

Red River Gorge Climbers' Coalition

2022 Annual Report



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jake Ellis

President

Jereme Ransick

Vice President

Briana Mazzolini-Blanchard

Secretary

Matthew Fronck

Treasurer

Curtis Gale-Dyer

Land Manager

Amber Garvey

Brian Ogawa

Cat Runner

Colin Howell

Curtis Rogers

Jonathan Bruns

Nicholas Hart

Sam North

Billy Simek

Executive Director

Bill Strachan

Executive Director Emeritus

Zane Paff

Land Maintenance Assistant



[Photo: Billy Simek]

Our Mission

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.

Our Strategy

- First secure the highest quality climbing opportunities, whether on public or private land
- Make climbing sustainable for climbers and the environment
- Provide exemplary stewardship of the natural environment on the lands where we climb
- Educate climbers about access issues, encourage them to take "ownership" for their behavior and its impact on access



A Letter from the Director:

What did I promise last year? Probably something crazy like going to the moon. Well, between the painkillers my doctors prescribed when I broke my leg and the productivity everyone else had, I'd say we got pretty close. Access Fund must have thought so too, recognizing the RRGCC with a **Land Conservation Award** for paying off the BRRP. Overall, **2022 was a year of capital projects & big-picture management planning**, on top of another round of kickass events and fundraising. You can thank our Board of Directors, land management team, & volunteers for putting in the hard work to make this happen, but don't forget to pat yourself & your fellow donors on the back for supporting the RRGCC and its mission. For that, we thank YOU!

We started off with a much needed overhaul of the **Coal Bank hollow access road & parking lot**, subsidized by a **Climbing Conservation Grant** from Access Fund for \$3,500. By the time summer was cooking, a torrential downpour triggered flash flooding throughout the Gorge, **washing out many of our bridges & parts of the Miller Fork road**. Either I brought bad luck the past three years or Al Gore was right. In any case, an added culvert & some hefty grading got things back in shape. Meanwhile, over in PMRP, these rain events the past few years were **cutting the Drive-By parking lot in half**. So we sent in the backhoes one more time to fix the drainage flowing straight into the lot and patch up the ever-growing fissure. With each of these projects, we look to **not only repair, but improve** each area so that they can better withstand the wear for years to come.

Improvements didn't end with road work; however, as we collaborated with a number of conservation groups, LCOs, & government agencies on our growing management reach. I attended Access Fund's third **'Future of Fixed Anchors'** conference in Utah this past summer, gleaning all sorts of knowledge regarding route development policies, re-bolting, rope access safety, & federal management plans. Upon bringing this back to Kentucky, our Access committee released a new **route developer MOU for bolting on our properties** and intend to look more closely into re-bolting efforts around the Gorge. Beyond that, RRGCC worked with the Forest Service on its new **Red River Gorge management plan** to ensure crag stewardship projects were included. And lastly, RRGCC & Muir Valley sent nine folks to Access Fund's **Climbing Advocacy Conference** to discuss our most pressing issues in the LCO world & how to improve upon these topics in the Gorge. Both our DEI chair, Briana, and I presented about protecting cultural resources & the economic impact of climbing, respectively.

Our DEI committee keeps plowing forward, growing our Climb L8 program inside and even sending it outside for the first time — Rock L8! We hosted **16 free climbing events** with our regional gym partners and added **two free outdoor trips** right here in the Red River Gorge, one supported by a grant through **Climbing for Change** & the other from our friends at **Muir Valley**. Other events rolled on, with Rocktoberfest growing to such a juggernaut that I may have overbooked the amount of space we had available at Land of the Arches. Sponsors & climbers flocked from across the globe to the tune of **\$100,000 in gross revenue!**

Well I'm about to run out of space, but not before I mention the incredible work our land management collective pulled together in 2022. Through a grant from **Athletic Brewing**, Access Fund was able to send its amazing Conservation Team to tackle the massive project of **fixing the belay base near 'Monobrow' at Rival Wall**. Additional stone terracing also improved erosion control at Bronaugh wall, Playground, & the Nursery. New bridges were installed at Chocolate Factory, Fruit wall got a new trail to its left side, Patagonia ambassadors even helped with a huge, ongoing project at Chica Bonita. There is way more out there, so go enjoy it for yourself and remember to **sign up as an RRGCC member** so we can keep this train rolling!



