



Exposure

Dedicated to Protecting the Climbing Resources and Natural Environment of the Wichita Mountains

After a long hiatus, the WMCC's Exposure Newsletter, is relaunched, reconnecting our local climbing community and keeping climbers abreast of news, events, and happenings in the Wichita Mountains. Within this document you will find links to additional online resources. We hope you'll find this updated issue of Exposure both informative and helpful.

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Refuge Update

Comprehensive Conservation Plan

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working on a long-term management plan for the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge. This plan, called a Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP), will serve as a guide for managing the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge over the next 15 years.

Over the past few years the WMCC Board has been working directly with the Refuge to provide input and resources for development of a balanced plan that will include rock climbing as an accepted and manageable public use.

The most recent update, [Planning Update #2](#) was provided in January 2011. The update lists rock climbing under the category of the all-encompassing category of "Rocksports" and includes rappelling and bouldering

The three proposed "Alternatives" range from providing "No Action," which essentially means rock climbing would

continue to be managed as it has, to "Alternative C" which completely eliminates rock climbing. However, the "Proposed Alternative," Alternate B,



Jeremy Collins climbing RA (5.11) on the Crab Eyes in Charons Gardens, Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge. Photo by Andy Chasteen

allows rock climbing and includes additional actions. These actions include conducting a study on social and resource impacts, requirement of on-site registration of those participating in rock climbing, and limitation of groups to no more than 15 in the Charons Gardens Wilderness Area. The fixed anchor management process already in place

would continue; replacement of fixed anchors would be allowed and new fixed anchors would be very limited. The current review process in place would continue to include the WMCC Advisory Bolting Committee (ABC) for evaluation with the Refuge making the final approval.

The Draft CCP was originally slated to arrive in Fall of 2011 but that date appears to have been pushed back a bit. The Final CCP is anticipated for Fall 2012.

The WMCC Board has open communication with Refuge staff working on the CCP and will continue to provide support and feedback throughout the draft phase. After the draft CCP is released to the public the WMCC Board will notify it's membership by email, newsletter and the website to make all aware.

At this time the WMCC is supportive of the current process and the actions proposed in Alternative B. Once finalized, the CCP will incorporate rock climbing as an acceptable secondary use within the Refuge.

"When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world."

— John Muir



Emergency Summer Closures

The Refuge suffered what was likely one of the worst summers on record. Extreme heat resulting in a number of heat-related incidents and rescues caused the Refuge to issue an emergency closure of the Charons Gardens Wilderness Area for a number of weeks. The closure continued when wildfires engulfed the area. Acres of land were scorched including areas on the northeast side of the Refuge and a large portion of Charons Gardens.

We appreciate those who were respectful of the closures. All areas have since been re-opened to the public.

New Refuge Manager

The WMCC would like to welcome Mr. Tony Booth as the new Refuge Manager. Mr. Booth transferred to Oklahoma from Tok, Alaska, where he was the refuge

manager for the Tetlin National Wildlife Refuge.

WMCC History

During the late 1980's and early 1990's, technical rock climbing was becoming an increasingly popular recreational activity throughout the United States. Climbing, which was once little-known to the general public and practiced by only a few thousand dedicated individuals, quickly grew to become a mainstream recreational pursuit enjoyed by hundreds of thousands of people. The majority of this activity was taking place on public lands managed by the U. S. Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, and U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Faced with increasing numbers of climbers and growing concerns over the impacts of climbing, land managers began comprehensive reviews of the activity to determine what

steps should be taken to insure that natural resources were protected. In many areas around the country, these reviews resulted in the establishment of a climbing management plan designed to minimize any impacts from climbing activity. Often, these plans involved some type of partnership arrangement between the climbing community and area land managers. The Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge soon became one of many popular climbing areas in the U.S. to undergo such a process.

In 1993, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) initiated numerous Environmental Assessments at the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) for the purposes of determining whether technical rock climbing and other recreational activities were causing significant impacts to refuge resources. In the early stages of this process,

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a considerable amount of public controversy was created when it was announced that climbing, which had been a compatible use of the refuge since the early 1940's, was to be terminated. In order to meet that threat, hundreds of local climbers from Oklahoma, Texas, Kansas, Arkansas, and Missouri formed the Wichita Mountains Access Association (WMAA) to represent the rock climbing community in its efforts to insure that rock climbing was not eliminated as a recreational opportunity at the Refuge.

In 1995, following two years of additional reviews, numerous discussions with the WMAA, and considerable input from the public, the Refuge released the Final Environmental

Assessment for Technical Rock Climbing, and the USFWS issued a Decision Notice and FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI) for Technical Rock Climbing. These documents found that climbing could continue as a compatible recreational activity at the Refuge, subject to a few additional regulations and assistance from local climbers in managing the impacts of the activity. To fulfill that requirement, the WMAA determined that the climbing community would best be served by forming a new non-profit, volunteer climber's organization.

On February 26, 1996, the Executive Committee of the WMAA executed the formal Charter of the Wichita Mountains Climbers Coalition (WMCC). The WMCC was created to represent the interests of rock climbers from Oklahoma, Texas, Kansas, Arkansas, and Missouri who frequent the Refuge, and to work directly with the USFWS to protect the rock climbing resources and natural environment of the refuge.

