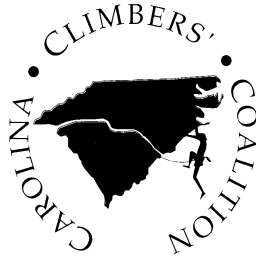


Laurel Knob Climbing Management Plan

Cashiers, North Carolina





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Need for this Document

This document serves to provide guidelines to climbers, with the intent of applying the least restrictive management options in order to maintain the climbing experience and unique natural resources of Laurel Knob. The CCC has established a set of goals for the protection of Laurel Knob and has established a set of rules and regulations designed to meet these goals. *The CCC will achieve these goals through volunteer management by the climbing community.* In the event that regulations set forth in this document are not managed, the CCC will take necessary steps to enforce publicly and/or legally.

Introduction

Located in southern Jackson County near Cashiers, North Carolina, the cliffs of Laurel Knob (4,014') are the highest continuous cliffs in the region, and reported to be the single highest rockface (1,200') in the Eastern United States. The North Carolina Natural Heritage Program recognizes it as a national, state and locally significant land mass. The property includes almost 50 acres, which contains a Montane Oak-Hickory Forest, with dwarfed white oak and table mountain pines nearly 200 years old, wetlands, and a forested summit. Laurel Knob sits at the headwater of the Horsepasture River, which is a federally designated Wild and Scenic River. Figure 1. provides an overview of the area.

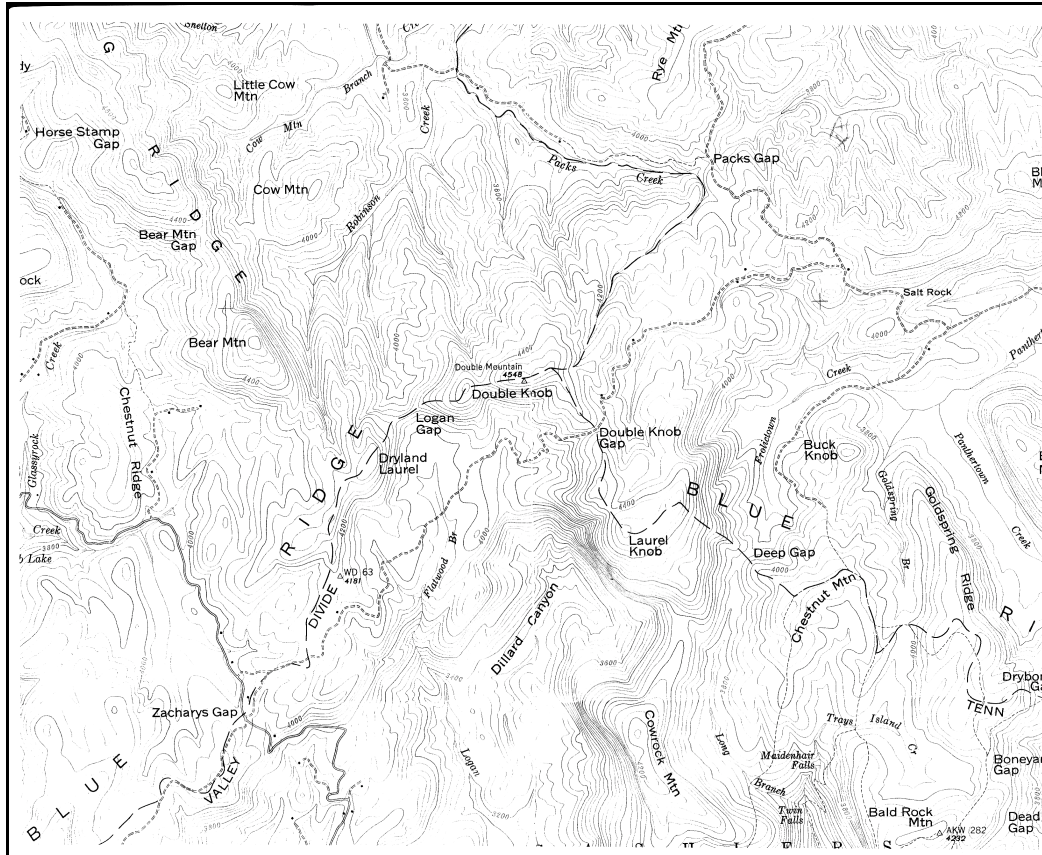


Figure 1. Laurel Knob and Environs (Big Ridge Topo)

Climbing Management Plan - Goals

1. Preserve the natural resources found on Laurel Knob while providing for recreational climbing activities.
2. Present a clearly defined set of regulations for climbing on Laurel Knob that will encourage continued climbing activity.
3. Provide a set of written regulations to educate climbers visiting Laurel Knob.
4. Outline enforcement policies to ensure goals of management are preserved.

