

# RRGCC eNewsletter

Spring 2008

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## The People's Issue

Welcome to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Red River Gorge Climbers Coalition newsletter. The RRGCC and the Red River Gorge climbing community as a whole is stronger than ever. With your help the last few months have been simply amazing. As a community, we have hosted the Johnny and Alex Trail Day with over 70 climbers sweating in the August heat. In September, we helped host the [Mountain Gear U-climb](#) clinic, bringing in over 80 new people to the area and raising over \$4,000 towards the PMRP purchase. We have made the climber's voice heard by having representatives at all the National Forest Service Limits Of Acceptable Change meetings and have had climbers at many local and state tourism meetings. With the hard work of many, we welcomed the Petzl RocTrip and climbers from all over the world to our little piece of heaven in October. And last winter, the Climbers Who Care raised donations of money, food, and clothing for families in need in Powell County.

The reasons for the surge in success are many and having some of the best sport climbing in the US doesn't hurt. The most fundamental and important reason, though, is the hard work, dedication, and determination from *you*, the Red River Gorge Climbing **Community**.

So what is community?

Community is a group of people that, by sharing the same experiences, interests and passions, form lasting relationships. A community should be able to share its ideas, experiences and goals and in turn use that to add to the overall health of the community. A true community will be there to share the joys during the best of times and will be there to support each other during the worst of times. Nowhere else in this world does a community exist such as the one we have here, you should be proud to be a part of something this large. *None of this would be possible without you.*

For nearly everyone that's been here, no matter how long, they always take away the power of the community in the Red. In this issue we will get inside the heads of a few members of our community. Some are long time locals working daily to secure our climbing privileges and some are just visiting but leaving their mark just the same. We hope you enjoy this issue but most of all we hope you continue to take ownership in the area and help support the growth that we are experiencing. Together we can protect climbing for generations to come.

*Matt Tackett*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

*Red River Reunion  
April 18-20 at Miguel's Pizza*

Featuring:

- *Spray*, a Brian Solano Film
  - A slideshow by Jason Kehl and David Chancellor sponsored by [Phillip Galls](#)
  - Climbing competition at Torrent Falls
  - Live Bluegrass Music
- Visit [RRGCC.org](http://RRGCC.org) for more

*In the next issue, look for:*

- *Interviews with route developers*
- *Interviews with those re-equipping the Red*
- *Financial Review*
- *Featured Crag*
- *And more!*

## NICE PANTS

If you were wandering the Red last fall and noticed a red and blue beast tearing up the walls, you were probably in the presence of the Man himself. When I asked him about his sending attire, he tried to get me to sign a non-disclosure agreement. Eventually, he relented.

**MikeD:**

Crap, my secret's out... The jeans are my secret power, they're my sending jeans. They are actually stretch denim and super comfortable to climb in. For sending they are usually accompanied by a pair of Calvins. The red shirt? Well, red shirts look good for photos.

## THE RED'S HARDEST?

Previously MikeD said that Dogleg (5.12a) was "definitely the hardest established route at the Red!" With a height-dependant move 5'6" MikeD proved that height is no excuse. He sent it in style in October. In his [blog](#) he wrote:

I wanted to attempt *Dogleg*. I went up it and quickly climbed to the crux. Unfortunately after a year the move was still just as big and improbable feeling. I tried the move a few different ways and quite a few times. I finally settled on having my right foot really high and my left foot smeared sideways on the wall below me. From that position I could generate a bit of momentum and as long as my left foot didn't slide I could fully dyno/deadpoint to the upper sharp crimp. I stuck the move once only and quickly lowered to the ground to try the redpoint. Fortunately for me I finished the move first try and redpointed the route. As John had promised Petzl donated \$500 to the [RRGCC](#).

## Beastie boy MikeD

*Interview by Paul Vidal*

In the spring of 2007, Paul Vidal sat down with Mike Doyle to ask him a few questions. The high plains drifter took some time from his current adventures in Australia to answer a few questions.

**Me:** What were you doing here? What brought you to the Gorge?

**MikeD:** The red was actually my first stop on a long road-trip around North America. I had been there twice before in the past both times on short trips and wanted to spend some time there. I was originally thinking four weeks but that ended up being two months.