As its first official act of business, the Board of Directors of the WMCC signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)



with the USFWS on May 6, 1996. Under the terms of that five year agreement, the WMCC committed to assist the USFWS in managing rock climbing activity at the Refuge by providing guidance on critical climbing issues, organizing volunteer conservation projects, establishing an Advisory Bolting Committee (ABC), and educating the climbing community on resource protection.

Since that time, the WMCC has developed a successful working relationship with USFWS management and personnel at the Refuge, and has provided substantial assistance on a number of important projects, including: design and printing of an informational rock climbing brochure, installation of a climbing and backcountry bulletin board, development of a fixed anchor application and review process, and organization of trash cleanups and major trail-building efforts. In addition, the WMCC has kept the climbing community informed about important conservation issues through the organization's website and newsletter.

In 2001, the WMCC and the Access Fund joined forces to purchase Baldy Point (Quartz), one of the region's most

valuable climbing areas. The property was immediately donated to the State of Oklahoma as an addition to Quartz Mountain State Park. As a result of the new park status, the WMCC expanded it's mission in 2001 to include protecting Baldy Point's climbing and natural resources, and to providing assistance to Quartz Mountain State Park in managing climbing activity and any associated impacts at Quartz.

As a result of the outstanding efforts of our members, and thanks to the support of the climbing community, the Access Fund, and other volunteers and contributors, the WMCC continues to insure that the climbing resources and natural environment of the Wichita Mountains are protected.

From Refuge Manager Tony Booth

On behalf of the Wichita Mountains National Wildlife Refuge, I would like to offer holiday greetings and our best wishes for a happy and safe new year to each of you. I have been here just over a year now and have had the pleasure to meet several of you, and I look forward to the opportunity to meet and perhaps work with more of you in the future.

When asked about contributing something to your newsletter, I thought about what would be most interesting and entertaining to you. In light of the time of the year, I figured that a highlight or recap of just some of the Refuge management issues or events during the past year may be the most useful or interesting contribution I could offer. So here are just a few Refuge highlights that I hope will be of interest to you.

The Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan:

During 2011, the Refuge staff and Planning personnel from the FWS's Regional Office continued to work on the Refuge's Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) and Environmental Assessment (EA). This Plan, mandated by law, is needed to provide a vision and general management direction for Refuge for the next 15 years. It will describe a Proposed Action for management of Refuge, and other management alternatives considered. The EA associated with it will describe and compare the consequences or impacts of implementing each of the management alternatives on the physical, biological, and human environments. This Plan will replace current management direction when it is finalized.

A draft of the CCP is under internal review by the Regional Office. Following the internal review, we will allow the State opportunity for a preliminary review. Then we plan to release a draft for public review in April or May, and



Wichitas on fire. News9 File Photo by Brandon Mowry

provide public meetings this summer. We hope to have it completed by October 2012. Some of your members have been working with the Refuge during development of the alternatives in the Draft CCP on management issues related to climbing. I encourage your membership to remain engaged in development of the Plan and take the opportunity to review the Draft Plan when it becomes available.

Weather and Wildfires:

As you already know, the summer of 2011 was dominated by a persistent record heat wave and severe drought conditions throughout this region of the country. The severe weather conditions have significantly affected the Refuge. Our lake levels are lower than anyone can remember, most of the Refuge ponds and creeks went dry, the Refuge had limited green-up and much of the vegetation went dormant during the summer in response to the drought and heat.

These severe weather conditions allowed for a record year for wildfire activities on the Refuge. Over half of the Refuge burned during the past year, and approximately 68% of the Refuge burned during the past 16 months. The Ferguson Fire, which started on September 1, 2011, burned almost 28,000 acres of Refuge lands and was the largest wildfire ever recorded on the Refuge. It also burned approximately 12,000 acres of private lands and destroyed 11 homes on the

north side of the Refuge. The second largest wildlife that occurred on the Refuge this past year was the Indianhoma Wye Fire, which occurred last April. It started on Fort Sill and burned approximately 2,096 acres of Refuge lands. Both the Ferguson and the Indianhoma Wye Fires burned substantial acres of lands within the Charons Garden Wilderness.

Although much of the Refuge may look rather charred and damaged right now, of these wildfires should render long term beneficial impacts on Refuge wildlife habitat. The native mixed grass prairie and woodland habitats that dominate the Refuge landscape are adapted to periodic fires, and in fact even dependent on recurring fires. However, we do have concerns with the short term impacts. Normally, regrowth of the native grasses occurs relatively rapid following a fire, but severe drought conditions have significantly slowed the recovery or regrowth of grasses from the recent fires. The quantity of habitat burned, coupled with the slow recovery, may create a shortage of range forage needed to sustain our primary grazers, longhorns and bison, through the winter. Thus we are looking at management options to support our bison and longhorn populations this winter.

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Proposed Temporary Longhorn Relocation:

The Refuge is working with the U.S. Army, Fort Sill on a project to move the Refuge longhorn onto the Army base during the next year to alleviate grazing pressure on Refuge grasslands impacted by the drought and wildfires. This will allow more opportunity for recovery of range habitat affected by the recent fires. Fort Sill has offered to permit us to approximately 1,400 acres of rangeland just outside the Refuge boundary as temporary pasture for our longhorns. We are still working out the details for that permit, but we will have to build over 3 miles of additional fence to contain the longhorns, and remove the fence when the project is complete. It is impractical for us to capture the entire herd of Refuge longhorns, but we hope to capture and relocate up to 250 animals onto Fort Sill for the next year.