Billy Simek, Executive Director



2023 Strategic Focus

Functional Initiatives

Access & Acquisitions

1. Commitment to new climbing access in at least 1 of 3 open opportunities
2. Improved outreach & communication with private landowners
3. Educate public on bolting & access issues as well as the developer MOU for RRGCC land.

Conservation and Stewardship

1. Road maintenance
2. Conservation improvements
3. Nursery, Bornaugh, and Chaos rehab
4. Continue to build relationships with the Forest Service

Education, DEI, and Outreach

1. Continue to grow and fundraise for Climb L8, Rock L8, and other DEI initiatives
2. Continue Gym-to-Crag program
3. Build and improve Indigenous relations as it pertains to stewardship and conservation



Operational Initiatives

Governance

1. Elevate & improve use of committees and new member onboarding to improve Coalition effectiveness
2. Define responsibilities of additional staff
3. Continue implementation of policy & procedure additions & updates

Operations

1. Continued implementation and documentation of bookkeeping, accounting, and other process improvements
2. Create proactive processes and documentation for potential future land acquisitions

Fundraising and Membership

1. Maintain or increase membership count & revenue
2. Apply for grants for specific committee & organization needs

Events and Sponsorships

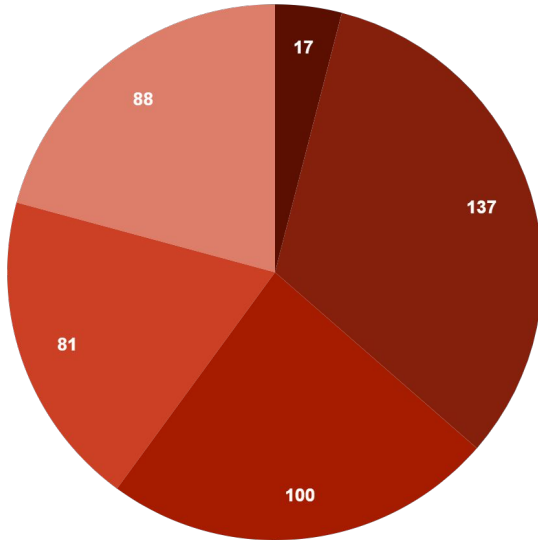
1. Expand relationships with new sponsors for large and small events
2. Increase the number of small events in 2023
3. Better incorporate education and DEI programs in small events

Marketing & Communications

1. Develop annual marketing & communications plan
2. Promote & advertise RRGCC activities & events
3. Investigate RRGCC merchandise sales & fulfillment

Membership Program

Member Base (423 total)



● Annual Tier 1 ● Annual Tier 2 ● Annual Tier 3 ● Monthly Tier 2 ● Monthly Tier 3



Membership Tiers & Incentives

Tier 1 (\$35/year)

- Member sticker
- Limited member discounts

Tier 2 (\$65/year or \$5/month)

- Member t-shirt & sticker
- Applicable member discounts

Tier 3 (\$125/year or \$10/month)

- RRGCC beanie
- Member t-shirt & sticker
- Additional member discounts

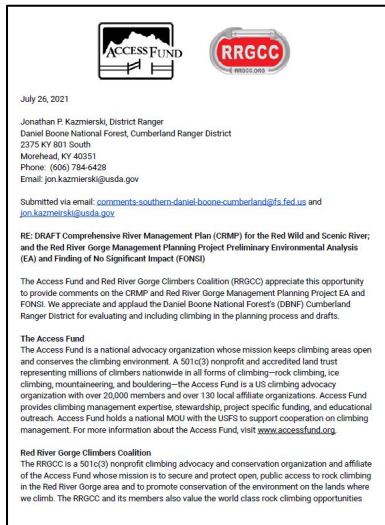
Membership Sponsors

- Aclipse Campervans
- Red River Gorgeous
- Lago Linda Hideaway
- Hoosier Heights Gyms
- Daniel Boone Coffee Shop
- Gnarly Nutrition
- BedRock RRG
- Muir Valley
- Rockquest
- Miguel's Pizza
- RockSport
- One Love Hemp