Climbing Management Plan - Topics

- 1.0 Access
- 2.0 Climber Registration
- 3.0 Fixed Equipment
 - 3.1. Fixed Anchors
 - 3.2. Belay/Rappel Station Installations
 - 3.3. Bolts and Bolting Practices
 - 3.4. Pitons
 - 3.5. Fixed Software
- 4.0 Development of New Routes
- 5.0 Rappelling
- 6.0 Development of Approach Trails
- 7.0 Rock Alteration
- 8.0 Vegetation Alteration
- 9.0 Human Waste
- 10.0 Gear Caches
- 11.0 Climber Safety
- 12.0 Camping
- 13.0 Guiding
 - 13.1 Eligibility
 - 13.2 Documentation
 - 13.3 Other Considerations
- 14.0 Pets
- 15.0 Firearms

1.0 Access

1.1 Access

Access to Laurel Knob is limited and is permitted only through Nantahala National Forest and the Panthertown Valley. Access through Lonesome Valley is prohibited and will be considered trespassing. *And will negatively affect the CCC relationship with the property owners.*

1.2 Driving

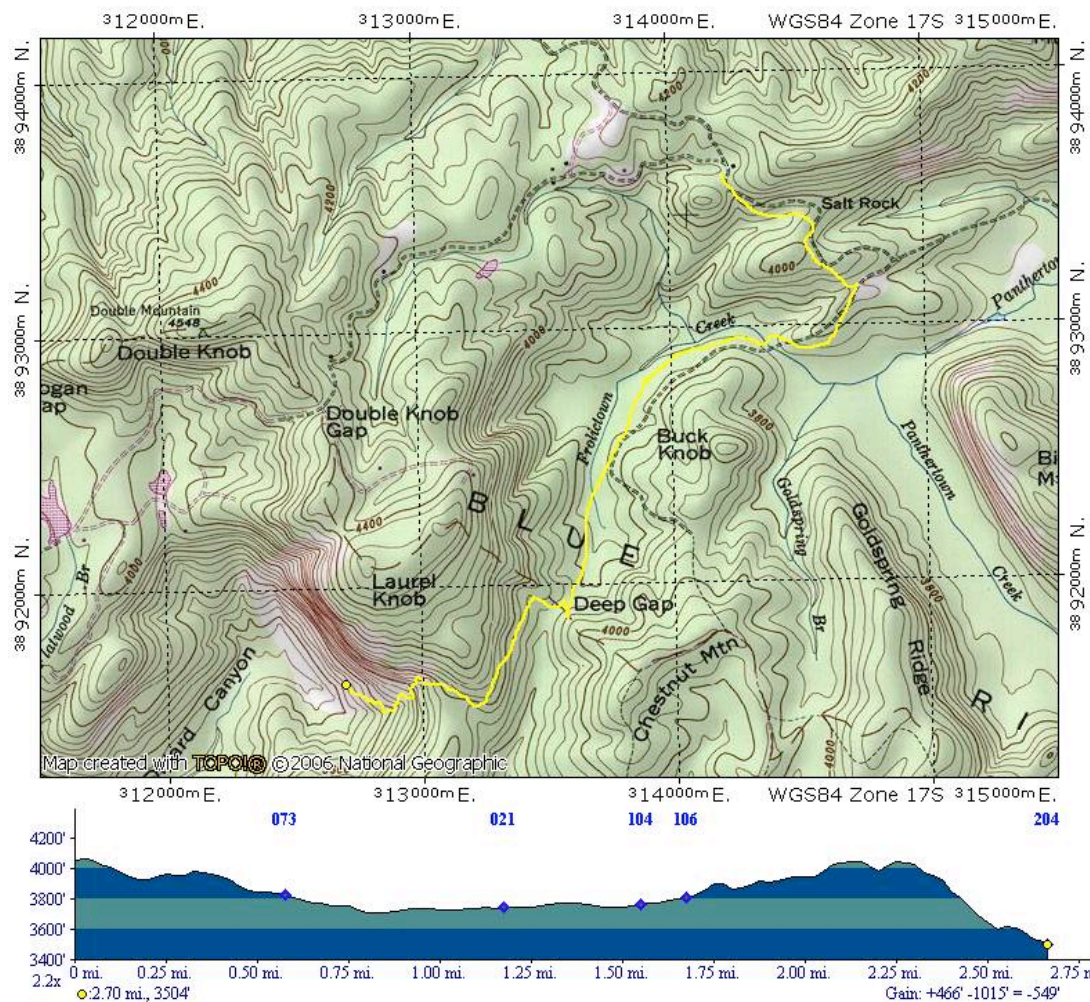
To access Laurel Knob: U.S. 64 west through Sapphire, NC. Turn right on Cedar Creek Road, then right on Breedlove Road all the way to the Panthertown Valley trailhead parking area. Park here, walk-in, and follow the CCC climbers' trail to the base of the cliff.