**Me:** What's been the biggest obstacle you've had to overcome as a climber?

**MikeD:** Probably time. I went from high school to university straight to working full time. I haven't had a lot of time to travel and climb so I've tried to use my time wisely. However, now I am on a long road trip and I'm super excited about it.

**Me:** No holds barred: what did you think of the Red? What did you think about the community?

**MikeD:** Personally I think the Red is just fun. I've always had a good time there and I love that style of climbing. Not too bouldery but hard enough where you have to fight a pump and then pull some hard moves. I was very impressed by the climbing community, especially those involved with the development of routes and securing access. I can't believe the amount of work some people do, or the amount of money raised. I was also very surprised by the support of the community when it came to Lucifer. For about a month people kept stopping and asking how it was going, wishing me luck and I really felt I needed to send it as a thank you to everyone for their support.

**Me:** I can't avoid asking about it: you sent Lucifer last fall, a project at the Purgatory. Any particularly memorable aspects of working that one? How does it compare to some of the other hard climbs you've been on?

**MikeD:** There were a couple of memorable aspects; getting on it the first few times and not being able to do all the moves, hitting the ground from the fifth bolt, falling past the crux three times and of course the send. It's hard to compare it to other routes since I've never really been on a route quite like it before. Most of the hard routes I do are really steep but that one wasn't. It's just slightly overhanging with bad holds, bad feet and big moves.

**Me:** Tell me about hockey. Favorite teams, favorite situations, favorite players, favorite aspects, etc.

**MikeD:** Hockey is the best sport ever!!! For the most part of my life I've been unfortunate to be a Vancouver Canucks fan. It was my dad's team growing up and we'd watch hockey every Saturday night, thus I'm a Canucks fan. Fortunately they've been better in recent years but it's still pretty painful. My favorite player is probably Trevor Linden, I still remember how hard he battled back in 1994 and he is such a good community guy off the ice. My favorite aspect of hockey is probably the combination of speed, size and skill. It's unbelievable watching these 210-230lb guys skating super fast, crashing into each other and doing crazy stuff with the puck.

**Me:** Do you have a favorite non-climbing memory of your time in the Red?

**MikeD:** Discovering the white chocolate and raspberry scones at a coffee shop in Richmond. That or bombing along a creek bed on a 'road' between the Motherlode and the Gold Coast.

**Me:** Favorite toppings on your pizza.

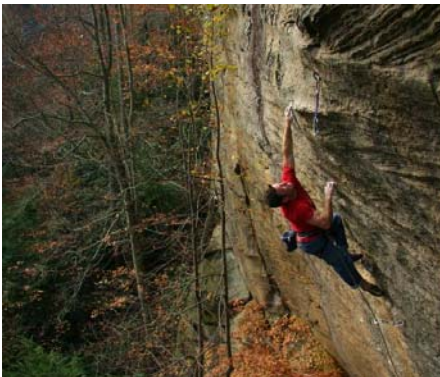
**MikeD:** Avocado, chicken and feta cheese.

**Me:** Tell us about surfing. Do you feel surfing and climbing are related at all? In the rush, challenge, or excitement?

**MikeD:** Personally I don't feel they are related at all. I surf for different reasons than why I climb. Generally speaking I climb because I like pushing myself mentally or physically (or both), I surf to relax, be in the sun and generally just to sit out on a board watching the waves roll in.

**Me:** What would you tell someone planning their first trip to the Red?

**MikeD:** You'll get pumped, especially on your first few days. After you learn how to relax on the climb then the place gets really fun. Try to hit a few different walls. They each have some unique characteristic.



Mike Doyle on "Thanatopsis", 14a, at the Motherlode. Photo by Derek Galloway.