Temporary Closure of the Charons Garden Wilderness Area:

Due to the hazardous conditions resulting from the extreme heat and persistent drought, we implemented a temporary closure of the Charons Garden Wilderness Area to public access and use that went into effect on July 29. It remained in effect until the Ferguson Fire was controlled in late September. The extreme weather conditions this past the summer led to recurring incidents of dehydration, heat exhaustion, heat stroke and other injuries while hiking and climbing in the backcountry of the Refuge and required several search and rescue operations. Most of the problems were within or near the Charons Garden Wilderness Area. On Saturday, July 23, 2011, Refuge search and rescue teams and other local emergency services were called upon to rescue 10 hikers from three separate groups from within the Wilderness Area. The severe heat, coupled with the rugged terrain of this popular wilderness area, not only rendered a high danger for visitors, but also created a high risk to Refuge

and other emergency service personnel who were frequently called upon for search and rescue operations. The closure substantially reduced the burden for search and rescue operations.

Burford Lake Trail Rehabilitation:

During National Wildlife Refuge Week in October, the Refuge and volunteers from the Friends of the Wichitas partnered with Treasure Lake Job Corps and Oklahoma Outdoor Connection to re-establish an old one mile hiking trail along the east side of Burford Lake. The old trail had not been maintained for many years.

From the WMCC

A special "Thank you!" to Refuge Manager, Tony Booth for taking the time to prepare these updates on the Refuge - we appreciate the insight and contribution to this newsletter.



The WMCC has worked closely over the years with the Refuge in coordinating numerous trail-maintenance efforts.

In the mid-1990s the WMCC donated [trail building tools](#); pick axes, shovels, pry bars and McLeods, to the Refuge for the purpose of maintaining trails. Many of those tools are still in use today.

Following an exhaustive day of trail reconstruction, everyone met up at the Refuge Environmental Education Center where lunch was graciously provided by the staff.

While no future trail maintenance days have been determined, the WMCC anticipates that others will be arranged in the Spring of 2012. Areas in need of restoration/repair include some portions of the Narrows trail (this trail sees a lot of traffic and needs ongoing attention), and sections of the Charons Gardens trail leaving Sunset parking area towards Crab Eyes.

These trails are popular not only for climbers but for hikers, wildlife watchers, and group outings of all kinds. Keeping these trails maintained prevents impacts to other wild areas, inhibits further erosion, and allows for clear passage to those wild areas deep in the Wichita Mountains.



Narrows Trail Building

In June 2010, members of the WMCC, Texas Mountaineers, Oklahoma Climbing Team and an assortment of local youth volunteers teamed up in cooperation with Refuge personnel for a trail maintenance day in the Narrows.

The previous winter left the main trail riddled with downed trees, broken limbs, was eroded and badly in need of repair. Through sheer human-power, volunteers cleared the entire trail from the trailhead to the creek crossing near Lichen Wall - nearly two miles of trail!





Will Shaw on Snake's Head Dihedral (5.8)

Statement". A copy of the position statement is available for viewing on the WMCC website.

Under the new policy, fixed anchors may not be placed, replaced or removed at Quartz without the prior authorization of the QBC. Any climber wishing to undertake any fixed anchor activity at Quartz is now required to submit a written email request to the QBC specifically describing the nature of the proposed fixed anchor activity and to obtain authorization from the QBC before placing, replacing or removing any fixed anchors at Quartz. Approval of any fixed anchor proposal will require a super majority vote (6 of 9 members) of the QBC. The QBC will make its decisions based solely on protecting Quartz's rock resources, historical routes and natural environment.

Quartz Update

WMCC, QMNP SIGN MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

QUARTZ BOLTING COMMITTEE FORMED TO MANAGE FIXED ANCHORS

The Wichita Mountains Climbers Coalition has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with Quartz Mountain Nature Park similar to that which the WMCC has in place with the US Fish and Wildlife Service at the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge. The MOU is an official document that establishes the relationship between the WMCC and QMNP and outlines the agreements between the two organizations in minimizing the impacts of rock climbing activity at the Baldy Point Natural Area. As part of the MOU, the WMCC has committed to establishing a Quartz Bolting Committee for the purpose of protecting the rock resources, historical climbing opportunities and natural environment at Quartz. A copy of the MOU is available for viewing on the WMCC website.

Unlike the formal fixed anchor application and permitting process in use at the Refuge, the Park will allow the fixed anchor policies and procedures at Quartz to be governed and directed by the WMCC and QBC, so long as the climbing community continues to demonstrate its ability to effectively self-manage fixed anchor activity at Quartz.

In that regard, the WMCC has established a 9-member Quartz Bolting Committee (QBC) to oversee fixed anchor activity at Quartz. The QBC will develop the necessary guidelines for managing the use of fixed anchors at Quartz and a method for evaluating any future fixed anchor proposals. In developing those guidelines and making its decisions, the QBC will adhere to the underlying philosophy for managing fixed anchors set forth in the WMCC's official "Quartz Fixed Anchor Position

The WMCC Board of Directors has nominated and approved the following persons to serve as the initial members of the QBC:

Duane Raleigh (CO)
Eric Forney (OK)
Terry Andrews (TX)
Tony Wilson (OK)
Marion Hutchison (OK)
Tony Mayse (OK)
Ryan Ray (TX)
Rob Leinau (OK)
Thomas Martin (TX)

The WMCC Board of Directors believes these individuals to have the necessary climbing expertise, historical background and personal character to cooperatively work together in successfully managing fixed anchor activity at Quartz. We ask for the climbing community's full cooperation and support for these new policies and the dedicated efforts of the QBC in protecting the integrity of the invaluable climbing resources at Quartz.