1.3 Access

- 1) From the Saltrock Gap parking area, hike down the gravel road toward Panthertown Valley.



- 2) Take the easy turn into Big Green Mountain, bear left at the first tight switchback and follow this established road, cross Frolictown Creek. As the road approaches Deep Gap, the CCC trail (single-track) veers up and to the right. Please note Deep Gap and road beyond are located on Private property – stay off!
- 3) Follow this contouring trail to a log over a stream and then on to the corner marking the property line between the USFS and the CCC.
- 4) From the corner marker, the very obvious trail heads southwest following the straight line of the easement boundary line. You will contour across a mossy stream and about 100 yards of mossy slab.
- 5) Soon the slab becomes steep and the trail makes a short curl back down and left into the woods then back right and follows along the edge of a laurel and rhododendron thicket and below the steep mossy slab.
- 6) You will see a gravel road in the gap to your left. Do not hike near or onto that road. That is all private property. Stay on the CCC built trail and pass the CCC info kiosk on the right.
- 7) 100 yards past the kiosk, the trail begins the 600-foot descent down many switchbacks to the very base of the main face of Laurel Knob. The first route that you will come to is Manatee Fluid. Continue down and around to the other routes.



2.0 Climber Registration

2.1 The CCC would like to request that all climbers register at the kiosk. While registration is voluntary, it is an important management tool. It provides the CCC with an estimate on the number of climbers visiting Laurel Knob, where they are coming from, contact information for workdays, future fund raising, liability, and general communication. This information may also be useful in the event of an accident or overdue climbing party. Registration information would include: names of members in party, address or other contact info such as email address, date, intended route, weather conditions.

3.0 Fixed Equipment

Definition: Fixed equipment (or gear) is any hard or software including webbing or rope, that is used to aid ascent or descent, or as protection, and is left on the route by a climbing party following completion of the climb.

3.1 Fixed Anchors

Definition: Fixed anchors, particularly bolts require drilling into the rock for their placement and left in the rock by a climbing party after completion of the climb.

- 3.1.1 The placement of new fixed anchors will not be allowed when the ability to place removable protection is available. An exception to this regulation will be considered by the CCC, if the site for the proposed fixed anchors is such that overall climber use and safety would justify fixed anchors. To be approved for a special exception to this regulation, climbers will notify the CCC of the site of the proposed fixed anchors, and a written statement as to why the climber(s) feel that this site warrants fixed anchors. The CCC will evaluate the request and rule on it.
- 3.1.2 The placement of fixed anchors will be allowed on established routes only to replace existing fixed anchors that are deemed unsafe or in the event that the first ascensionist has provided the CCC with a written request that an additional fixed anchor be placed on a route for safety reasons. All written requests will be kept on file with the CCC and made available to climbers upon request.
- 3.1.3 Minimum anchor standards shall be a stainless steel 3" x 3/8" wedge anchor or a 2.25" x 3/8" sleeve anchor using stainless steel hangers. Larger and longer anchors are welcome.
- 3.1.4 The use of non-climbing specific hardware (i.e. home-made hangers, cold shuts, and chain) is prohibited on Laurel Knob.



3.2 Fixed Belay/Rappel Station Installations

Definition: A fixed belay/rappel station is any arrangement of fixed anchors placed at the top of a pitch for the purpose of belaying or placed for the sole intent of rappelling.

