

Red River Gorge Climbers' Coalition

2019 Annual Report



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Executive Director Emeritus

We are dedicated to securing and protecting open, public access to rock climbing in Red River Gorge, Kentucky and promoting conservation of the environment on the lands where we climb.

A Letter from the President:

If 2019 showed us anything, it is that rock climbing isn't just a passing fad. Last year we saw some of the biggest crowds in our parking lots, trails, and crags. The community found out about a plan to build a resort next to natural bridge state park and we saw many new businesses open in response to the growing demand. Even in the colder weekends of the winter, usually empty walls saw crowds.

Our mission at the RRGCC is securing and protecting open, public access to rock climbing in the Red and promoting conservation of the environment on the lands where we climb. With the tremendous growth and popularity of climbing, this mission has become more challenging. Last year we furthered out Gym-to-Crag programs with the intent of educating new climbers, and old, on some of the ways in which the users of RRGCC lands can help us further our mission.

We can't do it alone. I'd like to take a second to say thank you to our supporters for helping to further protect the land we all know and love. Thank you to the person who speaks up at the parking lot, gently reminding out of towners that they shouldn't block oil equipment or the road. Thank you to the group that asks the over rambunctious dog's owner to please leash their pet. Thank you to the people I see cleaning up micro trash at the crag and taking a last look before leaving an area to make sure they left no trace. A huge thank you to all of our volunteers and supporters. Maintaining the trails, roads, and bridges we sometimes take for granted is a HUGE effort and we couldn't do it without your help.

A quick drive down 11 shows a lot of changes to our little corner of Eastern Kentucky. With these changes, we, as a community, will continue to change. I feel we have done a great job organizing the crowds and limiting impact and we will continue to do it with your help. We will continue to promote responsible climbing and land use. We have 10+ gym-to-crag presentations planned for this year. If you would like to see one at your gym please let us know.

Speaking of changes, our Executive Director, Ashlee Milanich, accepted a job with the American Alpine Club last year. Ashlee was an integral part of the RRGCC. She ran many of the Gym-to-Crag presentations and organized all of the logistics. She also organized and ran all Coalition events including Rocktoberfest. Ashlee will be sorely missed but we are all very excited for her in her new position. If you know Ashlee or see her around please thank her for her tireless effort in helping the RRGCC further our mission. Ashlee, thank you so much for everything you did for the coalition -- I know you will be awesome at the AAC. They are lucky to have you.

Rocktoberfest 2019 was, yet again, a huge success. The festival saw over 1,000 attendees, 35 sponsors and 13 clinics. The proceeds from RF were over \$50,000. That money will be used to help pay on our mortgage for Bald Rock Fork and maintain trails and roads to the other RRGCC lands. This year showed the return of the crowd favorite Dyno Competition. Thank you to Justin Minard and Kris Hampton for putting on an awesome show! The forest service and the RRGCC also signed a Memorandum of Understanding to better coordinate on access, trail projects, natural resource education, and mitigating climber's impact.

Climbing is inherently dangerous. Nothing cemented that more, for me personally, than the loss of Marty Vogel last year. Marty was a huge supporter of the RRGCC, The RRG Fixed Gear Initiative, Muir Valley and the Red in general. Marty's death hit us at the RRGCC particularly hard. He was a mentor, friend, and inspiration to more people than I can count. Marty's loss will be felt for years. The RRGCC has communicated with other organizations in the area and we plan to memorialize Marty's legacy. We are still working out the details and will update the community when more information is available.

In the new year the RRGCC plans to continue educating new climbers with our Gym-to-crag programs. We will also continue to search for new land that fits with our mission of protecting climbing in the red. We will work with the forest service to try to identify areas that have potential new climbing where it does not impact archaeological artifacts and/or endangered species. We are also supporting a second economic impact study to gather new numbers to compare to the previous one.

Thank you to all of our Supporters and Volunteers!