STATEMENT OF NON-LIABILITY REGARDING CLIMBING AND FIXED ANCHORS

The WMCC's QBC assists QMNP by reviewing proposed fixed anchor activity to protect Baldy Point's natural resources and historical climbing routes. QMNP, WMCC, and QBC make no representations or warranties regarding the safety, reliability or suitability for use of any fixed anchors or other hardware currently existing or installed in the future on any climbing route at BALDY POINT. Moreover, QMNP, WMCC, and QBC make no representations or warranties regarding the degree of hazard or danger involved, or lack thereof, on any rock climbing route at BALDY POINT. It is understood and agreed that rock climbing is a dangerous activity and that the individual climber must personally make all decisions regarding his or her safety while climbing.



Quartz Fall Gathering 2011 Report

The annual Quartz Mountain Fall Gathering was held on November 5th and 6th, 2011 at Baldy Peak. As with previous years, a special overnight permit was granted to allow climbers to spend the evenings camping in the grassy areas among the boulders and mere feet from the main face of Baldy. The event brought together climbers from across Oklahoma, Texas, Kansas, Colorado, and some from further afield (like, California), to climb, camp, swap stories and share beta.

Baldy Peak is perhaps the most striking and well-recognized location for climbing in Oklahoma. With acres of climbable stone, the granite slab climbing lends itself to heady friction climbs, smears, and technical faces.

Climbers enjoyed two days of clear skies, albeit, windy (as expected) conditions.

Jason Pauley designed a special t-shirt commemorating the event which featured Baldy Peak.

Announcements

The WMCC has selected two new Board members: Melissa Alcorn of Edmond, Oklahoma and Shana Martin from Hurst, Texas.

Melissa Alcorn started climbing, somewhat reluctantly at first, in 2004 at the Wichita Mountains. After gaining some confidence at OKC Rocks, later Rocktown Climbing Gym, there was no turning back on a life as a climber. Melissa is now an American Mountain Guide Association certified Single Pitch Instructor that hopes to someday grow up to be full-fledged Rock Instructor. She climbs with her husband, Stephen, on rock, mountains, ice and anything else that looks amusing, having ascents in Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Oklahoma, Utah, and Wyoming. As of right now, her most favorite climbing day ever was on West Country, Stately Pleasure Dome in Tuolumne Meadows of Yosemite National Park; incidentally, also her favorite place to climb. To pay for her addiction to climbing, Melissa is an attorney by day and works in-house at

the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation.

About **Shana Martin**:

"I have been climbing since 2002 when my now husband took me to a local climbing crag after about a month of dating. He and his friends proceeded to put me on a 5.9 with out giving me any clue as to the true difficulty of what they were putting me on. Needless to say it was quite a struggle to get to the top but after who knows how many takes. That same day I climbed a 5.6 dihedral with a crack in it. I ran it 3 or 4 times and on one of those runs I discovered the basic concepts to crack climbing and I was sold! The rest is history, as they say."

"Since that day I have come to love all aspects of climbing from the mental to the physical, from face to crack, and of course my fellow climbers. And I feel it is important for all climbers to support each other as well all endeavors concerning our environment and climbing resources. I feel we have a strong community and it is my hope that we continue to grow stronger for our future and for future climbers."

ROUTE PROFILE: CRAZY ALICE (5.8)

Crazy Alice (5.8), established by Mike Panciera in 1975, follows a diagonal crack system up the center of Zoo Wall. The climb is perhaps the most popular line in the Narrows and one of the most well-known routes in the Wichita Mountains.

For many first-time climbers this is their introduction to "real crack climbing." The smooth granite walls do not allow for much in the way for hand or footholds outside of the crack. Upward progress is made through hand-jams, liebacks, and crafty footwork using the crack.

The most technical part of the climb comes about half-way up the route. At this point one can choose to go high or go low. Going high means walking your feet up the crack while your upper body leans into the smooth wall and your right hand works higher up the crack. Going low means keeping your hands in the crack and hand-traversing up and right, smearing your feet below the crack until you can gain enough purchase to get your feet up and into the crack again.

The line is a milestone for developing lead climbers. The crack protects well with passive gear; hexes and stoppers, but most prefer to throw in a cam here or there.

For those wanting to top-rope the climb, the anchors are easily accessible by the upper narrows trail or by climbing the easier line to its left, The Dihedral (5.7).

And for a step-up in difficulty you might also top-rope the infamous Dr. Coolhead (5.10d), to the right of Crazy Alice.

It's no wonder that Crazy Alice is so high on traveling climbers to-do list - it's in a great location, has impeccable stone and is a great route for multiple skill levels.

Perhaps the only drawback to this route is its popularity. On a nice day, the base of Zoo Wall can indeed become a zoo. Keep this in mind and have other routes as a back-up just in case. Weather climbing it your first time or your one-hundredth time Crazy Alice remains a classic.