- 3.2.1 The placement of new fixed belay/rappel stations will not be allowed when the ability to place adequate removable protection is available. However, a special exception will be considered if justified after evaluating overall climber use and safety concerns at the site proposed for fixed anchor(s). To be approved for a special exception, climbers will notify the CCC of the site of the proposed fixed anchors and a written statement as to why the climber(s) feel that this site warrants fixed anchors. The CCC will evaluate requests and rule on them.
- 3.2.2 All new fixed belay/rappel stations will be composed of stainless steel and shall be a 3" x 3/8" wedge anchor or a 2.25" x 3/8" sleeve anchor. Larger and longer anchors are welcome. Fixe ring anchors® are recommended.
- 3.2.3 Bolt placement for the purpose of fixed belay/rappel stations will not exceed two (2) bolts.
- 3.2.4 The use of webbing and accessory cord will not be allowed in the construction of new fixed belay/rappel stations, except in an emergency.

3.3 Bolts and Bolting Practices

Definition: A bolt is any device that requires a hole to be drilled into the rock for its placement.

- 3.3.1 Bolting will be allowed on currently established routes only under the guidelines set forth under sections 3.1 Fixed Anchors and 3.2 Fixed Belay/Rappel Station Installation.
- 3.3.2 When replacing fixed anchors identified to be unsafe, recommended hardware will be used whenever possible, a reasonable effort to remove the existing hardware will be made and existing drill holes will be used in the installation of replacement fixed anchors whenever possible. Drill holes will be patched with Rectorseal® epoxy putty (or similar moldable epoxy putty product) if deemed unusable.
- 3.3.3 Bolting will be allowed only in the development of new climbing routes and only in sections of the route that have no rock features adequate for the placement of removable anchors.



3.4 Pitons

3.4.1 The placement and removal of pitons does permanent damage to the rock. Pitons will only be used when other reasonably safe means of protecting the climbing party is non-existent.

3.4.1 When pitons are used in the development of a new route that would be expected to receive regular climbing traffic, pitons will remain fixed to reduce further damage to the rock.

3.5 Fixed Software

Definition: Fixed software is any rope, cord, or webbing, etc., which has been placed to aid in the ascent or descent of a route and remains in place when the climbing party is not on the route.

3.5.1 Fixed rope for the purpose of retreating from a climb is allowed under the following conditions: (1) the climbing party intends to return to continue the climb; and (2) the placement does not exceed a period of 30 days.

3.5.2 Webbing used when gear is fixed for the purpose of retreating from a climb, when the climbing party has no intention of returning to the climb (“bail gear”), should be of a natural color similar to the rock color. The color of webbing should not be a deciding factor when retreating due to an emergency or the inability to climb the route.

4.0 Development of New Routes

Definition of New Route: A new route is any route traveling across previously unclimbed terrain – either in totality or as a direct start or finish to an existing route.

Preface

New routes are allowed without prior approval. One goal of this management plan is to promote the development of new routes at Laurel Knob while working conscientiously to preserve the adventure ethic that makes Laurel Knob so unique. The CCC fully expects that any party establishing a first ascent on Laurel Knob will recognize the uniqueness of Laurel’s climbing style and create a route that maintains the “spirit” of the area. The CCC recognizes that this is a “nebulous style” requirement and will approach all cases with an open-mind.



4.1. Documentation of new routes

Climbers **MUST** submit a detailed topo and route description of the new route to the CCC within 30 days of completing a new route.

4.2 Hardware Standards

All new routes shall comply with the hardware standards as established by this plan:

- All anchors shall be stainless steel
- Minimum Anchor standards shall be a 3" x 3/8" wedge anchor or a 2.25" x 3/8" sleeve anchor. Larger and longer anchors are welcome.
- All hangers shall be stainless
- All rap stations shall have non-degradable stainless hardware (i.e. no chains, no webbing nests, etc...) Fixe ring anchors® are preferred.

4.5 First ascent style

All new routes will be established ground-up – RAP-DRILLING IS NOT ALLOWED. All new routes must utilize an existing descent route or descend utilizing anchors installed during ascent. Topping-out and walking-off are strictly prohibited.

5.0 Rappelling

5.1. All routes must be rappelled to descend; there is no walk-off. The top portion of Laurel Knob is owned by another property owner. Please help us be a good neighbor by rappelling all routes.

