feels good to give back. But it also renews our sense of control and impact. We can make a difference. And we can take that lesson and apply it to all different kinds of advocacy—from the halls of Washington, D.C., to local crags all around the country. Advocacy works, and just like access to the outdoors, it is more important now than ever before.

Start by taking one step forward, and go from there. I can promise you'll feel better.

Chris Winter  
Executive Director

*On the cover: Rocktober in Yosemite's high country, Tuolumne. Endria on the final climb of the day at the Knobs. Yosemite, Me-Wuk Lands | © L. Renee Blount / IG: Urbanclimbr*

# What the Election Results Mean for Climbing

Nearly 150 million Americans just exercised their right to vote in one of the most hotly contested elections of our generation. So, now that the dust has at least partially settled, what do the election results mean for climbers? Here are our top four takeaways for climbing.

## 1. We have a good shot at restoring Bear Ears National Monument and the integrity of the Antiquities Act.

With the change in administration comes an opportunity to restore Bears Ears National Monument, and we will be pushing the Biden Administration to honor the cultural legacy of the Native American tribes, as well as protect the outstanding recreational values.

In 2017, President Trump issued a proclamation that eviscerated Bears Ears National Monument and left two dramatically smaller, isolated parcels on the map. Access Fund challenged that decision in federal court, because it threatened world-class climbing opportunities and undermined the integrity of the Antiquities Act—including many other climbing areas in national monuments. That litigation is still pending in court, but we now have the opportunity to settle this issue outside of court by pushing for a reversal of President Trump's 2017 executive order.

## 2. We have a historic opportunity to put America back to work protecting public lands.

Although control of the Senate is still up in the air, broad bipartisan support for public lands and job creation give us a historic opportunity to push a forward-thinking job-creation program through Congress.

Access Fund is working with our allies on Capitol Hill to promote a modern-day Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) as a perfect way to create green jobs, help small businesses, and stimulate local communities that have taken a huge hit from the pandemic—all while restoring and protecting public lands. Earlier this year, U.S. Rep. Joe Neguse (D-CO) and U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR) introduced bills that would dedicate \$9 billion to a new CCC program that would also ensure that the jobs and the benefits of the conservation groups are shared equitably across socioeconomic and racial classifications. Similarly, U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin (D-IL) introduced a bill that would allocate \$55 billion over five years and put 1 million Americans to work. These are exactly the kinds of proposals that can unify Americans through job creation, social justice, and public lands stewardship.

## 3. We must continue to fight for climate change legislation.

Joe Biden wants to see the United States reach net-zero emissions by 2050, which would require a clean-energy revolution. For our country to tackle the climate crisis and transition from fossil fuels, America's public lands must play a critical role in preserving large, intact landscapes that are resilient to the impacts of a changing climate.

The Biden Administration will have opportunities to create change through executive action, but the scale of the problem calls for Congressional leadership and support. Access Fund will continue working to build bipartisan support for protecting the climate and America's public lands, while expanding outdoor recreation and making sure we all share equitably in the benefits of the transition to a clean-energy future.

## 4. We have our work cut out for us restoring balance to public lands management.

The presidential change means a change in leadership for our land management agencies, which we hope will restore balance to public lands management. Attacks on the implementation of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) over the last four years, coupled with a slew of unconfirmed agency leaders, fast-tracked unmitigated energy development and cut the American public out of decisions about public lands.

Although we do not yet know who will lead the Department of the Interior, the National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service, and other key agencies, Access Fund will be pushing to reinvigorate our land management agencies with a commitment to a balanced and open public process that involves the American public in key decisions that impact the future of public lands.

*Access Fund is a nonpartisan organization, and for almost three decades we have worked with policymakers and lawmakers on both sides of the aisle who care about protecting public lands and the environment, promoting outdoor recreation, and leaving a legacy for future generations of climbers and outdoor enthusiasts.*

*The White House is located on ancestral lands of Nacotchtank (Anacostan) and Piscataway.*

# THE FIGHT FOR PUBLIC LANDS

## THE LATEST BUZZ

*Climbing advocates protest mining operations at Oak Flat, ancestral lands of Akimel O'odham (Upper Pima) and Hohokam. © Michael Schennum*

The fight for America's public lands is a long one, but we've had some great victories in the last few months, thanks to your support. Be sure to check out the opposite page for the latest on Bears Ears. Here's what you need to know.

### Major Win for the Climbing Community in Moab

After sustained advocacy from the climbing community, conservation organizations, businesses, and local governments, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announced it has canceled its plans to auction more than 85,000 acres of recreation-rich land around Moab, Utah, for oil and gas leasing. Access Fund sent out a call to the climbing advocacy community, and more than 5,000 climbers from around the country responded, pressuring the BLM to cancel the auction, which would have jeopardized Moab's world-class recreation, the environment, cultural resources, and the local economy. Although we won this fight, we need climbers to write to their congressional representatives and ask them to reform the antiquated laws that allow the BLM broad discretion to lease our favorite climbing, biking, hiking, and camping areas.

### How the Great American Outdoors Act Could Improve Climbing

With help from the climbing community, the Great American Outdoors Act, one of the most important conservation bills of our lifetime, was signed into law—and now Access Fund is working to secure some of those funds to improve climbing areas. There are two critical parts to this landmark law—one permanently funds the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), and the other invests billions of dollars in critical repairs at our national parks, forests, and other public lands. In total, this means up to \$2.8 billion a year invested to expand, maintain, and improve public lands. Right now, we are working with land management agencies to allocate some of this

new funding to improve climbing areas and expand climbing opportunities around the country. As an accredited land trust, Access Fund regularly taps into the LWCF program to help us buy new or threatened climbing areas, and our traveling Conservation Teams are well positioned to leverage these new funds to repair and maintain America's climbing areas.

### The Fight for Oak Flat Isn't Over Yet

This year marks the 15th anniversary of Access Fund's ongoing fight—alongside Native American tribes, environmental groups, and local climbing organizations—to save Oak Flat in Arizona from being destroyed by mining. Although a land exchange bill was passed in a shady backroom deal in 2015, the Forest Service is still legally required to complete an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the mining operation before the public land at Oak Flat can be conveyed to the mining company. Access Fund, tribes, local citizens, and environmental groups have mobilized strong opposition to the draft EIS, which does not adequately analyze the potential impacts to air, water, cultural resources, neighboring communities, and the local recreation economy. At the same time, we've put our support behind the Save Oak Flat Act, a bill that would repeal the land exchange altogether.