Fixed Anchor Management

The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) requires the approval of a Fixed Anchor Application prior to the placement, replacement or removal of fixed anchors in the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge.

Refuge management in association with the climbing community has developed guidelines for the placement of fixed anchors which minimize negative impacts to Refuge resources while allowing new development of quality fixed gear routes. This process is part of a comprehensive management plan for rock climbing designed to insure that the activity remains a compatible recreational use of the Refuge.

Any person placing, replacing or removing fixed anchors without permit approval is subject to fines and penalties as specified by the USFWS.

Any person desiring to place, replace or remove fixed anchors (bolts, pitons, etc.) in the Refuge must complete a Fixed Anchor Application form. Applications are available at Refuge Headquarters.

The Refuge, assisted by the Advisory Bolting Committee (ABC) evaluate each application based on a number of criteria.

QUALITY ROUTES

New fixed gear routes will be evaluated using a high standard. Only quality new fixed gear routes that add to the Refuge's climbing experience and do not infringe on existing climbs will be approved.

RESOURCE IMPACTS

New fixed gear routes will be evaluated on the potential degree of impact to Refuge resources. Of main concern are areas with:

1. Existing high densities of fixed anchors
2. Sensitive plants and wildlife
3. Fragile rock

Visit the following link for complete details on the fixed anchor application process for the WMWR:

<http://www.wichitamountains.org/abcapplication.html>

ABC Update

The WMCC welcomes Thomas Martin to the ABC. Thomas has been an avid Wichita Mountains climber for years and brings with him years of experience and knowledge of the area. Adding Thomas also gives the ABC further representation of Texas climbers. We would like to sincerely thank Eric Forney for his years of expertise and service to the ABC. Eric will continue to act in an advisory capacity on the QBC.

Fixed Anchor Inventory

CHARONS GARDEN WILDERNESS AREA

Elk Slab

Water Streak - lead bolt (1), belay anchors (4) replaced - 1999

The Dihedral - belay anchors (2) replaced - 1999

Nike Route - belay anchors (2) replaced - 1999

Miscellaneous - spurious bolts (5) removed - 1999

Nike Route - lead bolts (2) placed - 2005
Water Streak - belay bolts (2) replaced - 2007

Lost Dome

Made in the Shade - lead bolts (2) replaced, belay anchors (2) placed - 2000
Baptists on a Rampage - lead bolts (6) replaced - 2000 *

Baptists on a Rampage - lead bolt (1) replaced - 2001

Blades of Steel - lead bolt (1), lead copperheads (2) replaced - 2000

Rap Bolters from Hell - lead bolts (5) replaced - 2001

Crack-a-Lo-Lo - fixed sling belay (1) replaced with belay bolts (2) - 2002

** one new lead bolt reported to have failed in 2000*

Hidden Wall

Serpentine - belay anchors (2) placed - 2004

Echo Dome

Lady Bugs and Gentlemen - lead bolt hangers (3), belay anchor hangers (2) reinstalled* - 2000

Frosted Flakes - lead bolt hangers (6), belay anchor hangers (2) reinstalled* -

2000

Worm Hole - lead bolt hangers (6), belay anchor hangers (2) reinstalled* - 2000
Crack Pipe - lead bolt hanger (1) reinstalled* - 2000

* reinstall stolen hangers on existing fixed anchors

West Horizon Pass

Hot Rod Corner - lead bolts (4), belay anchors (2) placed - 2005

Desperate Dome

The Warm Up - lead bolts (4), belay anchors (2) placed - 2004

Fist Fighter - fixed lead pin (1) replaced with lead bolt (1) - 2008

MOUNT SCOTT

Upper Mt. Scott

Foolish Behavior - lead bolts (2) replaced - 2000

Toprope Route - lead bolts (3) replaced - 2000

Frankly Scarlet - lead bolts (2) replaced - 2000

Locomotive Breath - lead bolt (1) replaced - 2000

Simply Red - belay anchors (2) replaced - 2000

Baldilox Bulge - belay anchors (2) installed - 2000

Lower Mt. Scott

Lay-Away Plan - lead bolt (1) replaced - 2000

High Anxiety - belay anchors (2) replaced - 2000

THE NARROWS

Leaning Tower

Lycra Sheath - lead bolts (3) replaced - 1997

Love Potion No. 8 - lead bolts (2) replaced, lead fixed pin (1) replaced with bolt - 2005

Love Potion No. 8 (Variation) - lead bolt (1) replaced - 2005

Lichen Wall

League of Doom - belay anchors (2) replaced - 1998

League of Doom - belay anchors (4) placed - 1998

Nuclear Combat - lead bolt (1) replaced - 1998

Riverside Attraction - lead bolts (2) replaced, belay anchors (2) placed - 2004

Wizard Wall

Asleep at the Wheel - lead bolt hangers (4) reinstalled*, belay anchors (2) placed - 2000

** reinstall stolen hangers on existing fixed anchors*

Zoo Wall

Masters of Reality - belay anchors (2) replaced - 1997

No Stone Unturned - lead bolt (1) replaced - 1999

The Dihedral - belay anchors (2) replaced - 1999

Crazy Alice - belay anchors (2) replaced - 1999

Dr. Coolhead - lead bolts (2) replaced - 1999

Scrotum Roof - lead bolt (1) replaced - 1999

Miscellaneous - spurious bolts (7) removed - 1999

Aerial Wall

Aerial Anticipation - belay anchors (2) replaced - 2004

Aerial Anticipation - redundant lead bolt (1) removed - 2004

THE MEADOWS

Thunderdome

Taco Time - belay anchors (2) placed - 1997

Creek Show - belay anchors (1) placed - 1997

Barter Town - belay anchors (2) replaced - 2000

DISCLAIMER: The above information has been reported to the WMCC and ABC by individual members of the climbing community. The WMCC and ABC do not field check these reports and do not insure the accuracy of the information provided above. This information is for general reference purposes only and is not intended to be relied on for determining the safety, or lack thereof, of the described routes. Verification of the information reported is the responsibility of the individual climber.

