



Climbing Management Plan Goals:

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

Climber Safety

Climbing is an inherently dangerous sport. Responsibility for safe climbing rests solely with the individual climber. **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 Hidden Valley! The CCC does not provide supervision or 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. Seek professional help for rescues only in extreme cases where self rescue is simply not an option.

Hidden Valley Introduction:

Hidden Valley is located in Southwest Virginia, 10 miles north of Abingdon in Washington. The Hidden Valley cliff and trail system is recognized by the Commonwealth of Virginia as a Virginia Natural Treasure for its significant recreational resources that are open to the public. The property owned by the Carolina Climbers Coalition (CCC) includes over a mile of sandstone cliff line. There is a cliff line on both the left and right sides of Hidden Valley Rd. that are owned by the CCC. Hidden Valley is a sandstone cliff band ranging up to about 70 feet high. The climbing is mostly face climbing, with some large roofs, corners and aretes thrown in for good measure. Many of the 475 or so routes are well bolted sport climbs with a handful of trad and mixed routes. Grades range from 5.5 to 5.13, with a large number of 5.10s, 5.11s and 5.12s.

Some important points of information about Hidden Valley:

Although there are many sport routes here, many routes require traditional gear for adequate protection.

Rock quality varies greatly. Be weary of soft and sandy rock. Back up bolts in soft rock or bolts in poor condition.

Regarding access, much of the cliff at Hidden Valley is owned by the Carolina Climbers Coalition, which is working hard to maintain good relations with neighboring landowners. Please be respectful of parking closures initiated by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF). Please drive slowly on Hidden Valley Rd and be respectful of residents and other visitors.

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1.1 Access History

For many years, Hidden Valley was privately owned and open to the public thanks to the good will of the owners. After years of open climbing, the owners decided to close access to the cliffs to “friends only”. In 2014, with the help of the Access Fund, the CCC purchased the cliff line and access to it. In 2016, the CCC built a parking lot to provide access to the cliff.

1.2 Driving

Hidden Valley is located just North of Abingdon, VA. From Abingdon, take 19 North for a few miles. Keep an eye out for signs for Hidden Valley Lake / Hidden Valley Wildlife Area on the right and take a right there onto Hidden Valley Rd (state road 690). Drive up the paved road, hitting some steep switchbacks and then look for the CCC parking lot on the right. A trail across the street will lead you to the left-hand side cliffs and one from the lot will take you to the right-hand side. This is the preferred approach, but you can also hike up the road and access the cliff that way from the Brumley Mountain trail in the DGIF parking lot. Walk that trail just a short distance towards the woods and then take a left on an obvious trail. Follow that to the cliff. If you pass the Brumley Mountain Trail sign you missed the turn.

1.3 Parking

The new parking lot on CCC property is complete, open and should be the preferred lot for climbers at Hidden Valley. It's the large lot on the right at the top of the switchbacks, about 400 feet below the DGIF lot. Trails from here will lead you from the lot to the left-hand and right-hand side cliffs. Parking in this lot does not require a permit. Please maximize the spaces in the lot and park in a way so that others can easily get in and out as well. The DGIF owned Low Gap lot at the top of the hill is closed to climber parking from October 1 through January 7th for hunting season. Please respect this closure. If you wish to park there during the non-closure time you will need to acquire a day use permit or hold a valid Virginia hunting, fishing, or trapping license or boat registration. Details and links to that permit are [available on the DGIF website](#).

2.0 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.

2.1 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.

2.1.1 All anchors and hangers shall be stainless steel.

2.1.2 Minimum anchor standards shall be a 3” x 1/2” wedge anchor.
Please note that glue-ins may be necessary for soft rock.

2.1.3 All rap stations shall have non-degradable stainless hardware (i.e. no chains, no webbing nests, etc...) Fixe ring anchors® are preferred. The use of non-climbing specific hardware (i.e. home-made hangers, cold shuts, and chain) is prohibited at Hidden Valley.

2.1.4 The placement of new fixed anchors (i.e. bolting) will not be allowed when the ability to place removable protection is available. This includes new routes.

2.1.5 Fixed anchors should never be placed or added on an established route (i.e. retro bolting). An exception would be acquired consent from both the first ascent party and the CCC.

2.2 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.

2.2.1 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.