*Sign up for Access Fund's Policy Digest email to stay current on the latest in the fight for public lands.*  
[accessfund.org/policydigest](https://accessfund.org/policydigest)

# Access Fund Wraps Up Arguments in Bears Ears Lawsuit, Awaits Decision

After more than two years of litigation, Access Fund has finished the first round of arguments in its lawsuit to defend the original boundaries of Bears Ears National Monument in southeast Utah, a sacred landscape to Native Americans and home to world-renowned rock climbing. At the time we went to print, a critical decision could be issued by the federal district court in Washington, D.C., at any time.

President Trump’s December 2017 executive order reducing the monument by 85%, to open it to energy development, threatens nearly 40% of climbing areas within the original boundaries. Access Fund, along with several Native American tribes and conservation groups, sued the Trump Administration to defend Bears Ears National Monument from this attack.

Throughout this lengthy legal battle, Access Fund has asserted that President Trump does not have the authority under the Antiquities Act and the Property Clause of the United States Constitution to reduce national monuments. That power is reserved by Congress.

“The court’s decision on Bears Ears is a pivotal moment in the greater fight for public lands,” says Access Fund Executive Director Chris Winter. “We’re gaining momentum, and Access Fund and the climbing community are proud to support Native American tribes in their work to protect this incredible landscape.”

The Antiquities Act has protected many iconic climbing areas—including Joshua Tree (now a national park), Grand Teton (now a national park), and Devils Tower (a national monument)—

and the climbing experience in these areas would look very different today without their protected status. The Antiquities Act gives a president the authority to proclaim a national monument, but it does not give a president the authority to revoke or modify one. Only Congress can take that step. Thus, national monuments enjoy a protected status that is largely insulated from political attacks by changing administrations.

If the court agrees on this point, Bears Ears could be restored.

On the other hand, if President Trump’s action is allowed to stand, shifting political winds and changing administrations could threaten national monuments across the country, severely undermining the Antiquities Act, threatening climbing areas, and eroding the very fabric of America’s public lands system.

No matter which way this ruling goes, the case will likely end up in the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals. Federal litigation can be a slow and time-consuming process, but Access Fund, along with the tribes and other partners who have joined in this fight, are committed to seeing this through to the end.

“The entire Bears Ears landscape deserves monument status and protections,” says Access Fund Policy Director Erik Murdock. “This unique landscape would not be the same without protected traditional values and sacred sites, an intact ecosystem, and well-managed recreation opportunities. Climbers value these intrinsic elements of the Bears Ears landscape, and Access Fund has fought hard to protect them.”

We will keep you posted on any updates on the case.



Bears Ears National Monument | Ute (Nuu-agma-tuvu-pu) and Pueblo Territories © Tara Kerzhner

# HOW COVID-19 IS CRUSHING CLIMBING AREAS

Right now, crags and boulder fields around the country are seeing a record number of visitors— with some locations reporting up to a 300% increase—and climbing areas are buckling under the pressure. We're getting disturbing reports from our Conservation Teams and local advocates, who are seeing rampant impacts from coast to coast, including overcrowding, trash piling up, newly eroded trails, crushed and dying plant life, and more human waste.

When it comes to surviving the pandemic with our spirits intact, climbers (and other folks who enjoy the great outdoors) have a leg up. One consistent message we're hearing from health-care professionals is that we're safer outside, in the open air. With a few extra precautions, we're still able to get out and enjoy the sport we love and feel some semblance of normal.

But we aren't alone. The pandemic has created a huge rush of people heading outdoors to recreate. With the majority of climbing gyms still operating at limited capacity, we are spending more time outside, and crags are feeling the crunch. We are also sharing these spaces with a lot more people who are camping, hiking, biking, and paddling—which means more cars, more trash, and more crowds.

Even before COVID-19, climbing areas were struggling under the rapid growth of our sport. Over the past decade, the popularity of climbing has skyrocketed, but many crags were developed when the sport was still fringe.

"Most climbing areas simply don't have the recreation infrastructure—like formal trails, toilets, ample parking, etc.—to handle so many visitors without serious impacts to

the environment," says Access Fund Stewardship Director Ty Tyler. "Now, as the pandemic has pushed even more people into the great outdoors, we've reached a critical tipping point."

Access Fund is working quickly to ramp up our stewardship and outdoor education initiatives to:

- ▶ Send more resources to help our Conservation Teams and local climbing organizations restore damage at crags.
- ▶ Help transition indoor climbers into responsible outdoor stewards.
- ▶ Foster continued minimum-impact knowledge in seasoned climbers.
- ▶ Welcome all climbers to the crags, while stressing our responsibility to take care of the places we love.

*But we need your help. Now, more than ever before, we all have a responsibility to step up and protect the places we love, whether you have been climbing for 20 years or this is your first day outside. Donate today at [accessfund.org/donate](https://accessfund.org/donate) to help Access Fund expand our education and stewardship initiatives—before impacts to our climbing areas become irreversible.*



Trash piling up in Red Rock Canyon, Nevada, ancestral lands of Southern Paiute and Newe (Western Shoshone) © Irene Yee

## Troubling News Across the Country

If you've been reading the headlines, this story is unfolding all across the nation:

- ▶ *Trouble on the Trails: Forest Service Grapples with Crowds, Trash and Human Waste*
- ▶ *Rec hot spots 'overrun' with visitors, many acting badly*
- ▶ *Litter, graffiti and vandalism are increasing at state parks, national forests across Colorado*
- ▶ *Summertime Visitors Swarm State Parks and Budgets*

# 5 Ways

## TO EASE OVERCROWDED CRAGS DURING COVID-19



*A crowded crag on the Colorado Front Range can see lines of three to four parties waiting for routes. © Brittany Hamilton*

Climbing outdoors offers a pretty amazing way to stay sane during these difficult times—especially when medical experts agree that we’re all safer outside, in the open air. But let’s face it: Everyone and their mom is heading outside to recreate right now, and the crags and boulders are so crowded that it’s starting to impact the climbing experience, the environment, and access.