To find more details and sign up to become a member, follow the link below --
RRGCC Membership Page: <https://rrgcc.org/membership>

Access & Acquisitions

USFS Management Plan



The RRGCC worked with the Access Fund to review and comment on the USFS Red River Gorge Management Planning and Comprehensive River Management Plan. This plan was signed in 2022!

Advocated for...

- Trails & Access
- Support for Education
- Partner with Climbers
- Managing Cliffside Access
- Clifty Wilderness Fixed Anchors
- Roads & Parking
- New Climbing Routes and Areas

Recent Developments

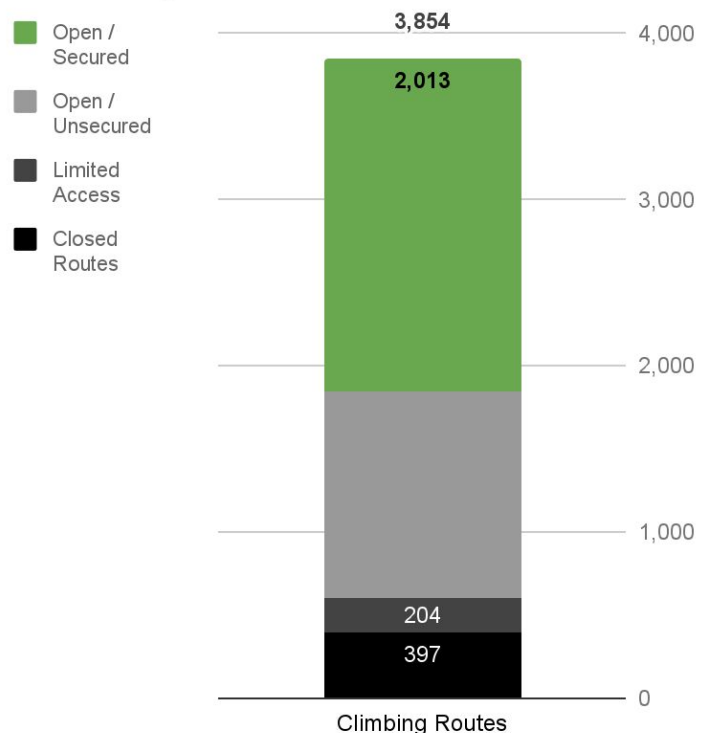
- Coordinated with USFS on the signing of the Management Plan (2022)
- Bolting MOU and Route Submission Form creation (2022)

Current Opportunities:

- Purchase (1) / Donation (1) / Lease (1)

Climbing in the Red

Routes By Access



Bolting & Route Development

The RRGCC has created a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for use between RRGCC and route developers to establish improved route development framework. Additionally, a route submission form has been create to track new routes developed on RRGCC property.

Visit: <https://rrgcc.org/bolting/>

Conservation & Stewardship



1200
Hours
of Work

1.6
Miles of
Road

1,161
Acres

23
Miles of
Trails

Update from the Land Manager:

With the BRRP mortgage paid off last year, we were able to funnel some extra cash toward stewardship projects for our roads, trails, & crags in 2023. Some of our biggest infrastructure benefited greatly, with road work in the Miller Fork, Coal Bank, & Drive-By areas. A few grants helped move other stewardship projects along as well, with major belay base work at Rival Wall thanks to Access Fund's Conservation Team & Athletic Brewing!

JATD also finally returned to it's normal, one-day format with over 100 volunteers & 12 successful projects across our properties! Many of these projects had instant impacts, while others were part of larger trail or crag overhauls.

There is always more work to be done, so keep an eye out for volunteer opportunities and some of our new projects coming up in 2023!