5.2. Sport rappelling is prohibited.

6.0 Trails

6.1. The CCC will maintain and upgrade trails as needed to make them passable and eliminate any unnecessary trails. The CCC will schedule periodic workdays to conduct any needed trail maintenance.

6.2. Climbers will use Leave No Trace practices and take every precaution to ensure that the area remains in a natural condition (Appendix A).

6.3. Climbers will not build cairns or in anyway mark approach trails. When needed, cairns and trail markers will be added and maintained by the CCC.

6.4. The intentional development of approach trails is prohibited.



7.0 Rock Alteration

Definition: Rock alteration includes the removal of rock from its natural position and the drilling, chipping, or gluing (reinforcing) of holds.

7.1. The removal of rock from its natural position will be allowed only when the rock to be removed poses a significant risk to the climbing party or a future climbing party (i.e. trundling).

7.2. Chipping or the gluing of holds is strictly prohibited.

7.3 The CCC will not tolerate alteration of holds. The CCC will enforce non-compliance of regulations through the following steps:

- 1) Written communication to ascent party informing them of non-compliance.
- 2) Ban ascent party, through trespassing order, from returning to Laurel Knob.

8.0 Vegetation Alteration

Definition: Vegetation alteration is the removal of vegetation from its natural position, destruction, or damage.

8.1. Removal of vegetation from the base of climbs or belay ledges is prohibited.

8.2. Climbers should do whatever they can to minimize their impact when developing routes that require the removal of vegetation.

9.0 Human Waste

9.1. Parties climbing routes are required to follow standard Leave No Trace practices (Appendix A).

9.2. Parties climbing routes expected to take longer than one day will have in their possession during the climb, a container sufficient to contain human waste without the possibility of leakage or breakage, and such container and its contents will be removed from Laurel Knob upon completion of the climb. It is highly recommended that climbers use Wag Bags® or Restop® to carry-out their waste.



10.0 Gear Caches

Definition: A gear cache is any supply of gear left unattended in the area for future use or the future use of another climbing party.

10.1. The caching of climbing equipment at or near the base of a climb in the event of a retreat due to weather, injury, or illness will be allowed for a for a period not to exceed 14 days.

10.2. The caching of equipment on the wall, such as fixed ropes or other climbing equipment is prohibited.

11.0 Climber Safety

Climbing is an inherently dangerous sport. Responsibility for safe climbing rests solely with the individual climber. ***Due to its remote location and fact that top access to the cliff is prohibited, rescue will be achieved from the ground-up. All climbers are strongly encouraged to be self-sufficient and possess the appropriate first aid, partner and self-rescue skills. Climbers are encouraged to carry equipment necessary for self-rescue, proper clothing, water and food in case of emergency.*** The CCC and author of this CMP assume no responsibility for any injuries incurred by anyone engaging in any climbing activity on Laurel Knob! The CCC does not provide supervision, instruction, and are not responsible for the conditions of the terrain or acts of persons who may be on CCC property. Cell phones are encouraged for emergencies.

12.0 Camping

12.1 Camping is strictly prohibited on CCC property. Camping is permitted in the Panthertown Valley which is located in Nantahala National Forest.

12.2 Campfires are prohibited at Laurel Knob.

13.0 Guiding and Climbing Instruction

Definition: Rock climbing guides and instructors are defined as:



Guide – Anyone who offers climbing instruction on a fee-for service basis and is a proprietor or employee of a guiding service, which has met CCC eligibility and documentation requirements for guides and instructors.

Instructor – Anyone who offers climbing instruction and is associated with an organization other than a guide service, that teaches climbing and has met CCC eligibility and documentation requirements for guides and instructors.

13.1 Eligibility - All organizations and individuals engaging in instruction or guiding activities are responsible for the safety of their students and clients and are required to meet the following eligibility requirements:

- 13.1.1 AMGA Certification. All guides must possess certification by the American Mountain Guides Association (AMGA) as a Rock Instructor or Rock Guide. All aspirant guides must have taken and successfully completed Rock Instructor or Rock Guides exams in order to be eligible.
- 13.1.2 Certification. Every instructor or guide must possess current certifications (minimum) in Wilderness First Responder (WFR) and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), or higher levels of certification.
- 13.1.3 Liability Insurance. Businesses that offer guiding or instruction services at Laurel Knob must be covered under a liability insurance policy in an amount not less than \$1,000,000.00 per incident and \$2,000,000.00 aggregate applicable to the instruction and guiding of rock climbing and a Workers Compensation policy 15% of salary per guide. This policy must cover claims made whether during the period the insurance is in effect or thereafter, and must also cover the Carolina Climbers Coalition as additionally insured, that is CCC officers are held harmless from any and all claims, suits, actions, damages, and costs of every nature and description which may result in connection with technical rock climbing.