## CHICAGO IN TWO DAYS

**MC:** Wow, only two days? Well, I'd recommend staying in the city if they can. If they like shopping there's always the Magnificent Mile but, let's face it, you can shop back at home. What I love about Chicago is that it's diverse with museums, great food, and activities. I'd make it a point to visit the Art Institute of Chicago. If art isn't your thing, find out what special exhibits are on display at the Field Museum or Museum of Science and Industry. Chicago is also known for its varied architecture; try taking an architectural walking, bus, or river boat tour. Take in a show at The Second City, an improv comedy where some Saturday Night Live stars (like Belushi, Murray, and Aykroyd) got their start. Look into "Wicked," an award-winning musical about the Land of Oz before Dorothy arrived. Another wonder in Chicago is that you can find just about any cuisine you have a taste for. Sushi, Indian, Persian, Italian, Chinese, French, Spanish, Ethiopian... it's all here. And don't forget Chicago-style deep dish pizza. Unfortunately, there are many good restaurants visitors are unlikely to find them on their own. Here are a few good recommendations (look up details on [yelp.com](http://yelp.com)): Lou Malnati's or Pizzeria Uno for Chicago-style pizza. Tango Sur for steak. Cafe Iberico for Spanish tapas. Hema's Kitchen for Indian. Simply It for Vietnamese. Avec for contemporary American. The list could go on and on so I'll stop there.



Mike Chung  
Photo by Lauren Kessler

## An M.C. You Must Listen To

*Interview by Paul Vidal*

**Mike Chung** lives in Chicago. Despite the long commute, he still calls the Red his home crag. We get the chance to catch up with him and hear a little about the Windy City.

**Me:** Are you involved (i.e.: donor, volunteer, etc) with the RRGCC? Why/why not?

**MC:** So far I've only donated funds to the RRGCC (aside from directing parking that one night). If I lived 2-3 driving hours closer to the Red I'd do something more hands-on but money is simple and it's the least I can do--and it's needed! It's important to preserve areas for the future and acquisition is the most reliable way of ensuring future access for climbing. I think any climber who spends time climbing outdoors should give back in some form at the very least; whether it be financial donation, participation in trail days, rebolting or anchor replacement, or donating time for other activities. The RRGCC and other organizations, like the Access Fund, the Southeastern Climbers Coalition, and the Carolina Climbers Coalition, are all doing what they can in the interests of climbers but it takes hard work, time, and money to make things happen. Get those wallets and/or jars or elbow grease out!

**Me:** Do you remember your first lead? Tell me about it.

**MC:** Oh man, do I remember. My first outdoor lead was Tourist Trap at Torrent Falls. It was my first trip to the Red. I had come down with a few friends for the weekend and we were staying at the Torrent Falls B&B. Seeing the area for the first time through the morning fog on Saturday was magical. Anyway, we made our way up to the cliff line and decided we'd warm up on this route. My belayer was new to lead belaying and I was getting short-roped as I climbed, let alone clipping the 'draws. I was able to get the first three bolts clipped before I got dripped upon. I was starting to wonder what was going on and I got my answer not long after. The clouds opened up and it was a morning shower. I down-climbed back to the third bolt and lowered off, taking shelter from the rain in the rock house at the start. I was starting to worry that we were already done for the day but the rain died down after 10 minutes or so. I climbed back up and finished the route without many problems (the biggest of which was still getting shortroped). Anyway, the more/most experienced climber I was with knew enough to TR off of carabiners (and not the anchors directly) and at his insistence we had the rope running through locking 'biners and a sliding-X on the anchor bolts. At the end of our day, he cleaned the anchor and rapped down... but left the lockers on the anchor. Mind you, while the quickdraws we had used were his, those two locking carabiners on the anchors were about one-third of all the gear I had at the time. We ended up scrambling up a path to the top of the cliff line where I belly-crawled to the edge to retrieve my carabiners from above and very nearly slipped on the now wet foliage to my demise. I've learned a lot about climbing since then. Looking back, it was dangerous and I'm kind of glad, in a way, that I didn't know any better or else I would've been scared out of my mind!

**Me:** You live in Chicago yet you often make a trip of six to seven hours for a weekend trip. Why the Red?

**MC:** Well, the closest climbing to Chicago would be on limestone at the Mississippi Palisades or on quartzite at Devil's Lake (equally far). Though I used to spend more time up at the Lake, I'd much rather spend my time on sandstone. Southern Illinois is ever so slightly closer to Chicago than the Red, but between those, I enjoy the atmosphere and style of routes at the Red more. Don't get me wrong, while climbing at the Red is fantastic and world-class, I still do climb elsewhere. I have a half-serious goal of visiting five climbing destinations new to me each calendar year. Since 2002, when I came up with this idea, I haven't missed the goal, yet.