The USFWS, WMCC and ABC make no representations or warranties regarding the safety, reliability or suitability for use of any fixed anchors or other hardware, currently existing or installed in the future, on any climbing route in the WMWR. Moreover, the USFWS, WMCC and ABC make no representations or warranties regarding the degree of hazard or danger involved, or lack thereof, on any rock climbing route in the WMWR. Rock climbing is a dangerous activity and the individual climber must personally make all decisions regarding his or her own safety while climbing.

In Remembrance of Russell Hooper

Don't Suck

by Tony Wilson

One of Oklahoma's climbing icons, Russell Hooper, died in August from pulmonary artery sarcoma after an eight year battle with the disease. While our entire community is still grieving, we are fortunate that Russ did all he could to prepare us for what had become inevitable. I still remember trying to voice my fears to him just a few months before he died. His words still resonate, "Tony, quit worrying about me. I'm ready to move on and see what's next." Just like that he made what seemed impossible possible. I quit worrying and just started enjoying the time we had left.

Now that he's gone there is no doubt about the big emptiness that will take time to be filled. I've been climbing a few times since and each time it's been noticeably different. The last time out I got to the first bolt on the S Wall where I stood and stared up at the runout. Though I've done these moves scores of times and have never fallen anywhere on the route, for some reason, I hesitated and just stood and thought about the consequences of falling. I was starting to feel like I didn't even want to take the risk when I remembered how many times over nearly 30 years I've heard Russ holler up at me while belaying, "don't suck". That's all it took to tighten up my sack and I cruised the moves. Even though he's gone and won't be belaying me anymore, it's nice to know he's still in my head when I need him.

Thinking about Russ like this opens up a wellspring of memories that in time may serve to fill the emptiness of his passing. One memory is when he and I went to Turkey Rock, Colorado after Pam and my cabin burned in a forest fire. We worked a couple of days with chain saws and shovels trying to clean up the mess. Come Sunday morning we were black

with soot and grime. Desperate for a shower we hit upon the brilliant idea of going to the car wash at Woodland Park. We got there early and stripped down to our underwear and started spraying each other with the wand on low pressure. Just about the time we were really getting going, we looked up and there was a line of cars waiting their turn to get in for a pre church wash. People were just staring in disbelief at us. I even saw one desperate mother holding her hands over her young children's eyes. We dropped the wand, grabbed our filthy clothes, jumped in the truck still dripping wet, and sped away. We always wondered what prayers were prayed that morning as a result of our creative showering.

Russ is gone and none of us will ever be the same, but I'm betting that lots of you are just like me and are full of his memories. I hope like me you can pull them up when needed and enjoy the richness of Russ's legacy. Just remember when life gets a little dicey, whatever you do, "don't suck".

Quotes From the Forum

"He was a fearless climber (I don't think I ever heard him say "take"), and a kind man to all." ~ah2

"A part of him has rubbed off on all of us. That is the way it is with good people. You remember that easy smile and kindness that he had." ~BASE104

"...Russell was the sort of guy that made you feel like you were best buddies no matter who you were." ~peter_the_rib_man



"He had a passion for climbing and he had a genuine interest in anyone that would approach him, friend or a stranger."
~Superdiamonddave

"...He shrugged off things that bother most of us which allowed him to have energy for the things that truly mattered in life, like always smiling, always happy and always a good friend to everyone." ~TM

"Russell, you will truly be missed by all who knew you." ~jules28



Memorial Bench Placed

A memorial bench was placed in honor of Russell Hooper along the east shore of Lake Hefner in Oklahoma City. On the bench is a small plaque that reads, "In Honor of Russell Hooper, Donated by the Oklahoma Rock Climbing Community." overlooks the lake.

CLIMBING IS DANGEROUS: STACK THE ODDS IN YOUR FAVOR



- Check your knots and harness buckle
- Inspect your gear and replace as necessary
- Know your partners and their habits
- Check your belay - are you sure you're on?
- Read all warnings - they can save your life
- Fixed gear is unreliable - back it up when possible
- Keep an eye on the weather
- Rock breaks - check your holds
- Always double check your rappel system
- Wear a helmet

REMEMBER, SAFETY IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY!

Tread Lightly to Protect Climbing Access

Climbing, once an obscure activity with few participants, has become a mainstream form of outdoor recreation. And our impact on the environment and others around us is under increasing scrutiny. As climbers, we must show a healthy respect for the places and policies where we climb. This mindset helps assure continued climbing access by showing landowners and managers that we take care of the places where we play.

Slip into stealth mode and follow these easy guidelines to help protect climbing access every time you're at the crag ...