**Here are a few simple things you can do to ease overcrowding:**

1. **Embrace the crags less traveled.** There’s definitely something enticing about ticking off all of the 5-star routes in your area, but the “classic” routes are the ones most likely to be slammed, especially during peak hours. A 3-star tour can be just as fulfilling and offer even more adventure—plus, route stars are subjective anyway. The farther afield you go, the more solitude you’ll find and the more you’ll alleviate overcrowding.
2. **Perfect your timing.** Climbing at popular crags during peak hours—weekend mornings and weekdays after work—is a recipe for overcrowding. Try the weekend afternoon shift. You might be surprised that you can show up around 1 p.m. and find lots of folks leaving. Or try climbing midweek, in the mornings, for a more peaceful experience. With a little forethought, you can enjoy a more responsible and less crowded climbing experience.
3. **Stay flexible.** Do some research ahead of time and have a couple of backup options if the parking area at your first-choice crag is slammed. We’d even recommend having backup activities as well. Bring your bike or your hiking boots and embrace some cross-training if the climbing area is too crowded. You could probably even squeeze in a ride in the morning and hit the afternoon shift for climbing. It’s all about being flexible.
4. **Follow health and safety protocols.** Land managers are aware of how crowded climbing and other recreation areas are right now, and they are watching our behaviors closely. Make sure you bring a mask, and if the crag is crowded, wear it. Even if you’re comfortable without a mask, others might not be comfortable, including the land manager who controls access.
5. **Be kind.** Be patient, kind, and respectful of other people’s space. We’re all stressed right now, and everyone exercises different levels of COVID caution, depending on their own personal situation. Err on the side of giving more space—we can still be friendly and social from 6 feet away.

### Did You Know?

Parking is one of the leading causes of climbing access issues. Many climbing areas are located in tight canyons or accessible only from the side of the road, where parking is limited and can be dangerous. Climbing areas that are accessible through residential areas often share parking with other users in the neighborhood. Illegally or dangerously parked cars are one of the first issues that land managers flag. Do your homework to learn where it is OK to park. If the parking area is full, climb somewhere else instead of parking illegally.

# Why Route Names Matter

Climbing has a long, quirky, sometimes hilarious, and often vulgar history of naming routes. Inside jokes, digs at other climbers, shock-value verbiage, and linguistically creative ways of sticking it to the man are the norm—all reflective of the counterculture spirit that has long been emblematic of the climbing world. Many climbers still celebrate this independent ethos as a means of keeping that counterculture experience alive and setting the climbing world apart.

But our community has been asking some tough questions around the route-naming legacy. Is it possible to take names too far? Should the community do something about it, or is that a slippery slope toward censorship? Does the first ascensionist have a right to name a route whatever they want, or is it ultimately up to community consensus?

What is sometimes lost in these endless online debates, is why and how route names can hurt individual climbers and impact their experience at the crag. We'd like to share some of those stories, in hopes of facilitating discussion and reflection on route names.



© Nikki Smith

## Ashleigh Thompson's Story

**Climber, Ph.D. Student, Red Lake Ojibwe, She/Hers**

The first time I realized route names could hurt was when I discovered a route called “Trail of Tears” featured on the Mountain Project home page. The Trail of Tears was one of the most egregious acts against Native Americans in United States history. Thousands of Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Seminole, and Creek people were forcibly removed from their homelands and marched west of the Mississippi River at the hands of the U.S. government. As a result, thousands of Indigenous people lost their lives. To see a route named after this atrocious event displays ignorance, apathy, racism, or a combination of all three. Would naming a route in Red Rocks “Las Vegas Shooting 2017” be acceptable?

I was also appalled to come across a route called “Squaws in Heat.” Squaw is a derogatory term for an Indigenous woman, and the name perpetuates violence against a population of women who already face the highest rates of violence in North America. Indigenous women are murdered at a rate 10 times the national average, and 84% of Native women face violence in their lifetimes.

These route names—and the acceptance of them by the climbing community—are hurtful and dangerous. They uphold violence against Indigenous people, and I would hope that in the future, climbers can use forethought, intelligence, and compassion in route-naming.

## Lor Sabourin's Story

**Climber, Guide, He/Them**

Last year I was guiding a group of college climbers in Joshua Tree National Park at Dihedral Rock. There is a route on the right side of the wall named “Thin Line.” On Mountain Project, it is named “Thin Line (Limp Wristed Faggot).” The students had learned about Mountain Project earlier in the trip and often consulted it throughout the day. When they saw the route name, they immediately began using it and calling each other “limp-wristed faggots.” I did my best to stop them, but the damage was done. The route name had given them permission to use hateful language in a joking way.

As a queer guide, this made my work environment feel toxic and made it much harder to teach the skills they needed throughout that day. Holding onto that route name for “historical value” allowed a future generation of climbers to learn that the climbing community tolerates hateful language and behavior. Getting rid of those names sends a powerful message about the type of climbing community we want to have in the future—one that is welcoming to folks from any background.





City of Rocks National Reserve, Idaho, on Shoshone-Bannock lands | © Nikki Smith



© Nikki Smith

## Irene Yee's Story

### Climber, Photographer (@Ladylockoff), She/Her

I was climbing in Tennessee with a friend, when a man came up and started helping us distinguish the routes in the area. He began listing them off, and I was stopped in my tracks by some of the racist and problematic names. That moment solidified something in me: Keeping these names around allows these words to proliferate and be used in a casual way. The man did not even give pause as he said the words like it was his laundry list. We have a chance to contribute to the dismantling of a power structure that continuously oppresses groups based on race, sex, and sexual orientation. We can make sure words and concepts that should have died out with a previous generation do not have a chance to proliferate.

## Identifying Harmful Route Names

Although blatantly bigoted or cruel route names may be an easy call for revision, many route names fall into a gray area. But there is a line—there is no place for racism, misogyny, homophobia, or other forms of bigotry within our community.

- ▶ When you reflect on a given name, does it go beyond humor or grossness and instead dip into the realm of racism, homophobia, or misogyny—like the use of slurs, hate speech, or references to historical trauma?
- ▶ Is the route name just generally provocative, or does it have a specific target, singling out a particular group of people? What is the effect, intentional or not, of this targeting? Does the name associate violence, degradation, or other forms of mistreatment with this group?
- ▶ Was the route named in an earlier era, perhaps innocuous when first named but now considered outdated? Can the language be updated to reflect the original intent using modern phrasing?
- ▶ Has the route name caught the attention of land managers, landowners, or other local-community members? Is it contributing to negative perceptions of climbers?