Sincerely,



Adam Gregory
President

Climbing in the Red

Growth of Climbing

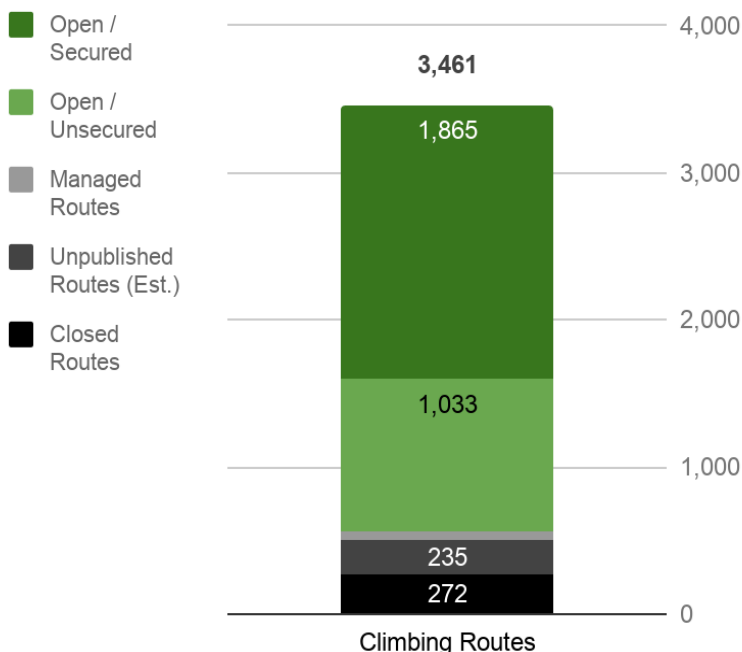
Routes in 1998 Bronaugh Guidebook:
≈ 1,000

Routes in 2005 Ellington Guidebook:

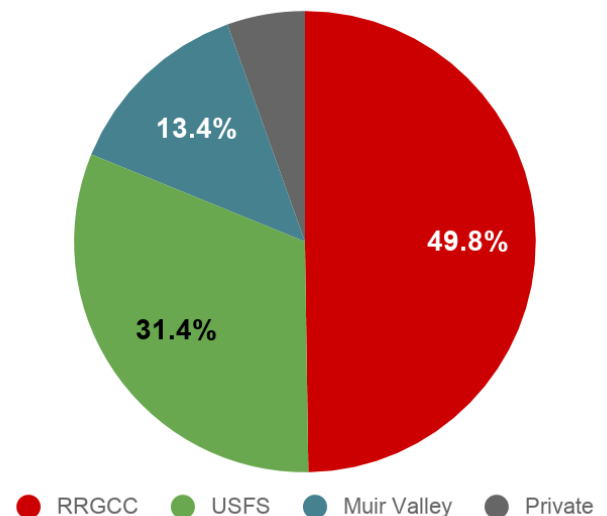
SIGNED: Memorandum of Understanding

The MOU formalizes our partnership with the U.S. Forest Service moving forward as it pertains to improving access, trail projects, natural resource education, and mitigating climber's impact.

Routes By Access



Open Routes by Owner



Climbers spend an estimated \$3.8 million dollars in the regional economy each year.*

* Economic Impact of Rock Climbing in the Red River Gorge, KY (2018 Update)

Land Management

1,161
Acres

1,225
Hours
of Work

18 Miles
of
Trails

1.6
Miles of
Road



Trail Days

- Johnny & Alex Trail Day
- Rocktoberfest Trail Day
- Trail Education Day
- 20+ organized trail days

New Trails

- Entrance to Motherlode with new bridge
- Entrance to Chocolate Factory
- Trail to Pharmacy
- Trails to Hole in the Wall

Slope Restoration

- Grandpa Joe lumber stairs & terracing
- Nursery stone terracing
- Velo Wall stone reinforcement

New Crags

- Hole In the Wall

Maintenance Items

- Miller Fork Pit Toilet servicing
- Rebenching at:
 - North 40
 - Velo Crag
 - Miller Fork East
- New stone steps at Drive-By Crag
- Storm damage repair:
 - Miller Fork Bridges
 - Miller Fork Shortcut Trail

Roads & Parking

- Miller Fork Road
 - Repairs to storm damage
 - New gravel

Volunteers & Events

Our Amazing Volunteers

- **Rocktoberfest:**
91
- **Johnny & Alex Trail Day:** 85
- **Other Trail Days:**
68
- **From 5 Groups:**
78
- **Individuals:**
11