Stay on established trails – Even if the trail is not the most direct line to the base of a route or boulder, avoid the temptation to blaze your own path. Hiking off trail promotes erosion and destroys vegetation.

Keep a low profile – We know that route you're working requires a lot of moxie, but yelling, swearing, screaming beta at your partner, and even playing music at the crag can seriously disrupt those around you, including the landowner.

Clean up excess chalk – Chalk is a necessary part of climbing, but it also creates visual evidence of climber impact. Clean up spills and brush off tick marks after each session.

Respect closures – Respecting the wildlife (e.g., nesting birds) and cultural resource (e.g., petroglyphs) closures will help ensure that they don't turn into unreasonable closures.

Visit www.status.accessfund.org for an updated list of closures and restrictions across the country.

Keep tabs on your dog – Dogs at the crag can have a serious impact on climbing access due to their ability to disturb the peace of those around them, including that of the landowner. Consider leaving Fido at home. If you must bring your dog to the crag, keep it with you at all times, control its barking, and clean up after it.

Pack it out – Don't trash the crag. Carry an extra plastic bag and pack out your own trash (yes, even climbing tape counts). Human waste counts too—do your business away from cliffs, boulders, trails, and water sources and pack it out. For AF member discounts on Restop bags, visit www.accessfund.org/memberdiscounts.

Pad and tread lightly – We know you're focused on sending that sweet boulder problem, but remember to think about the life on the ground around you. Avoid trampling or throwing crash pads on vegetation.

Educate others KINDLY – If you see someone hiking off trail, blaring music, or throwing trash on the ground, kindly let them know that their actions could threaten access for everyone. In many cases people simply don't recognize that their actions might negatively impact the environment or access to the area.

Reference: http://www.accessfund.org/site/c.tmL5KhNWlrH/b.6036067/k.483E/Tread_Lightly_to_Protect_Access.htm



Protect America's Climbing

Perspective

The More Things Change...

by Aaron Gibson

I was hiking to the base of S-Wall at Quartz Mountain when I overheard:

"This is Oklahoma, nothing ever changes."

A climber, unfamiliar with Quartz, had just asked his friend if there were any new bolted routes and this was his buddy's reply. I continued on but couldn't get the remark out of my head. My focus was supposed to be on climbing for the day but the comment bothered me.

Looking across the south face of Baldy the routes flashed by in my mind – large sweeps of pristine granite: Bourbon Street, Amazon Woman, S-Wall - all routes established decades ago with very few bolts. I considered many of the routes in the Refuge - a similar story.

I considered, "Is Oklahoma climbing stuck in the dark ages?"

My fear was that this outlook might represent the views of some climbers comparing Oklahoma to other areas, areas that have different histories, values, ethics and style than our granite areas.

It's not uncommon for newer climbers to visit the Wichitas or Quartz after a trip to another sport climbing or bouldering area and think about the differences. Other areas might contain hundreds of bolted sport climbs, some even with permanently affixed quickdraws, and circuits of boulder problems with interconnected trail networks and sculpted landing pads perfect for crashing onto. Indeed, these places are very different from Quartz and the Wichitas. Different enough that one starts to wonder, why is Oklahoma climbing this way?

As with many lessons, it's important to take a step back and reflect on where



we've come from, and what we've achieved, in order to appreciate what we have and why we have it.

First off, to dispel the opening statement about nothing ever changing in Oklahoma, it's probably best to regard this as facetious because a blanket statement such as this has so many errors in logic that it's difficult to address them all. Simply put, things in Oklahoma

HAVE changed - climbing issues included - and it's narrow-minded to think otherwise. There are new traditional routes, upgraded fixed anchors, and even some "newly discovered" rock. There are more climbers than before. There are more group outings.

(continued on next page)

And climbing is easier than ever to get into given the number of climbing gyms, books, and online guides. But more importantly, a lot has gone on off the rock in terms of preserving access that's resulted in positive change to protect climbing, and this is where change matters most.

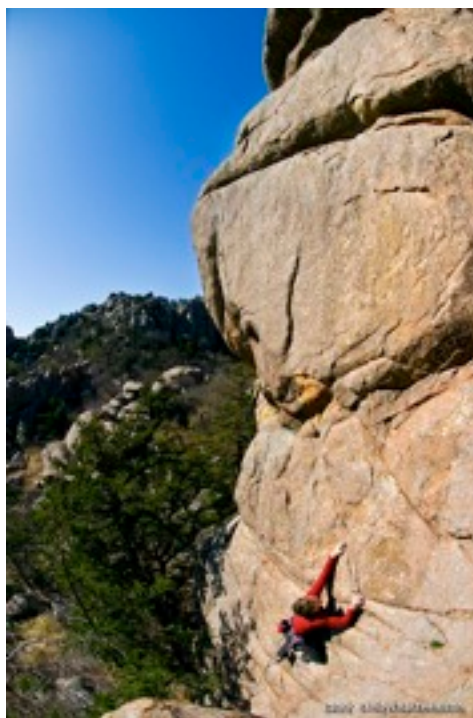
Let's appreciate what has been accomplished to allow climbers the opportunity to continue to climb in the places we call our "climbing areas." The very place that the comment was made in, Quartz Mountain, was under threat of being privately purchased and completely closed to climbing. Instead, climbers in cooperation with policy makers banned together to purchase the property and have it donated to the State for the purposes of maintaining it as a designated climbing area. That was an enormous WIN for Oklahoma rock climbing and a clear example of the enormous efforts of a few resulting in a positive result for all climbers.