## Moving Forward Together

We can maintain climbing's counterculture roots and celebrate our independent spirit without using language that harms fellow climbers. Our legacy does not need to include cruel, bigoted, or biased route names—however unintentional that harm may have been. Let's do the work to correct this harmful language and create a just future for the sport we love. Access Fund is here to support our fellow climbers as we push forward in this work together. Want to continue the discussion?

➤ [Reach out to taimur@accessfund.org](mailto:taimur@accessfund.org) with thoughts and questions.

# Climbers Buy New Cliff at the Gunks

Gunks Climbers' Coalition (GCC) and Access Fund are pleased to announce the purchase and opening of a new section of cliff line in the Shawangunk Mountains of New York. The newly acquired property includes 1,000 feet of the Millbrook Mountain cliff line, including the historic Ant Lion Crag. This acquisition adds a new, backcountry climbing area to the Gunks, offering a uniquely remote experience that boasts traditional climbing, top roping, overhangs, vertical faces, and even a little crack climbing—ranging from 5.5 to 5.13.

“We were given a rare opportunity to secure access and protect a beautiful portion of the Shawangunk Ridge,” says GCC Chair Peter Cody. “This acquisition is an important milestone for climbing conservation and will showcase and safeguard the diverse nature of the ridge itself.”

Although there is some historic evidence of climbing on the cliff, dating back to the 1970s, the area has never been officially opened to climbing or route development. This prized section of cliff line, situated along the southern portion of Millbrook

Mountain, was not only privately owned, but also surrounded by other private land, making it inaccessible to the public.

In the spring of 2018, GCC and Access Fund began working in earnest to find a conservation and access solution to secure the property. The organizations partnered with neighboring landowners Robert O'Brien and Kevin Abberton in a unique, three-way purchase to secure the cliff line and the undeveloped forest below, as well as provide public access.

GCC worked with Access Fund to purchase the climbing area, using funds from the Access Fund Climbing Conservation Loan Program (CCLP), and struck a deal with the two private landowners, who purchased additional forested acreage around their existing home sites and agreed to an access easement across their land to make the cliff line publicly accessible. Access will be established via a new trailhead off South Mountain Road and a mile and a half of trail to reach the cliff.

“This was a complex acquisition project that required the collaboration of numerous parties working on their individual pieces of the puzzle,” says Access Fund National Access Director Joe Sambataro. “This partnership allowed us to acquire and permanently conserve a property that was out of reach of each individual buyer alone.”

Ant Lion is the 29th climbing area conserved through the CCLP, which provided \$109,000 to allow GCC to purchase this property. The CCLP is a revolving loan program, which means loan funds will be repaid so that those dollars can be used to open or save other threatened climbing areas. Since the CCLP's inception, Access Fund has loaned \$3.2 million to local climbing communities around the country to secure and permanently conserve climbing areas.

## Community Support Needed

We now need the community's support to raise \$200,000 toward the Millbrook Mountain Conservation Initiative. Donations will go directly to the acquisition, long-term stewardship, and site-improvement costs for a new access road, parking area, trailhead amenities, and construction of a new trail to the cliff. GCC will notify climbers when the parking and trail system are open for public access, which are expected to be completed by fall 2021.

➤ *Donate today at [gunksclimbers.org/antlion](https://gunksclimbers.org/antlion)*

*Climbing at Ant Lion crag is located on ancestral lands of Munsee Lenape. © Chris Vultaggio*

# Restoring the Popular Cathedral Ledge Approach

The Access Fund–Jeep Conservation Teams have just finished a massive, three-month effort to stabilize the approach trail and staging areas at the popular Thin Air Face at Cathedral Ledge in New Hampshire’s Mount Washington Valley.

With a high concentration of excellent, moderate routes and stunning views, Thin Air Face is a beloved spot for New England trad climbers and local guiding companies. However, the wooden structures installed 15 years ago to shore up the approach trail to this popular area have begun to deteriorate. Without intervention by professional trail crews, these timber failures would have led to severe damage at numerous points along the trail.

“Several sections of trail were hanging on by a thread, supported by timber structures that were rotting out,” says Access Fund Northeast Regional Director Mike Morin. “The crews on the ground did great work, replacing timbers and armoring the slope with stone structures to prevent large-scale erosion and severe damage.”

The Conservation Team East crew arrived at Cathedral Ledge in July to provide their expertise to this large-scale stabilization effort. Over the course of the three-month project, they worked side by side with Appalachian Mountain Club trail crews, the White Mountain Trail Collective, NorthWoods Stewardship Center crews, and the Access Fund–Jeep Conservation Team National crew.

The crews focused on removing the rotting timbers and replacing them with native-stone structures, as well as hardening the trail from top to bottom to reduce erosion along the entire slope.

Crews harvested large granite blocks from a nearby talus slope, split them into manageable sizes for building, and hoisted them into the air using a cable highline system to safely move the blocks across the work site to their final

destinations. The highline system allowed crews to efficiently and safely move building material that would otherwise be impossible to move due to its mass and the steep, uneven slopes of the work site.

“The quality of the trail work that Access Fund and the White Mountain Trail Collective have done this year is absolutely crucial to the conservation of this place, which is so integral to our community,” says local climber and International Mountain Equipment employee Brady Callahan. “A cliff called Cathedral deserves nothing less than the beautiful granite stairs that will now guide climbers to its base for another century to come.”

Access Fund and visiting crews took extensive safety precautions to ensure a safe working environment during COVID-19. Visiting climbers were able to give the crews socially distant high-fives while keeping their distance from the work site.

This project is made possible with support from the White Mountain Trail Collective and the National Forest Foundation, both of which provided grant funding for a regional trail stewardship effort. Similar work is slated at the Echo Roof area of Whitehorse Ledge next year, as part of this regional effort.

## Help Restore Climbing Areas

*You can support the Access Fund–Jeep Conservation Team’s work to restore climbing areas by donating today at [www.accessfund.org/donate](http://www.accessfund.org/donate).*



Conservation Team crew working at Cathedral Ledge, ancestral lands of Wabanaki Confederacy, Abenaki/Abénaquis, and Peqawket.  
© Cait Bourgault

# The Greatest Threat to Climbing

## YOU'VE NEVER HEARD ABOUT

*Sawtooth Wilderness in Idaho is located on the ancestral lands of the Shoshone-Bannock.*

In February, a new district ranger, who had arrived in Montana’s Bitterroot National Forest just a few months before, banned climbing bolts and all new route development in the area. There was no public process; there was no opportunity to object.