2022 Highlights

- Three weeks of rock terracing to rebuild Rival wall belay base
- New bridges at Chocolate Factory
- Erosion control projects at Bronaugh wall, Playground, & the Nursery
- Crag infrastructure for a sustainable opening at the Lumber Yard
- Another round of flood repairs on roads, bridges, and trails
- Repair Drive-By parking lot and improve drainage
- New Miller East & Fruit wall trails



Education DEI, and Outreach

Climb L8

Gym initiative which exists to remove systemic and financial barriers to entry into rock climbing and facilitate a safer space in the rock climbing gym for Black, Indigenous, people of color, LGBTQIA+, adaptive, first time climbers, and those without financial means. The goal of Climb L8 is to work to break down those barriers in climbing and bring people together by building community, empowering and amplifying underrepresented voices, and making space to learn together.

Climb L8 offers free admissions and rentals at partnering local climbing gyms for the communities described above.

- 16 events in three states serving over 300 individuals
- Partnering with Climb Time Oakley, Rock Quest, North Mass Boulder and LEF Climbing
- Received thousands of dollars in donations from Ale 8 One, Muir Valley, Access Fund, and many others.

Rock L8

Gym to the Crag initiative which exists to introduce first time climbers and those from marginalized backgrounds to the sport of outdoor rock climbing in the Red River Gorge.

- Hosted 2 Outdoor trips in 2022
- Partnered with local businesses and nonprofits to make the trips possible
- Introduced over 30 individuals to rock climbing in the Red River Gorge.

Gym-to-Crag

In depth discussions about what to expect for your first time climbing outside and how to be a good steward of the land.

- 7 Gym to Crag events in 2022
- Connected with 2 universities, 4 climbing gyms, and hosted one virtual presentation.
- Created educational videos on Gym to Crag ethics with a grant we received in 2021 from Access Fund.

The Opportunities Ahead In 2023

- In 2023 we plan to host 18 Climb L8 events, providing free climbing in Lexington, Cincinnati, and Indianapolis.
- Introduce 30 individuals from marginalized and underrepresented communities to outdoor rock climbing in the Red River Gorge.
- Host at least 6 Gym to Crag events, connecting with local gyms, climbing clubs, and universities across the tri-state.



The Red River Gorge Climbers' Coalition is committed to promoting diversity in all facets of climbing. We are dedicated to creating safer spaces in the outdoors and want everyone to feel welcome on our property.

The outdoors are for everyone.

Fundraising & Events

Rocktoberfest

2022 was another successful year! With new sponsors like The North Face, YETI, Bailout Systems, and Elemental Climbing we were able to add new and exciting things to the event.

We would like to thank all of those that showed support and attended the event. We hope to see you next year!

- Gross revenue over \$100k!
- Over 1000 attendees
- 17 Clinics with Pro Climbers & Guides
- New Holler Dash event presented by Scarpa

Films and presentations:

- *The Crux Documentary*
- *Prerna Dagni - The Climbing Initiative*
- *Climber Panel by The Struggle Climbing Show*
- *RRGCC Legacy Awards*



