



RED RIVER GORGE CLIMBERS' COALITION

www.rrgcc.org

Protecting, Promoting, and Ensuring Responsible Climbing



2005 ANNUAL REPORT

Dr. Bob Matheny, 2006 RRGCC President, climbing "Super Pinch"
Pendergrass-Murray Recreational Preserve, Lee Co, KY (Photo by Wes Allen)

Letter from the President

Two climbers founded the Red River Gorge Climbers' Coalition in November 1996 as a grassroots organization dedicated to advocating the interests of the rock climbing community to the US Forest Service. In 1993 the USFS banned climbers from installing new bolted safety anchors in the Gorge. The USFS lifted the bolting ban in 1996 but replaced it with severe restrictions on new climbing route development. These restrictions also threatened closure of entire climbing areas. Through the work of the RRGCC, blanket area closures were avoided and development of some new rock climbing routes was permitted.

In the late 1990's many climbers, avoided this bureaucratic red tape by focusing on developing new climbing routes on private land. An area of private land known as the Southern Region, located to the south of Red River Gorge proper, saw the bulk of this new route development. Quickly, the Southern Region became known both nationally and internationally for both the beauty and difficulty of its' climbing.

Recognizing that the threat of blanket climbing closures was even greater on private land than on public land, the RRGCC began to pursue the idea of securing climbing access through purchase of private land. Working with the Access Fund, a national climbing advocacy organization, the RRGCC identified a 700 acre tract in the Southern Region available for sale and executed an option to purchase it. Then in January 2004, the RRGCC made history by executing the largest direct US land purchase ever made by climbers to secure access.

Since the 700 acre Pendergrass-Murray Recreational Preserve was purchased in 2004, the RRGCC has established designated parking areas, installed signs, maintained trails, and developed

new climbing areas. In 2005 alone, over 40 new rock climbing routes were established on the Preserve. With over 200 existing climbs and the potential for hundreds of more routes, there is plenty of work to do, not the least of which is continuing to meet our obligations to pay for the property.

Even with the added responsibilities of owning and managing the Preserve, the RRGCC's work with the Forest Service continues. Though some additional route closures in the Gorge were implemented in 2005, the USFS continues to work on their plans to reopen closed portions of the popular Military Wall climbing area by "hardening" the archaeological site with protective matting. Involvement in the USFS recreational planning process for Red River Gorge called Limits of Acceptable Change has been an important RRGCC concern in 2005.

As summer 2005 ended, a new era of Red River Gorge climbing was heralded by the release of Ray Ellington's new climbing guidebook with 20% of the profits being donated to the RRGCC by Wolverine publishing. This was punctuated with a cover picture and feature article of Red River Gorge climbing appearing in Urban Climber magazine. No doubt, Red River Gorge will be a premier destination for an ever increasing number of climbers from around the world in 2006.



Bill Strachan, President

Activities

Pendergrass-Murray Recreational Preserve

- 40+ new rock climbing routes were developed in cooperation with PMRP Property Manager, Bob Matheny. PMRP climbing was featured in Crag Du Jour section of Rock & Ice magazine. PMRP climbing also appeared in Fall/Winter 2005 issues of Rock & Ice magazine, Urban Climber Magazine, and Climbing Magazine.
- Completed installation of Preserve signage and continued to upgrade trail system.
- Held 1st Annual Johnny & Alex Adopt-A-Crag Day in which over 50 volunteers conducted trail construction and route development activities.
- Wrote PMRP Introductory / Rules section for new Wolverine guidebook.
- Pursued negotiated Mediation Agreement in lawsuit with Charmane Oil.

Daniel Boone National Forest

- At least one member of the RRGCC, Board of Directors has been in attendance at each Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) Workshop. Some ten climbers are either regular LAC Workshop attendees or have shown an active interest in the process.
- RRGCC provided field assistance to USFS to confirm climbing route locations. USFS provided timely notification to RRGCC of route closures after fencing was placed. Route closure information was then immediately posted on RRGCC website.
- RRGCC communicated with Access Fund Policy Director, concerning LAC, USFS/SHPO Archaeological Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) & Military Wall project. RRGCC reviewed archaeological site hardening research grant proposal submitted to Access Fund by USFS employee. Grant was approved.

Events / Local Community Involvement

- RRGCC Rap n' Rawkus 2005 spring event at Miguel's Pizza premiered *Red River Ruckus* climbing video and was attended by ≈ 300 people. Rocktoberfest 2005 fall event at Torrent Falls was attended by ≈120 people and included first ever RRGCC sponsored outdoor climbing competition.
- Joined Lee County Chamber of Commerce. Held climber breakfast meeting with Wolfe County Industrial Board.
- Supported "Climbers Who Care" charity event & paid for band.
- Discussed vehicle break-in problem with Lee and Wolfe County Sheriff.