13.2. Documentation

All instructors and guides wishing to use Laurel Knob for their services are required to file documents in proof of eligibility with the CCC one month prior to the use of Laurel Knob for such purposes, and are responsible for keeping these documents current and filed with the CCC. Documentation can be sent to: P. O. Box 33227, Raleigh, NC 27636 or submitted online at www.carolinaclimbers.org. Instructors and guides who have not met the CCC eligibility requirements and/or have not filed the necessary documents with the CCC within the allotted time may not operate on Laurel Knob in the capacity of guide or instructor.

13.3. Other Considerations.

- 13.3.1 The guide or instructor will be permitted to serve no more than a maximum of two (2) clients at one time.



13.3.2 Guides or instructors are required to use, promote, and teach clean climbing techniques, environmental stewardship, and Leave No Trace principles to their students or clients.

13.3.3 The CCC reserves the right to prohibit any guide, instructor, or organization to climb or offer instruction or guiding services at Laurel Knob.

14.0 Pets

Due to the unique nature of the environment and length of climbs, dogs or other pets are prohibited at Laurel Knob.

15.0 Firearms

The possession of firearms in or upon CCC property is prohibited, except those in the possession of authorized law enforcement personnel.

References

Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park. (2006). *Interim Climbing Management Plan*. Retrieved September 5, from http://www.nps.gov/blca/planyourvisit/upload/BLCA_climbing_plan-2.pdf

Minnewaska State Park Preserve. (1996). *Facility development and access plan (draft) for the Peter's Kill Area of Minnewaska State Park Preserve*. New Paltz, NY: Author



Appendix A

Leave No Trace Principles For Rock Climbing

(Source: <http://archive.int.org/LNTPublications/RockClimbing/RockClimb.php>)

Plan Ahead and Prepare

You've probably done a bit of research on routes, their difficulty, and the kinds of protection you might need on your next climbing day. But what about the aspects of planning that allow you to improve your Leave No Trace efforts? Make a decision to decrease your impact on your next visit to the crag.

Before climbing at any area, check with land managers for advice and regulations specific to the environment you plan to visit. Local climbers, climbing shops, and guide services or climbing schools may also be able to give you essential information.

If you are venturing into designated wilderness or other pristine, undeveloped lands, learn what recommended group sizes are. In areas without trails, groups of four to six people cause less impact than larger groups. Where necessary, obtain permits to camp or climb. Ask about and respect all private property and temporary closures.

Adequate clothing, gloves, and some sort of hand warmer will help you resist the temptation to build a fire to warm your fingers. Fires can leave scars that last for decades.

Discarded tape and cigarette butts are unsightly so consider bringing a small plastic bag in your pack for trash. If all you do is pick up a bit of litter, you will have improved your own Leave No Trace habits.

Camp and Travel on Durable Surfaces

Climbing areas may lie above steep slopes that can be easily eroded, or along riparian zones with fragile vegetation. With the huge increase in the number of climbers, random access creates serious erosion and trampling problems.

At remote wilderness locations that show little or no obvious impact, try to keep it that way. Where no trails exist, spread out on durable ground, such as rock, gravel, or snow, to avoid creating new paths. Avoid fragile areas, such as steep hillsides or the black, castle like cryptogam that's found in desert regions. Making approach routes with cairns or flagging takes away the thrill and challenge of route finding people seek in these remote areas.

But dispersing impact won't suffice when the number of climbers gets too large. Eventually, choosing and marking paths for all to follow becomes necessary and the techniques listed below become important.

At easy-access crags or areas that see frequent traffic, the natural impulse is to make a beeline up through the brush to the base of the climb. Instead, take a moment longer to seek out and follow established paths and trails. A few footsteps off the trail may cause significant damage to the vegetation and attract further trampling and erosion, so remaining on existing paths is crucial. Try not to use trails that have been closed and respect rehabilitation efforts.