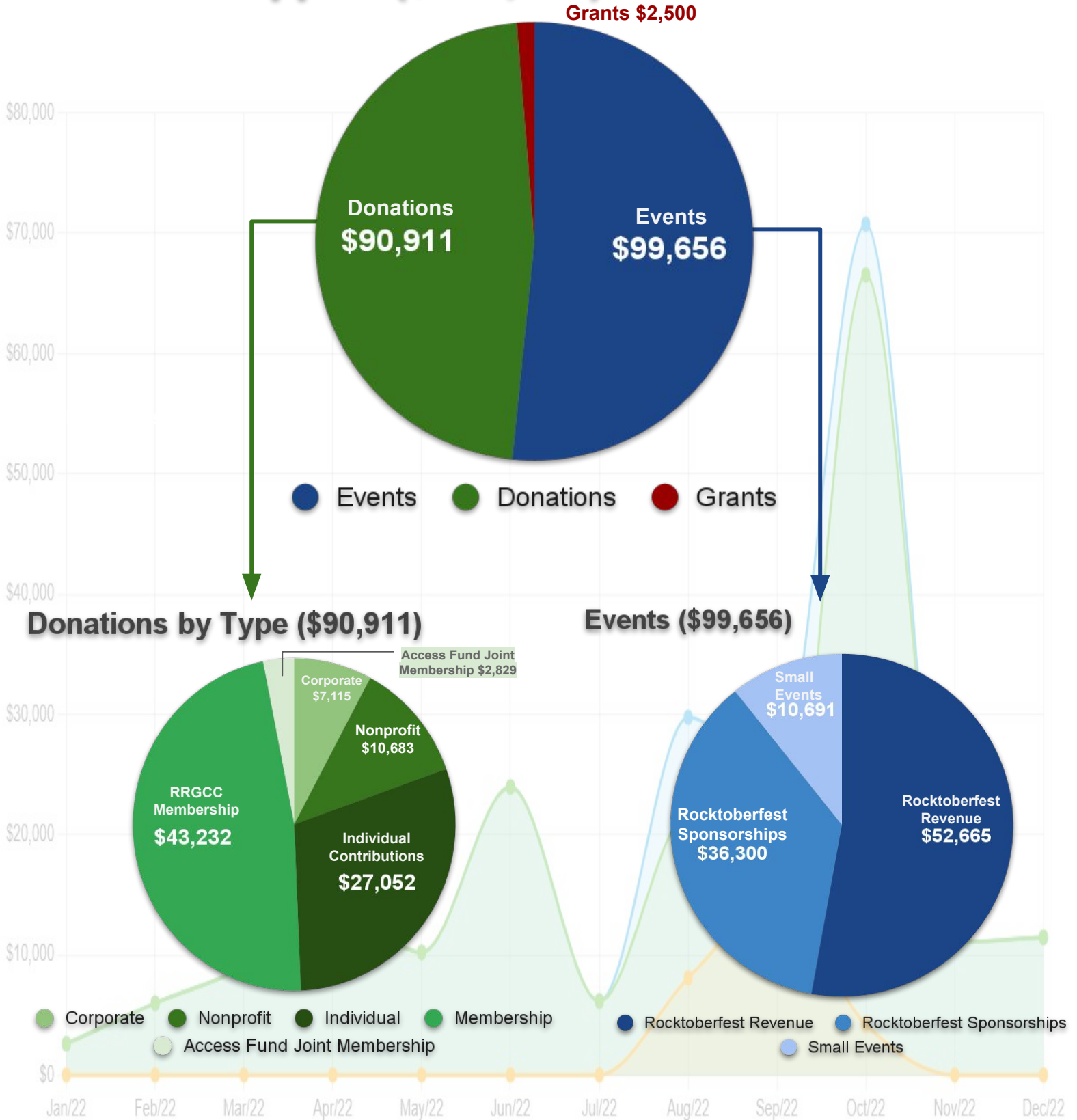
Johnny & Alex Trail Day

Despite the heat and the rain, JATD was a huge success in 2022. A big thanks for Lago Linda's Hideaway for hosting us again this year!