Though you can find both multipitch alpine test pieces and single-pitch sport crags in the Bitterroots outside of Missoula, the routes are not well-known, perhaps because locals are notoriously tight-lipped. The fact that you’re not sure if you ever want to climb there, however, is precisely what made the sweeping order so dangerous.

National forests in the United States host about 30% of America’s climbing, from backyard crags, like Boulder Canyon, to some of the country’s most iconic climbing areas, like Seneca Rocks, Rumney, the Linville Gorge, Cochise Stronghold, Wild Iris, California’s Needles, and so many more. Yet despite the volume of climbing on U.S. Forest Service land, the agency has no national-level policy establishing climbing as a legitimate use, allowing sustainable management of staging areas and trails, and protecting fixed anchors as a critical safety tool for the sport. This leaves each national forest, of which there are more than 150—and sometimes each individual district within each national forest—to make their own decisions.

Restrictions on climbing at the district or forest level are often put into place to address local conflicts, but their impacts ripple out far beyond the immediate area, for many years to come. District rangers and forest supervisors move among forests frequently as they progress through their careers. When they are faced with tough decisions, they search for guidance on how to make them. Finding none at the national level, they look to their peers.

“If the Bitterroot National Forest can just ban new routes without any public input, why can’t Mount Hood National Forest do that next?” says Access Fund Executive Director Chris Winter. “Without national-level guidance, each individual forest manager’s decisions are important to the entire climbing community. Each individual decision sets a precedent that affects climbing across the entire country.”

*“Without national-level guidance, each decision from each individual forest manager sets a precedent that affects climbing across the entire country.”*

This is how a ban on bolting in a forest you don’t care about becomes a ban in a forest you do care about, and the possible ramifications of this lack of national policy is one of the greatest threats to climbing today.

### Déjà Vu

Just a few decades ago, the climbing community faced a similar threat to climbing on U.S. Forest Service land. In September 1997, the supervisor of Sawtooth National Forest in Idaho banned fixed anchors in the forest’s Wilderness. The following summer, the ban in the Sawtooths became national policy, affecting all Wilderness areas.

The ban set off alarm bells for climbers everywhere and galvanized the entire climbing community. With leadership from Access Fund, the ban was effectively ended with a legislative fix, but national-level guidance legitimizing climbing and fixed anchor use on Forest Service lands never emerged, despite nearly 25 years of effort.

While the 1997 ban on fixed anchors in Wilderness areas riled climbers, the scope of the restrictions was much narrower than what’s at stake today. The bolting bans now being proposed or implemented in individual forests, including the Bitterroots, affect the entire forest, not just Wilderness. This means popular frontcountry and roadside crags could also be caught in the cross fire.

“It’s like the 1990s on steroids,” says Erik Murdock, Access Fund’s policy director. “This is a resurgence in the conflict over fixed anchors, but the big difference is that in the mid-’90s, no one was really concerned about climbing outside of the Wilderness.”

Plenty of people are concerned now, in large part because of the increase in climbers, as well as the increase in overall visits to public lands.

“We are in the era of user conflict,” Murdock says. “We have more climbers, but we also have way more people who mountain bike, backcountry ski, paddle, trail run, and recreate in other ways. We’re all vying for use of the same lands.”



*Mill Creek Canyon in Montana, ancestral lands of Apsaalooké (Crow) and Cheyenne | © Dane Scott*



## 15 of the Most Popular USFS Climbing Areas

There's a vast amount of climbing on USFS lands. Here are just a handful of the most popular.

1. Mount Lemmon, Arizona
2. Bishop, California
3. Holcomb, California
4. Boulder Canyon, Colorado
5. The Fins, Idaho
6. Jackson Falls, Illinois
7. Red River Gorge, Kentucky
8. Mount Charleston, Nevada
9. Rumney, New Hampshire
10. Linville Gorge, North Carolina
11. Maple Canyon, Utah
12. Icicle Canyon, Washington
13. Seneca Rocks, West Virginia
14. Ten Sleep, Wyoming
15. Wild Iris, Wyoming

*The route development ban at Ten Sleep in Wyoming (ancestral lands of Apsaalooké [Crow], Eastern Shoshone, and Cheyenne) could impact climbing in other forests. | © Louis Arealo*

### Forest Supervisors Left Wondering if Fixed Anchors Constitute “Damage”

The fixed anchor ban of the 1990s was based on one forest supervisor's interpretation that fixed anchors constituted “permanent improvements” and “installations” in violation of the Wilderness Act of 1964. The proposed bans on bolting and other fixed anchors today are not directly related to the Wilderness Act, but they still involve individual interpretations of the law, in this case, parts of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), which prohibits “damaging any natural feature or other property of the United States” and “abandoning any personal property.” Land managers are left wondering: Do bolts or other anchors constitute damage or abandoned property?

When forest officials issued a forest-wide ban on new route development in Wyoming's Bighorns, where the controversy over manufactured routes and subsequent bolt-chopping in Ten Sleep got ugly last summer, they justified the act in part by interpreting that bolts do in fact damage the natural features. Forest officials in the Bitterroots made similar interpretations as the foundation for their own ban.

“Right now, each forest is taking a crack at interpreting the Code of Federal Regulations for themselves,” Murdock says. “At Ten Sleep, they made a CFR interpretation. At the Bitterroots, they made a CFR interpretation. They just don't have any guidance.”

The recent CFR interpretations in the Bighorns and in the Bitterroots, where tensions between conservationists had simmered for years, were both levied to address immediate conflicts. But national forests across the country are also wrestling with how climbing and the CFR generally fits into the long-term management of their lands, which will require a hard look at how climbing and CFR intersect. This includes the use of fixed anchors but encompasses much more, including whether unofficial approach trails and staging areas at the base of climbs are legal, given that regulations prohibit “constructing, placing, or maintaining any kind of road, trail, structure ... significant surface disturbance, or other improvement ... without a special-use authorization.”

### Fighting for Long-Term Climbing Access, One Forest at a Time

Management of national forests is guided by planning documents, which can take years to complete and which are infrequently updated. In fact, most national forests currently operate under plans that are decades old, and because they were written in a time before the popularity of climbing exploded, most do not mention climbing at all.