Climbing Community Education / Outreach

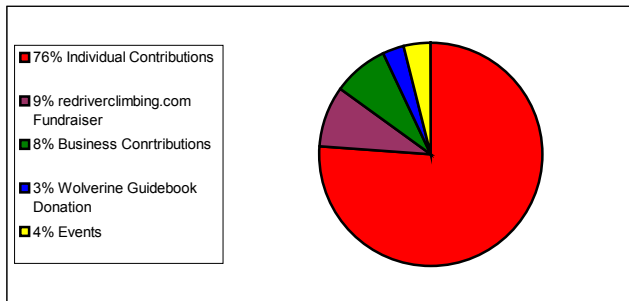
- Completed work on new RRGCC website including link from forum to front page allowing timely posting of announcements, route closures, etc.
- Area Reports provided by RRGCC were published in Access Fund, Vertical Times #63, August 2005 and # 65, December 2005.
- RRGCC placed "Responsible Climbing" advertisement in new Wolverine guidebook.
- Held RRGCC Leadership Social event at Eagleview Resort.

Organizational Development

- RRGCC adopted revised Articles of Incorporation and new Bylaws. 501(c)(3) application was submitted to IRS requesting formal approval of tax exempt status.
- RRGCC Board of Directors adopted Conflict of Interest Policy.
- Three Board members attended Access Fund regional summit in Carbondale, IL.

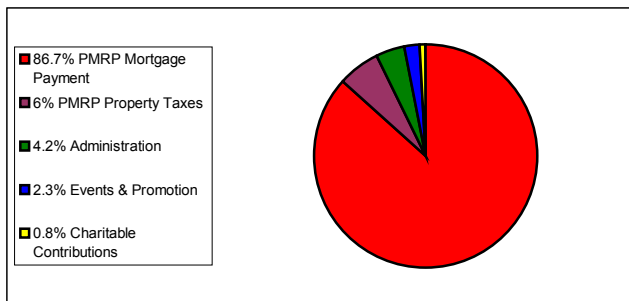
Vital Statistics / Information

2005 Funding Sources



Total Funding - \$39,728.07

2005 Expenditures



Total Expenditures - \$33,889.03

Analysis of Red River Gorge Climbing

Number of Climbing Routes in 1998 Bronaugh Guidebook – ≈1,000

Number of Climbing Routes in 2005 Ellington Guidebook – ≈1,300

All Climbing Routes

- 29.6% Private (Secured)
- 9.5% Private (Unsecured)
- 8.7% Private (Closed)
- 50.2% USFS (Open)
- 1.9% USFS (Closed)

Total Routes – 1,487

Open Climbing by Region

- 53.6% Red River Gorge Proper
- 25.3% Natural Bridge Region
- 21.1% Southern Region

Total Open Routes – 1,392

2005 Board of Directors

Bill Strachan, President
 Tim Powers, Vice President
 Bob Matheny, Secretary
 Ryan Adams, Treasurer

Shannon Stuart-Smith
 Gretchen Finniff
 Wes Allen

Business Partners

RRGCC 2005 Rap n' Rawkus

Miguel's Pizza (Event Location)
Red Bull
Victory Productions
Odub
Arno Ilgner / Warriors Way & The Desiderata Institute
Red River Outdoors

1st Annual John Bronaugh & Alex Yeakley Memorial Adopt-a-Crag Day

Title Sponsor Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI)
Presenting Sponsor W.L. Gore
Contributing Sponsor CLIF BAR
The Access Fund
Torrent Falls Climbing Adventure / Mark's Mountain BBQ (Après Event Location)
Miguel's Pizza
Red River Outdoors
Muir Valley
Mountain Gear
True North Outfitters
Wolverine Publishing
J&H Lanmark Store

RRGCC Rocktoberfest 2005

Torrent Falls B&B / Mark's Mountain BBQ (Event Location)
Miguel's Pizza
Red Bull
Red River Outdoors
Arno Ilgner / Warriors Way & The Desiderata Institute
Mountain Gear
J & H Lanmark Store
The Benchmark Outfitters
Phillip Gall's Outdoor & Ski
RockQuest Climbing Center
Wolverine Publishing
OutrageGIS Mapping
Evolve
Victory Productions

In Memoriam

John Bronaugh & Alex Yeakley
Ben Kreig
Steve Must Memorial Scholarship
http://www.ucmc.org/must_pages/must_home.html