2.2.2 Bolt placement for the purpose of fixed belay/rappel stations will not exceed two (2) bolts.

2.3 Bolt Replacement

The Carolina Climbers Coalition has acquired replacement hardware for updating aging hardware on existing routes. Volunteers can replace bolts with the following considerations:

2.3.1 All new hardware must meet requirements outlined in 2.1

2.3.2 When replacing fixed anchors identified to be unsafe, replacement shall be 1 for 1, respecting the original nature of the climb.

2.3.3 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 EZCrete, Rectorseal® epoxy putty, or similar moldable epoxy putty product if deemed unusable.

2.3.4 Replaced bolts need to be documented via writing or email to the CCC. This documentation helps the CCC in potentially achieving grants for more replacement hardware.

2.3.5 Fixed hardware replacement should follow the CCC’s bolting policy, which can be found on our website:

<http://carolinaclimbers.org/about-ccc/boltingpolicy.html>

3.0 Route Development

New routes are allowed without prior approval, with the following considerations.

3.1 Hardware Standards

All new fixed anchors (i.e. bolts) must comply with standards listed under 2.1.

3.2 Mindful Routes

New routes should not negatively impact, or change the nature of surrounding existing routes

3.3 Limited Bolting

When removable protection is available (traditional gear), bolting is prohibited. Bolts put a maintenance burden on future generations of climbers while simultaneously lowering the bar of climber education needed in order to ascend a route with adequate protection. Camouflage bolts to limit the visual impact.

3.4 Documentation

Report completed routes to the CCC within 30 days of completion via info@carolinaclimbers.org

4.0 Rappelling

Rappelling for the sake of rappelling (i.e. sport rappelling) is prohibited. All routes can be rappelled with a 60 meter rope.

5.0 Trails/ Leave no Trace

5.1 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. The general public is permitted to conduct trail maintenance only under permission of the CCC.

5.2 Climbers will use Leave No Trace practices and take every precaution to ensure that the area remains in a natural condition.

5.3 Stay on existing trails. The intentional development of approach trails is prohibited, unless granted permission by the CCC.

5.4 All human waste should be buried at least 100 feet from climbing or bouldering areas in a 12 inch deep hole. Please try to use other bathroom facilities (there is a port-a-potty at the lake)

6.0 Rock Removal:

6.1 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).

6.2 Chipping of holds is strictly prohibited.

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

6.4 Climbers should not remove rocks and fossils from the CCC property.

7.0 Pets

It is strongly recommended to leave pets at home. When a dog barks at Hidden Valley, it rings through the entire valley below, creating potential disturbance for

residents on the mountain. CCC property also is adjacent to hunting property where hunting dogs are often used.

8.0 Fires

Fires are not permitted on CCC property.

9.0 Camping

There is no camping at the cliff, in the parking lot or on land owned by the CCC. Camping is available at Hidden Valley Lake. Continue past the parking area and follow the gravel road down to the lake. Take a left at the boating access sign and follow that to the camping area. [Riverside campground](#), located just south of Hidden Valley on 19 by the river is also recommended.

10.0 Commercial Guiding and Climbing Instruction

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:

10.1 AMGA Single Pitch Instructor, PCIA Single Pitch Instructor, PCGI Single Pitch Instructor or higher level certification

10.2 Wilderness First Aid (WFA) and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), or higher levels of certification.

10.3 Liability Insurance 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 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.

10.4 All instructors and guides wishing to use Hidden Valley for their services are required to file documents in proof of eligibility with the CCC one month prior to the use of Hidden Valley 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 to info@carolinaclimbers.org.

10.5 The guide or instructor will be permitted to serve no more than a five (5) clients at one time.

10.6 Groups of more than 10 individuals total (including guides) are not permitted.

11.0 Recue Plan

In the event of an emergency where self rescue is absolutely not an option, call 911. The CCC has worked with the Brumley Gap Fire Department and trail building volunteers to adapt the following rescue plans for each side of Hidden Valley.

Right Side: Emergency access will likely be completed via Skycraft Road at the Mini-Ship Wall, (GPS: 36.8334 N, 82.0839 W), or further right between the Ladder Wall and Microwave Wall (GPS: 36.8307 N, 82.0825 W).

Left Side: Emergency access will likely be completed from the private 4WD road that parallels well below the cliffs.