As these plans are being slowly updated, spurred along by a 2012 law that sets the guidelines for how modern plans are developed, forest officials must contend with how to address whole classes of use not addressed before, including climbing but also mountain biking and other recreation.

“These documents are filled with wonky, regulatory language that will impact climbing for 20 or 30 years,” says Katie Goodwin, Access Fund policy analyst and California regional director. “What we've seen in the draft language of many of these plans is that they tend to not address climbing at all, or there's a blanket statement that bans fixed anchors altogether or provides vague language about a permitting process.”

*“These plans tend to not address climbing at all, or there's a blanket statement that bans fixed anchors altogether or provides vague language about a permitting process.”*

Without any assurance from the national level that climbing is a legitimate use of national forests, Goodwin and other Access Fund staff have to spend vast amounts of time tracking the development of individual forest management plans, engaging and building new relationships with forest leaders who frequently turn over, drafting comments, and participating in the public process—all just to preserve the tenuous foothold that climbing should be allowed at all.

In the Southeast, for example, Access Fund has been working for years to make sure that the plan for the Nantahala and Pisgah national forests in North Carolina—

which include Looking Glass, the Linville Gorge, and Whitesides—appropriately addresses climbing. But the draft, released in February 2020, concerns Zachary Lesch-Huie, who serves as Access Fund’s Southeast regional director.

“Right now the draft plan does not reflect all our work and the many specific recommendations that we made,” he says. “You collaborate for eight years, but you still don’t know: Will it result in good climbing management?”

Right now, at least in North Carolina, the answer appears to be no. The plan as proposed could shut down access to the vast majority of the area’s climbing, because of its inflexible approach to unofficial trails, and it also proposes an unrealistic permitting process for placing and maintaining fixed anchors in the forests’ Wilderness areas.

“Climbing was nearly invisible in their previous plan, so we had high hopes we could see some good additions. We spent years going to meetings with Forest Service officials and other interest groups, but the plan that came out was even more regressive than earlier plans,” Lesch-Huie says. “When that happens, you have to ask if they’re really listening. This is one of the most heavily used recreational forests in the country. It desperately needs better management tools for the next 20 years.”

### **We Need a National Policy Now**

While Access Fund will always work to build strong relationships with local land managers, moving past the question of whether to allow climbing and fixed anchors would allow the organization to work on a number of other important issues related to public lands, including sustainable trails, mitigating impacts at the base of climbing areas, raptor protection, and more.

“Each climbing area is distinct, and we’ll always have to negotiate the details of local climbing management plans,” Murdock says. “But we shouldn’t have to negotiate whether fixed anchors can be allowed or whether rock climbing is even a legitimate use.”

Murdock is optimistic that the needed national-level guidance is possible. Over the past decades, Access Fund has built a robust relationship with the national U.S. Forest Service office in D.C. The strength of this relationship is part of the reason Access Fund was able to force a revision to the order that banned bolts and new route development in the Bitterroot National Forest—in just seven days.

*“We shouldn’t have to negotiate whether fixed anchors can be allowed or whether rock climbing is even a legitimate use.”*

“It really speaks to the power of the climbing community and the partnership between the Forest Service and Access Fund,” Murdock says. “It took years to develop those relationships, but it was important exactly for situations like this.”

As soon as Access Fund learned of the ban in the Bitterroots, the organization sent out an action alert calling on climbers everywhere to oppose the order because of the precedent it set and the lack of a public process leading up to its issuance. The result was thousands of letters from all over the country. Fixed anchors are now being allowed with prior authorization while Bitterroot National Forest works toward a climbing management plan.

In the past couple of months, Access Fund has also led an effort to form a U.S. Forest Service Climbing Management Coalition. The group—which includes American Alpine Club, American Mountain Guides Association, NativesOutdoors, and The Wilderness Society—is working to come up with recommended guidelines for the Forest Service that, if adopted, would clarify the legitimacy of climbing activities. If the group succeeds in getting its recommendations adopted, more than climbers will benefit.

“In the end, national-level guidance will save taxpayers money and local Forest Service officials time,” Winter says. “And the consistency and stability it would create would bolster the outdoor recreation economy by allowing rural communities that surround these climbing areas to plan for the future.”

### **What You Can Do Now**

Sign up for action alerts—we’ll be rallying the climbing community soon to push on U.S. Forest Service officials to work with Access Fund on national policy that establishes climbing as a legitimate activity in national forests.

*[➤ Sign up at \[accessfund.org/action\]\(https://accessfund.org/action\).](https://accessfund.org/action)*

*Climbers are currently fighting for fair policies at Linville Gorge in the Nantahala and Pisgah national forests, ancestral lands of ᏅᏍᏉᏞᏍᏔᏚᏗᏪᏛ Tsalaguwetiγi (Cherokee, East). | © Shannon Millsaps*



# News from the Grassroots Network

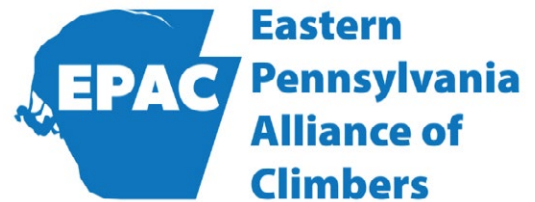


## Virtual Advocacy, Real Impact

Despite the global pandemic, local climbing advocacy is as strong as ever. In these cruxy times, LCOs are adjusting by hosting video calls and virtual gatherings, and launching creative new programs to keep their communities engaged. A few groups are carefully venturing back outside to host downsized Adopt a Crags, with volunteers in masks and socially distanced. Bigger events like the Yosemite Facelift and Rocktoberfest were virtual this year. Meanwhile, projects and negotiations with land managers and owners haven't slowed down. It's easier than ever to join in and support climbing advocacy, no matter where you are.

## Climbing Advocacy Booms in Pennsylvania

We're excited to partner with two new local climbing organizations: Eastern Pennsylvania Alliance of Climbers (EPAC) and Haycock Bouldering Coalition (HBC). EPAC is dedicated to building a community of climbing stewards for eastern Pennsylvania's rich collection of climbing areas, like High Rocks and Boxcar Rocks. HBC is a community of bouldering stewards dedicated to stewardship and protection of Haycock Mountain. Pennsylvania is now home to five LCOs, covering different parts of the state.