- Over 100 volunteers
- 12 projects completed

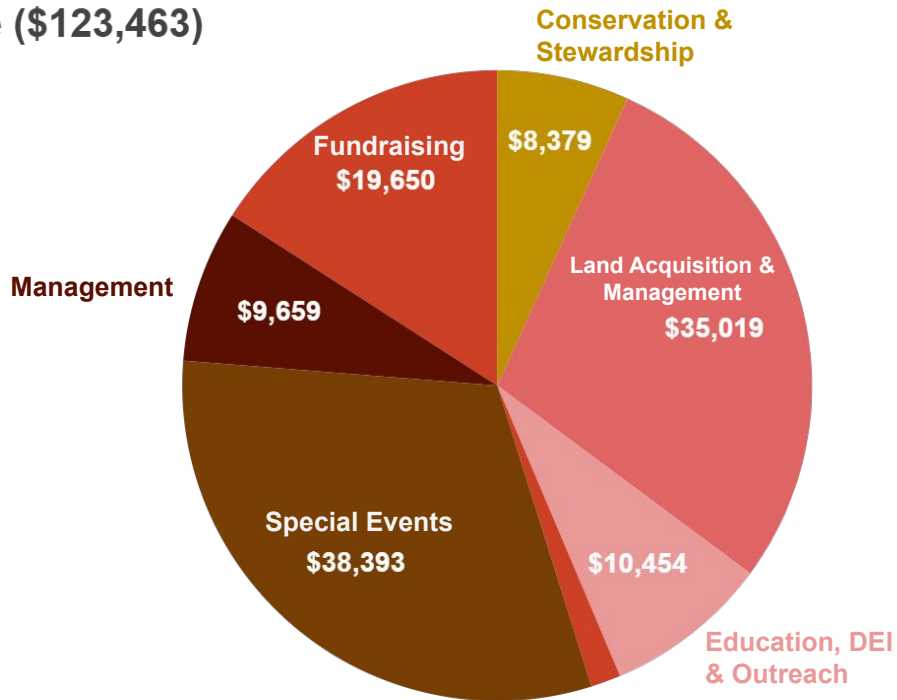
Finances: Support

Support (\$193,067)



Finances: Expenses

Expense (\$123,463)



- Conservation & Stewardship
- Recreational Land Acquisition & Management
- Education, DEI & Outreach
- Advocacy & Research
- Special Events
- Management & General
- Fundraising

2022 Capital Expenditures

Capital expenditures are not included in the RRGCC statement of activity, rather they added to our balance sheet.

- In 2022, the organization paid approximately \$20,000 to repair roads and parking lots.

Coal Bank Road	\$13,600
Hell Creek Road	\$1,790

Drive By Parking Lot	\$2,250
Miller Fork Road	\$2,280



Donors & Sponsors

\$5,000+

Anonymous
Access Fund
The North Face
Quantrell Subaru
YETI

\$2,000+

Jereme Ransick
Kerri Libbe and Doug Bunce
Ale-8-One Bottling Company, Inc.
Bailout Systems
Black Diamond Equipment, Ltd
Elemental Climbing
LEF / Mosaic Climbing Gyms
Maker's Mark
Petzl America, Inc.
Quest Outdoors
Sterling Ropes
West Sixth Brewing

\$1,000+

Anonymous
Beck Kloss
Faye Camahalan
Michael Murray
Van Wombwell
American Alpine Club
Arc'teryx
Beattyville Lee County Tourism
CAMP
Gnarly Nutrition
J&H Lanmark
Joshua Tree Skin Care
La Sportiva NA
Miguel's Pizza
Patagonia
RAB USA LLC
Rock Garden
SCARPA
Trango / Tenaya
Wild Country
Wolfe County Tourism

\$500+

Jonathan Bruns
Bill Strachan
Bob & Donna Simek
Hoang Nguyen
Ben Walling
Peter Hislop
Maxwell McDonald
Joern Putschke
Jerry Kripal
Mandy Hostetler
Country Boy Brewing
Aclipse Campervans
Athletic Brewing
Evolv
El Cap Holdings, LLC
First Ascent Game
Hop's
Kroger Community Rewards
K. Servant
Mammut
Mimic Holds
Patty Law
Physivantage
Rock On Climbing Gear
Rocky Talkie
Rubbish Ropes
Sassy Olive
Send Climbing
So iLL
The Armaid Company, Inc.
Wild Country
Wolverine Publishing
WVU Tech
Greater Cincinnati Native
American Coalition
NCW

\$250+

Dan Chandler
Michael Bond
Dave Phelps
Steven Helton
David Miller
Ray Ringle
David Warren
Pam & Greg Koch
Tara Palazzolo
Chris Elkins
Matt Fronck
Michael Hargis
Melissa Hargis
Nicholas Hart
One Love
Brian Ogawa
Noah Kaufman
Dennis & Beth Lappin
Adidas Five Ten
Best of the Red
ClimbOn
ClimbCincy
Warrior's Way
Yasmeen Fowler
Yosemite Climbing
Association