Rocktoberfest Stats:

- Over 1,000 attendees
- 35 Sponsors
- 13 clinics
- Dyno Comp & Climbing Comp
- bands & 2 DJ's

Trail Days

- Over \$50,000 net proceeds!
- Johnny & Alex Trail Day
- Rocktoberfest Trango Trail Day
- Climber Trail Days (4)
- Group / Club Trail Days (6)

Fundraisers

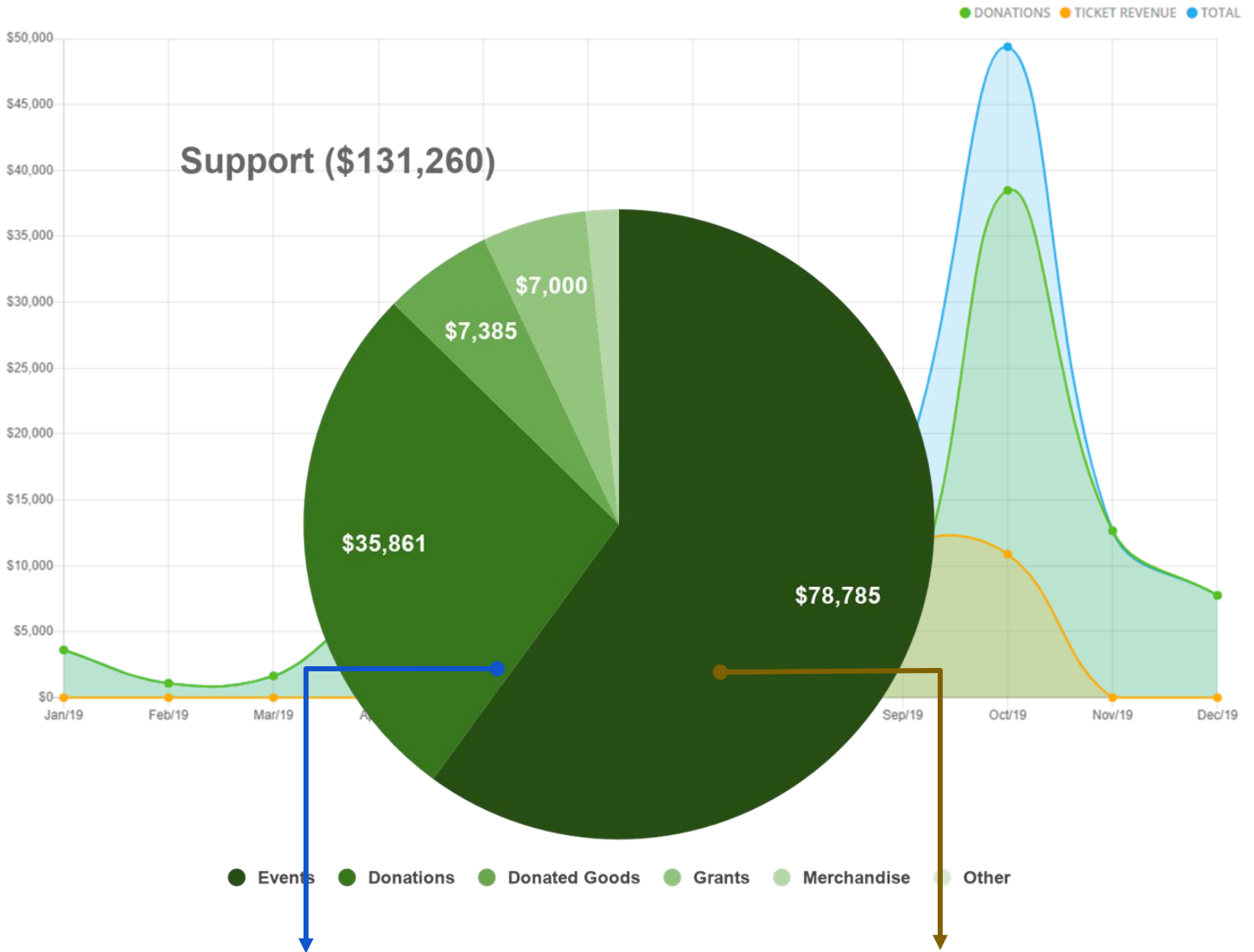
- Rocktoberfest
- Red River Reunion
- Sixth for a Cause
- MadTree Charity of the month