## New LCO in the Tetons

The newly formed Teton Climbers' Coalition (TCC) fills a gap in one of America's most iconic climbing landscapes, the Grand Tetons. With a broad focus on climbing community, access, and stewardship, TCC has already rallied the local community to expand public climbing walls. In August they hosted their first Adopt a Crag event at the popular Rodeo Wall, rehabbing trails and belay areas.

## LCO 101: Resolving Board Conflict

Successful LCOs are run by a diverse board of directors composed of people with a variety of skill sets, backgrounds, and points of view. That healthy diversity can sometimes lead to conflict, but LCOs that deal with conflict professionally and constructively are healthier and stronger in the long run.

- ▶ **Make it about your mission.** Working through conflict with a steady focus on your mission puts everyone on common ground, depersonalizes topics, and frames work for the greater good.
- ▶ **Pinpoint the issue.** To really address conflict, you have to clearly define it and work to gain a shared understanding among the board.
- ▶ **Minimize e-communication.** Emailing, group chats, message boards, and texts are terrible mediums for conflict resolution. Have the discipline to save it for an in-person meeting or a teleconference.
- ▶ **Use those guardrails.** Make sure your bylaws have the necessary guardrails in place to address typical areas of conflict—including term limits, termination procedures, and a clear code of conduct for board members.
- ▶ **Bring in a third party.** Sometimes you just need to call in outside help to break a logjam. When you're stalled out or a conflict between board members gets out of hand, a neutral, third-party consultant may be your best bet.
- ▶ **Approach JEDI issues in good faith.** Many boards are actively working to address justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion issues. It's essential everyone approaches these discussions with care and deep respect. Board members may be in very different places in their understanding of JEDI issues, so it's crucial to have these discussions with patience, tolerance, and an assumption of good faith.



## ADVOCATE SPOTLIGHT:

# Lor Sabourin

© Irene Yee

Lor is a training leader with The Warrior's Way, an AMGA Single Pitch Instructor and Assistant Rock Guide, and a certified Wilderness First Responder and Rope Rescue Technician. Lor is also a passionate advocate in creating space for LGBTQIA+ folks to use climbing as a way to have a better dialog with their bodies, mentalities, and relationships. By being open with their own narratives, they and others are able to see how social and physical barriers in the outdoors are met, challenged, and overcome. The best advocates are folks who not only do good for the community but also do good for themselves. Lor teaches us that we are never static in this world and that the more we can deeply understand ourselves the better we're able to help and support others in creating a sense of belonging in our community.

## 5 Questions for Lor

### What's your favorite cause in climbing advocacy right now?

Creating safer, more inclusive spaces for folks in the climbing community who might have felt unwelcome in the past. Climbing has the potential to be such an engaging, positive force in people's lives. I want everyone who gets the "climbing bug" to get the chance to pursue their passion without feeling afraid or wondering if there is space for them in the community. When people feel safe and included, they are more likely to get involved in other areas of advocacy, like taking care of the places where they play.

### What does it mean to you to be a climbing advocate?

For me, it means finding a balance between learning and absorbing new information and finding ways to give back and share what I've learned. Being an advocate also means listening carefully to my community, so that I understand how I can contribute and what I still need to work on.

### What's your advice to new advocates?

Enjoy the process. There's a sense of urgency to advocacy work that can lend itself to a "get it over with" mentality. It's important to have an inspiring goal, but it's also important to enjoy the work we are doing right now. Take breaks, surround yourself with a supportive community, and don't forget to smile.

### What excited you the most about getting into the advocacy world?

I think what excites me most is how much advocacy work relates to the challenges I experience in my climbing. Climbing, in comparison to advocacy goals, has relatively low risk. It's a perfect practice ground for feeling passionate about a goal and learning how to work hard for something that feels intimidating.

### Who is another climbing advocate whose work is really inspiring you right now?

Monserrat Alvarez. Since she started working for the American Mountain Guides Association, I've seen so many amazing policy changes that have created a more welcoming guiding culture. I've personally felt more comfortable and open in my profession, and I know that her work has opened up the narrative of who can be a leader in the climbing community.

# Featured Partners



Athletic Brewing Company makes great-tasting, nonalcoholic craft beer and works to positively impact the world by reducing alcoholism and encouraging activity, mindfulness, and time with loved ones. The company donates 2% of their revenue to stewardship-focused projects and organizations that maintain and rebuild trails, inspiring folks to get outside. We're excited to welcome Athletic Brewing Company as the newest sponsor of the Access Fund–Jeep Conservation Teams. Athletic believes that if we don't start acting in a sustainable manner now, we're going to lose our chance at great outdoor adventures. We applaud the company's core values of activity and sustainability.



The North Face was built on a love for the outdoors and the desire to enable all types of exploration, from our own backyards to the Himalayas. Over the last 50 years, they've lived by the True North—the belief that exploration has the power to change us, to challenge us, and to help us see the world from new perspectives. The North Face has been a strong and unwavering supporter of Access Fund for over two decades, providing critical financial support that enables us to protect America's climbing. Most recently, The North Face has made significant contributions to Access Fund's public policy program, making events like Climb the Hill, our Washington, D.C., lobbying event, possible.



Mountain Hardwear was founded in 1993 by a small band of outdoor industry iconoclasts who saw the industry changing, creating lower-quality products to serve a consumer market. They founded Mountain Hardwear to push back on this trend and provide quality products for outdoor athletes. The company holds the same focus when it comes to preserving our public spaces for the community. Access Fund would like to thank Mountain Hardwear for its support of the Access Fund–Jeep Conservation Teams and our work to restore climbing areas across the country.



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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 Access Fund and you. We encourage you to support them!

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### **Gold – \$5,000+**

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RESTOP  
Rock and Resole  
Rock Gym Pro  
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Sublime Climbing  
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The Quarry  
TRUBLUE Auto Belay by Head  
Rush Technologies  
Urban Ascent  
Vertical Adventures Ohio  
Vital Climbing Gym  
Voltaic Systems

# PLANNED GIVING: Join the Legacy Society

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IG: Urbanclimbr

Many of us may never develop a climbing route, put up a first ascent, write a guidebook, or climb 5.15. But there are other ways to contribute to the future of climbing in America. Making a legacy gift to Access Fund helps to ensure that our treasured climbing areas remain protected and accessible for the next generation, allowing others the same opportunity to climb well into the future.

Planning a deferred gift to Access Fund is an easy way to establish your legacy of climbing access and conservation, and give back to the climbing community. Planned giving may seem complicated, but it can be a very simple way to leave behind a gift to support the work and mission of Access Fund.

