

Press Release

Rutherford Outdoor Coalition and CCC team up for the Rumbling Bald West Side Boulders Acquisition

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For Immediate release

LAKE LURE – For the next two months, money donated to preserve a nationally significant bouldering area will be matched, a pair of local non-profits announced today.

Carolina Climbers Coalition (CCC) will accept donations and the Rutherford Outdoor Coalition will match those donations up to \$3,000 through May 31. The CCC is raising money cover a loan used to buy a portion of the Rumbling Bald West Side Boulders. In early January, the Carolina Climbers Coalition (CCC), a local volunteer driven non-profit, acquired a 6.12 acre property containing a portion boulder site. The Access Fund, a national non-profit climbers' advocacy organization, provided a bridge loan of \$72,000 from their new Land Conservation Campaign to finance the purchase price of the 6.12 acre tract. The property contains a significant recreation resource (28 boulders with 200 boulder problems) located along the boundary to the Rumbling Bald area of Chimney Rock State Park. The property contains a federally-listed endangered plant species, and helps to create a view-shed and buffer between the natural areas of the park and surrounding development.

The CCC has partnered with a number of non-profit outdoor groups to help fund-raise to finalize the purchase of this popular bouldering area from a private developer. The CCC is most excited about a recent partnership opportunity to work with the Rutherford Outdoor Coalition (ROC) to present a matching fund-raising campaign. The locally-based ROC is composed of individuals who also see the intrinsic value of land conservation in Hickory Nut Gorge and want to promote it for its excellent outdoor recreation opportunities. "A few years ago we did a short fund raising campaign to protect climbing at Rumbling Bald," said ROC President Jerry Stensland. "Shortly thereafter the State of North Carolina stepped in and began buying property for the park. We happily put the money in reserve awaiting an appropriate use and helping CCC acquire this tract is a perfect opportunity."

Both ROC and CCC were early advocates for the creation of a state park in the Gorge and are represented on the current park partners committee. The CCC sees the partnership with ROC as an ideal way to promote conservation of the natural resources that provide the high quality recreation resources for which Rutherford County is well known.

The CCC has partnered with other organizations such as the Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy to help assess and raise awareness for the protection of the endangered plant communities on the property. The CCC will fundraise over the next two years to pay off the loan and will work with the state on a climber-friendly management plan for the site and all of Rumbling Bald Mountain.

To Contribute to this project, please visit the Carolina Climbers Coalition website at www.carolinaclimbers.org. Click the contribute in the Save the boulders field in the upper left hand corner of the webpage. The Carolina Climbers Coalition and Rutherford Outdoor Coalition thank you for your generous support!