Gym-to-Crag Presentations

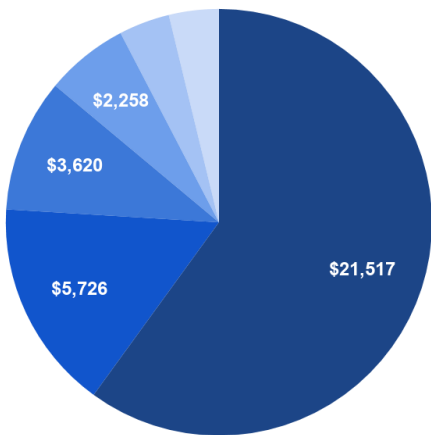
- LEF, Lexington, KY
- Cleveland Rock Gym, Cleveland, OH
- Hoosier Heights, Indianapolis, IN
- First Ascent, Chicago, IL
- Mosaic, Cincinnati, OH
- Planet Rock, Ann Arbor, MI
 - 75+ climbers attended



Finances: Support

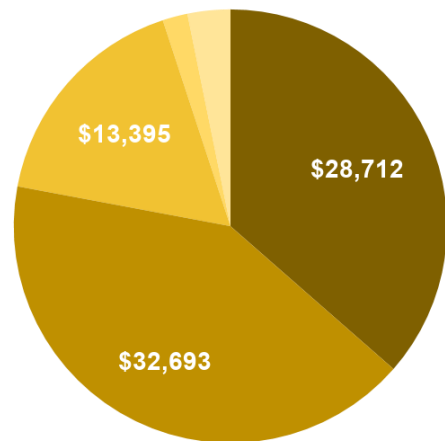


Donations by Type (\$35,861)



● One-Time ● Percent of Sales ● Recurring ● Payroll / Matching
● Access Fund Joint Membership ● Corporate

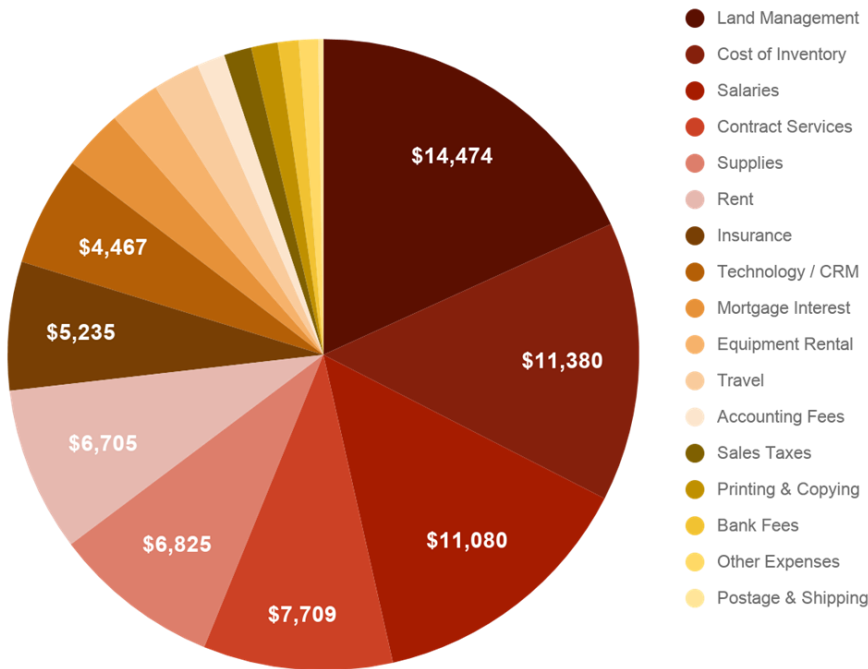
Events (\$78,785)