You can also support Access Fund's efforts to protect climbing for generations to come. It can be as simple as naming Access Fund as a beneficiary of an insurance policy or a retirement account (avoiding taxes and complications) or naming Access Fund in your will (with just a sentence or two). You too can help Access Fund carry on the mission of protecting America's climbing.

## Rob's Story

Rob Raker, a longtime Access Fund supporter, has lived a life of adventure—traveling all over the world as a videographer, climber, kayaker, and skier, often with his wife of nearly 30 years, Annette. Along the way, he helped to build Access Fund as one of our early board members, and he has continued to support Access Fund's work for more than two decades. Now, as Rob thinks about the legacy he wants to leave in the world, he decided to include Access Fund in his estate plans. Rob has made a bequest to Access Fund because “the organization is uniquely suited to tackle the many challenges that access to climbing faces.”

Contact our development director, Scott Dissel, for a confidential consultation at [scott.dissel@accessfund.org](mailto:scott.dissel@accessfund.org) or 303-536-7413, or go to [accessfund.org/plannedgift](https://accessfund.org/plannedgift) for more information.



L., short for the Lanisha, is a Harvard-trained designer, photographer, and longtime climber. While pursuing her visual arts, L. is also an innovation consultant who does strategy work and storytelling to rethink the future. Her photography is about making the outdoors much more accessible by illuminating the world she imagines—a world where people of color are being joyous in spaces that were never designed for them to enjoy. These are spaces that her parents and grandparents would have been nervous to travel to. L. has worked with Patagonia, The North Face, Athleta, *National Geographic*, *Climbing Magazine*, and more. To learn more about L. and her work, visit her on Instagram @urbanclimbr.



*Top Left: L. Renee Blount Self Portrait*

*Top Right: With freshly rechalked hands, Terumi works this problem. Undisclosed location, Wappinger Ancestral Lands*

*Left: It's my goal to capture the joyousness of each moment. I also make my friends laugh frequently behind the camera. This highlights that. Summer as they get ready to climb at the Knobs in Tuolumne. Yosemite, Me-Wuk Lands*

*Above: Documenting my crew of NYC climbers and friends at a crag in Connecticut. I watched Raheim repeatedly try this move. Undisclosed location, Wappinger Ancestral Lands*

*All photos © L. Renee Blount / IG: Urbanclimbr*

# Access Fund Welcomes New Board Members



Abby Dione

Tom Adams

Julie Reed

Justin Brown

Access Fund is pleased to welcome Abby Dione, Tom Adams, Julie Reed, and Justin Brown to its board of directors, which is responsible for establishing organizational policy and ensuring that the mission and vision are fulfilled. The board is composed of volunteers who are committed to protecting America's climbing areas.

"We are so excited to have such a passionate and experienced group to help lead Access Fund into the future," says Executive Director Chris Winter. "We all have an important role to play in taking care of the places we love, and these folks live this day in and day out."

We are thrilled to have Abby Dione join the board from Fort Lauderdale, Florida, where she is also the proud owner of Coral Cliffs Rock Climbing, an indoor gym. Abby is an AMGA-certified climber and USA climbing coach, who teaches clinics at outdoors climbing festivals like Color the Crag and the Women's Climbing Festival, and regularly speaks at events like Outdoor Retailer. With more than 12 years of experience, Abby has become a leader in the climbing industry by mixing her passion for the sport with her skill at building strong communities.

We're also pleased to welcome Tom Adams, the chief operating officer for Petzl America. Tom is a passionate climber and outspoken advocate for Utah's outdoor recreation industry. In 2015, Gov. Gary Herbert appointed him to lead Utah's Office of Outdoor Recreation. Under his leadership, Utah led recreation infrastructure funding, hosted the nation's largest outdoor recreation summit, and helped 23 states create their own offices of outdoor recreation.

We also welcome Julie Reed, an environmental attorney in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Julie has served as both a board member and president of the Southeastern Climbers Coalition (SCC), and she remains an active advocate and steward in the Southeast climbing community. She has logged thousands of volunteer hours at trail days and fundraising events, and offers pro bono legal services to SCC. Julie enjoys all styles of climbing and has climbed extensively across the country, but she loves Southeastern sandstone best of all.

We're also pleased to welcome Justin Brown, a Navy veteran and native Utahn who has worked in and around Congress for the past 15 years. Justin is an avid climber, who loves West Virginia's New River Gorge, Southern Utah, and his local gyms—The Front and Earth Treks. Justin founded both the HillVets Foundation, to assist America's veterans in their continued service of our nation, and The Nimitz Group, a government relations firm.

These incoming board members join a dynamic board of directors with representation across the country.

➤ [Visit \*accessfund.org/board\* for more information.](https://accessfund.org/board)

# Staff and Board

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### OFFICERS

**President – Jonah Harrison**  
(Washington)

**Vice President – Rob Price**  
(Washington)

**Treasurer – Hilary Harris** (Colorado)

**Secretary – Alex Kutches** (Montana)

### BOARD MEMBERS

**Tom Adams** (Utah)

**Justin Brown** (Virginia)

**Jeff Buhl** (Colorado)

**Peter Croft** (California)

**Abby Dione** (Florida)

**Josh Friedman** (Oregon)

**Kenji Haroutunian** (California)

**Shelma Jun** (New York)

**Bethany Lebewitz** (Colorado)

**Julie Reed** (Tennessee)

**Ed Shapiro** (New York)

**Nikki Smith** (Utah)

**John Winsor** (Colorado)

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## Protect America's Climbing

P.O. Box 17010  
Boulder, CO 80308

# Become a part of the movement >>

We are climbers, and we are a powerful voice for protecting the places we love. Whether we're sharing a rope, building a trail, or meeting with lawmakers in Washington, D.C.—we are stronger when we work together. All climbers have an important role to play in advocacy, stewardship, and conservation. And our individual efforts, no matter how small, lead to collective change. Join us by taking the Climbing Advocate Pledge today.

### I pledge to:

- ▶ Stand up and use my voice to protect climbing areas.
- ▶ Minimize my impact while climbing outside.
- ▶ Be kind and help create a welcoming and inclusive climbing community.

➤ Visit [accessfund.org/the-climbing-advocate-pledge](https://accessfund.org/the-climbing-advocate-pledge) to sign the Climbing Advocate Pledge today.