On multiple occasions, one of which is taking place right now with the Comprehensive Conservation Program (CCP), climbers have been faced with regulatory challenges to rock climbing in the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge. Representatives of the climbing community have worked tirelessly through the WMCC to represent the interests of climbers in order to protect climbing in the Refuge for future generations.

Each are examples of times when a regulatory change might have resulted in a negative impact to climbing if not for our ability to step up and react to these changes. To the uneducated eye, the end result appears as "no change," when in fact a change might have resulted "no more climbing."

But what bothered me the most about the opening statement was that it had this underlying air of Oklahoma climbing is not good enough, because it's outdated – it's old-school and old-school is lame.

The best climbs at Quartz and in the Wichitas were put up in bold style: on lead, hand drilling a bolt only when absolutely necessary, and only when a proper "stance" allowed. As such, a first ascensionist was often faced with harrowing runouts between self-placed protection points in order to establish the route. Sometimes it would be easier to keep climbing rather than stop to hand-drill a bolt.



Once established, it was up to others to repeat the route in similar style (minus the hand-drilling of course), should they want the full-value experience. Even now, routes placed decades ago remain as test-pieces and milestones for one's progress in climbing. Rather than see these routes as antiquated remnants of days gone by, they offer the exact challenge that many climbers still yearn for and hope to achieve.

Sometimes I hear climbers complain about there not being more bolts in the Wichitas or that all the routes are runout at Quartz or that they looked through the guidebook and all they saw were "R's" and "X's," for dangerous fall potential. My reply is always two-fold: first, you can always work harder and get better and one day, maybe become good enough

to climb the routes the way they were established. Secondly, there's nothing stopping you from top-roping a route or following someone more experienced. Just because the convenience factor is low doesn't mean you can't climb the route safely in some fashion.

I'm here to tell you that Oklahoma climbing is awesome in so many ways – and by many comparisons – far surpasses the novelties of other areas. What we lack in easily accessible and plentiful points of protection, we gain in adventure, wilderness, experience, and character. I take solace in the unchanged wildness of the Wichitas and Quartz. There's a conservation in the style of climbing we do that requires moving less intrusively and more quietly up the rock. And there's the added challenge for a climber to move carefully, lightly and consciously through the wild as they accomplish their task.

I hope those new to Oklahoma climbing come to appreciate this unique style of climbing. I've heard it said by many experienced and well-travelled climbers that if you can climb in the Wichitas, you can pretty much climb anywhere.

What we have in Oklahoma is a good thing and one we should be thankful for. The climbing experience that Quartz and the Wichitas offers is incredibly valuable – and that's not something that needs to change.



Membership

The Wichita Mountains Climbers Coalition (WMCC) was chartered in 1996 to represent the climbing community for the purposes of assisting the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service in managing climbing activity at the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge (Refuge). In 2001, the charter was expanded to also provide assistance to Quartz Mountain State Park in managing climbing activity at Baldy Point (Quartz).

The mission of the WMCC is to protect both the climbing resources and the natural environment of the Wichita Mountains. Through efforts like the establishment an Advisory Bolting Committee (ABC) to oversee fixed anchor use at the Refuge, the organization of volunteer projects to rebuild eroded trail systems at the Refuge and Quartz, and the publication of information concerning resource protection, the WMCC works to insure that the valuable climbing

opportunities and unique wilderness character of the Wichita Mountains are preserved.

Everyone in the climbing community is encouraged to join the WMCC. Annual dues of only \$5.00 is all that is required to become a member. Just fill out the [Membership Form](#) and return it with your dues to the WMCC. In return, you'll receive an official [WMCC decal](#) (NOTE: *New decals coming soon!*) for your vehicle, as well as future issues of the WMCC's newsletter "EXPOSURE".

In addition, you'll receive important notices about upcoming volunteer projects and special events. Most importantly, you will be helping to insure that open access, minimal regulation, and a healthy environment will continue to be a part of your climbing experiences at the Refuge and Quartz.

The WMCC urges all climbers to help us achieve our goals by committing to "minimum impact" and "leave no trace" ethics, abiding with all climbing regulations, and participating in organized volunteer projects.



Purpose of the WMCC

The Wichita Mountains Climbers Coalition is chartered as a non-profit volunteer organization for the following purposes:

1. To provide guidance and assistance on rock climbing issues to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) at the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge (WMWR) and to the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (STATE) at Quartz Mountain Nature Park (QUARTZ).
2. To provide volunteer support to the FWS and the STATE for conservation projects at the WMWR and QUARTZ.
3. To provide an Advisory Bolting Committee (ABC) to assist the FWS and the STATE in monitoring and reviewing fixed anchor protection at the WMWR and QUARTZ.
4. To educate and inform the climbing community on issues regarding rock climbing and resource protection at the WMWR and QUARTZ.
5. To coordinate efforts concerning rock climbing at the WMWR and QUARTZ with the Access Fund and other interested organizations.

The goal of the WMCC is to preserve the integrity of the rock climbing resources and the natural environment in which rock climbing activity occurs at the WMWR and QUARTZ. [From the Charter of the WMCC](#)

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