Choose campsites carefully. Camp in existing sites, if possible, to center your activities on already barren areas. If no established sites exist, choose a campsite at least 200 feet from water on durable ground. Consider sites where either the vegetation is very resilient, (e.g. grasses), or the ground is bare (e.g. rock, gravel or sand). Avoid cooking and congregating on delicate flowers and woody ground covers as they are easily crushed.

Try not to "improve" campsites by moving things around. If you move a few rocks to make a flat place to sleep, put them back before you leave. Choose a slightly raised site that will drain water so you won't need to dig drainage trenches in the soil.

General tips. Wherever you climb, try to unload your gear and take breaks on large, flat rocks or other durable ground to avoid damaging vegetation.

During mud seasons and after rains, soft trails and roads are easily rutted and damaged, accelerating erosion during future runoff. Consider postponing your trip or choosing a different crag to avoid the muddiest days.

Keep four wheel-drive vehicles and mountain bikes on designated roads and trails. Driving your vehicle off the road in a pristine spot will leave a path that may tempt others to do the same. Try to find established roads and parking sites instead.

The choice is ours: We can help preserve the natural feel of our favorite crags or let incremental change lead to an ugly maze of erosion.

Other Rock Climbing Leave No Trace Principles

Pack It In, Pack It Out

Stick to the old adage: "Take only pictures and leave only footprints."

Pack out what you bring in. All food waste, including orange peels and apple cores should be carried out, not buried or scattered. Food scraps left behind attract insects, rodents and other animals, which can become a nuisance or even a danger, especially in established or popular areas.

Please pick up trash when you find it. Consider taking a trash bag along with you every day. Recently, climbing rangers removed over 50 pounds of slings from the West Ridge of Forbidden Peak in North Cascades. The accumulation of trash increasingly outpaces clean up efforts. Keep a knife handy to remove old, unsafe slings you find littering rappel, belay, and pendulum sites.

Leave What You Find

Climbers are adventurers. When you climb, give others the same sense of discovery by leaving unique artifacts and features in place.

Plants and animals. Trampling vegetation at the base of climbs or removing it from the rock can be minimized if you are careful. Vertical walls represent unique biological communities. Some of the plant and lichen species in cracks and on crags may be quite rare so if at all possible, don't disturb them. Clean only the areas necessary for the ascent.

Reduce disturbance to animals. Stress, which results when animals are spooked or are approached too closely, may compromise their ability to survive drought or hard winters.



Try to keep all animals from getting human food. It's usually unhealthy for them and certainly teaches them to become pests in search of handouts-an especially bad situation when that animal is a bear.

The presence of raptors, such as peregrine and prairie falcons, eagles, and many hawks and owls, are indicators of the health of any ecosystem. Avoid nesting sites on or near the crags in the spring and early summer. Watch the birds as they circle and land near their nests to identify places to avoid. If you encounter nests on a climb, don't touch them. Human contact may cause the adults to abandon the nest and its eggs or young. Adhere to seasonal closures; you can always find another climb.

Cultural and historical resources. Humans have inhabited North America for millennia and remnants of these ancient cultures have been discovered throughout the country. Native American people consider many of these places sacred. Disturbing cultural sites may render them useless for study and observation in the future, and shows disregard for early American cultures. Even touching rock art can hasten its decay. Federal regulations protect all archaeological sites and artifacts. Likewise, antlers, fossils, and plants are best left in place for others to enjoy.

Many cultural sites are not immediately evident. Cliff bases may have been prehistoric shelter or camping spots. Look for blackened rocks from ancient fires under overhangs, chert/flint chippings, and evidence of stone or wood structures. Please do not move anything in such places, because context can be just as important to archaeologists as the objects themselves. Report any suspected cultural sites to the land managers or owners.

Minimize Use and Impact of Fires

Fire rings and pits at the base of any crag are unacceptable. Fires built in alpine areas will leave scars for decades.

Fires are often considered inappropriate in populated areas, and have caused access problems for climbers. Consider using a stove instead of fire for cooking. Warm clothes and hot food can keep you as toasty warm as a fire (on both sides at once!). Stoves consume no wood, leave no scars, and rarely get out of control.

If you decide a fire is necessary, build it in a pre-existing fire ring or grate in established or developed sites, or in a fire pan (a metal oil drain pan or barbecue grill works well) in undeveloped areas. Know local regulations, seasonal restrictions, and keep current fire danger in mind.