● Rocktoberfest Sponsorships ● Rocktoberfest Tickets
● Rocktoberfest Event Revenue ● Rocktoberfest Donations
● Small Event Revenue

Finances: Expenses

Expenses (\$79,494)



2019 Capital Expenditures

- **Principal Payments**
 - Bald Rock Fork: \$51,261
- **Conservation Easement**
 - Access Fund: \$10,000



Treasurer's Notes:

Bald Rock Fork Payoff

In 2017 the RRGCC established the Bald Rock Fork Recreational Preserve (BRRP) with the purchase of the land surrounding the Motherlode, Chocolate Factory, & Bear's Den. This was funded in part with a \$225,000 loan from the Access Fund.

We have made great progress towards paying off this loan with almost \$175,000 repaid over three years. We have \$51,000 to go which we plan payoff in 2020.

This will mark the third successful climber-funded land acquisition in the Red River Gorge. This purchase was made possible by our donors, corporate sponsors, and the Access Fund's Climbing Conservation Loan Program.

Grants & Reserved Funds

When the RRGCC receives a grant there may be stipulations as to how those funds may be used. In those cases, we hold and track those funds separately to ensure they are used solely for their designated purpose.

Currently, we have reserved funds from the Arches Foundation for use in building and maintaining pit toilets. We have installed one toilet in Miller Fork and have plans for a second in Bald Rock Fork.

Conservation Easement

The RRGCC and Access Fund recorded two permanent easements to strengthen conservation and recreation protections at all three climbing areas owned by the Coalition.

The Access Fund now holds permanent conservation and recreation easements on the properties, providing backup and support for RRGCC's long-term commitment.

The RRGCC pledged \$20,000 to the Access Fund to support the upfront legal costs and on ongoing maintenance expenses for holding the easements. The second half of this pledge is due in 2020.

Grants Awarded for 2020

Access Fund Climbing Conservation Grant

With a \$2,000 matching grant from the Access Fund we are supporting Dr. Maples and his team at Eastern Kentucky University with an update to the economic impact study of rock climbers in the Red River Gorge area.

American Alpine Club Cornerstone Conservation Grant

The RRGCC was awarded a \$6,000 grant for trail development, belay base reinforcement, and conservation work on a new crag that will hopefully be announced later this year.

Donors & Sponsors

The following list recognizes cash contributions during the calendar year 2019. Sponsors, volunteers, and donors who made in-kind contributions or gifts of their time, for which we are also grateful, are not included on this list.

\$5,000+

Quantrell Subaru

Outdoor Research

\$2,000+

Access Fund
Ale-8-One Bottling Company, Inc.
Black Diamond, Inc.
ClimbStuff.com (Sherrill, Inc.)
Jordan Wesolek
Petzl America

Tanya Jackson
The American Alpine Club
West Sixth Brewing
Wolfe County Tourism

\$1,000+

American Online Giving Foundation
Arches Foundation
Facebook, Inc.
Matthew & Mardi Roberts
Melissa Bellew
Roads Rivers and Trails

RockQuest
Rose Vogel
SCARPA North America, Inc.
Sterling Rope Company, Inc.
Wolverine Publishing

\$500+

Aclipse Campervans
Adidas / FiveTen
AmazonSmile Foundation
Cathy Baker
DMM International Ltd.
Dunbar Family Foundation
David & Marryanne Foster / GCF Grant
J&H Lanmark, Inc.
Jerry Kripal
Joe Dunbar
Joern Putschke
Kipp Trummel
Kroger Community Rewards

La Sportiva NA
Michael Murray
Noah Kaufman
Patagonia, Inc.
Progressive Casualty Insurance Company
Quest Outdoors
RAB USA LLC
Recreational Equipment, Inc.
Send Climbing LLC
Trango / Tenaya
Tyler Yarbrough
Wave Tools Therapy

\$250+

Bill Strachan
Brooke Alison
Carl Virost
Chelsea Willis
Clifton Gifford
Dan Chandler
James McSherry
Jennifer Beaulieu

Jereme Ransick
Jonathan Bruns
Michael Hargis
Miles Smith
Paul Pearson
Ray Ringle
Robert Whitford
Wendy Volkman