Either bring wood from home or collect your wood from a wide area, away from camps, trails and crags, to disperse impact. Gather only small pieces-wrist diameter or less-that are already dead and on the ground. This makes it easier to burn your fire down to pure ash and eliminates half-burned logs that are hard to disguise. Before leaving, make sure the ash is cold. Dispose of excess ash from fire pans by dispersing it widely, well away from camps, trails, cliffs, and roads.

Minimize Climbing Impacts

Treat the rock with care! Although there still seems to be plenty of room for new routes and new climbing areas, the rock resource is limited.

Impacts to natural resources. Chipping or drilling holds destroys rock. While cleaning loose or friable rock from faces is sometimes necessary for safety on new routes, avoid changing the rock to make the route easier or more comfortable.



Use removable protection and natural anchors wherever practical. Bolts and pitons permanently change the rock and placing them is a serious endeavor. First, consider local ethics and regulations regarding bolt placement as well as the validity and quality of the route. Above all, if you place a bolt, make sure it is secure.

The Wilderness Act makes motorized drills illegal in designated wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas. If you must place a bolt in these areas, use a hand drill and hammer. Wilderness offers an escape from the rest of our developed, motorized world because it's free from ATV's, chainsaws, and power drills. In areas where the use of motorized drills is unregulated, climbers must take responsibility for self-regulation.

If you are considering developing new opportunities for climbing, consider whether the local ecology can withstand the increased traffic a set of new routes will create. Climbing activities focus use on specific areas. Once a new area becomes known, changes such as barren ground, new trails, and disturbance to wildlife follow quickly. Is the new route or area you might develop really adding diversity to the climbing or is it more of the same? Before you place fixed protection or document a new route or crag, ask whether its quality and uniqueness justifies the impact that will inevitably follow once people learn about it.

Impacts to other people. Most non-climbers fail to understand the importance of the various and vital ingredients of safe and enjoyable climbing, and are sensitive and concerned about the presence of slings, bolts, or human-caused changes they see at climbing areas. These changes are often perceived as ugly or disruptive to the general surroundings. It is up to us to be sensitive to other people's perspectives, and to take every opportunity to educate climber and non-climbers about Leave No Trace techniques. Consider the following ideas when climbing; you may come up with other ideas as well.

To lessen the visibility of sport climbs, use discreet anchors at the top of climbs. Chains blow around in the wind and in soft rock like sandstone will dig grooves in the rock. Colorful slings are easily seen from the ground and they bother hikers and other users who complain to land managers.

Use dull or painted bolt hangers to better disguise those that are easily seen by other recreationists on nearby trails. Many climbers are now carrying a small stencil to keep paint off the rock when they paint their hangers-a little retro stenciling never hurts and might do your own crag some good! Better yet, Plan Ahead and Prepare by painting those hangers at home.

Rather than rappel with ropes directly around tree trunks, leave a sling instead. Pulling ropes around trees damages them permanently. The sling can be removed later when it becomes unsafe. If you do leave a sling, choose a color that is difficult to see from a distance.

Similarly, if you use chalk, try to choose a color that blends in well with the rock. Colored chalk has received mixed reviews: some say it does not work as well and others note that it does not usually match the hues of natural rock very accurately. A Leave No Trace attitude means that we should at least consider our use of chalk and how it affects the experiences of others. Maybe you will choose to use colored chalk or none at all.

If you like to use chalk, help make a difference by organizing a chalk clean-up day at a local crag. They are rewarding and fun, and clean holds are easier to hang onto.

Maintain a low profile by removing equipment at the end of each day. Regulations on federal lands prohibit abandoning equipment overnight. Sometimes climbers leave fixed ropes in place overnight to



make better time the next day, but protocol varies with area, so check local trends. Either way, the practice should not be abused; try not to let those ropes stay up for multiple days.

Protect access through courtesy. Noise-from the volume of your boom box to the words you let fly when you fail on that red point attempt-can have a huge impact on other people and on wildlife. Consider who else is around and try to keep your decibel level within reason. In populated areas like suburban crags in the Northeast, music is sometimes a major annoyance to nearby residents and other recreationists.

Another practice that can result in access problems is parking. Park only in designated areas or along roadways that are not posted. Carpool when it is practical.

Contact agencies and groups in your area and see how you can help. Be active in planning the management of climbing areas. Volunteer for clean up efforts, trail maintenance, and rehabilitation efforts, or organize them for your local area.