**Me:** Do you climb at a gym in Chicago? What gym? What do you do there?

**MC:** I believe that variety is key in climbing. I spent time bouldering at Hidden Peak but I tend to go to friends' home-walls these days. I work a semi-regular shift at Lakeshore Athletic Club, with its 90' tall wall, and climb there on occasion. I visit other gyms in the Chicago area mainly for their climbing competitions.

**Me:** You seem to do a lot of photography. What do you like about it? Any favorite styles or settings? Any quick tips for beginners?

**MC:** Well, I've only recently started but I like documenting events to share with others. For example, two buddies and I went to the Dirty South for Thanksgiving week to boulder. I was able to take photos and upload them nightly so that friends back at home could "come along" on our trip. Or documenting my friends' baby girl around 8 months old...they change so quickly that I was very happy to have been able to provide them with lasting mementos. Quick tips? Learn how aperture, shutter speed, and film/sensor sensitivity (ASA/ISO) are related and connected. Learn how to make and judge a good exposure. Learn how to use your camera effectively and efficiently. Learn how your camera meters and your camera's limitations. Pay attention to your backgrounds. Get an 18% grey card.

## Traditionally Independent

Interview by Paul Vidal

I first met Yasmeen Fowler at the Miami University climbing wall. For me, she's been something of a climbing mentor. She's showed me how to fall, belay, give soft catches, climb trad, accept life as it comes, and, ultimately, she introduced me into the climbing community at the Red. I took the chance to catch up with her recently

**Me:** What's been the biggest obstacle you've had to overcome as a climber?

**Yasi:** The biggest obstacle I've had to overcome as a climber was one I overcame just this past year. I realized that it's okay to miss a beautiful weekend at the Red to spend time with people who don't climb. I'm in love with climbing to the point that I don't ever see myself stopping, and I still prefer to spend *most* of the beautiful weekends out of the year at the Red, but I've started fitting my family into my weekends more instead of spending time with them only during the week. My climbing hasn't suffered for it, so it wasn't a very tough lesson to learn.

**Me:** How long have you been involved with the RRGCC? What have you been doing on the [RRGCC.org](http://RRGCC.org) website?

**Yasi:** For the past couple years, I played very minor roles in putting ideas together for the two yearly festivals; but recently I've been given the opportunity to help out with the website. I've been putting people's suggestions into effect by updating the code and the database as necessary. I wrote the Rocktoberfest portion of the site this past fall, to give people an online resource for the event.

**Me:** What do you hope to do with the RRGCC? What impacts do you hope to make?

**Yasi:** I hope to help the RRGCC present itself via the Internet to climbers and others who are interested in its goals. I want people who have ideas about the site to be able to present them and see their suggestions be implemented.

**Me:** Why the Red?

**Yasi:** The Red is a climbing area I'd drive past other destinations to get to so I feel incredibly lucky that it's the destination nearest to me. I've been able to learn and work on so many techniques there... overhanging jugs, slightly off-vertical pockets, technical slabs, splitter hand and finger cracks, and off-widths (for a brief stint), to name a few. One of my favorite things about the Red is the rate of development of new crags and routes. Most of the time, I enjoy climbing new routes rather than projecting, and the past few years have been perfect for that with the PMRP and Muir Valley bringing hundreds of new options to the Red.

**Me:** What do you like to do outside of climbing?

**Yasi:** Aside from the generic, obvious answer of spending time with my family, boyfriend, and good friends... I've been doing yoga regularly for about 5 years. Last year I decided I'd like to start doing triathlons, so I did my first triathlon (sprint distances) last September and have some planned for this summer. I always have a book with me - usually some sort of historical fiction. Over the past year, I've been enjoying exploring the aspects of downtown Cincinnati I breezed over as a child - various museums and goings-on. I've been fortunate enough to get to travel outside of the U.S. and I look forward to more trips abroad now that I have an income rather than a tuition payment.

**Me:** Do you remember your first lead? tell me about it (or another early lead that was memorable?)

**Yasi:** A friend I met my freshman year of college taught me how to lead climb. For my first outdoor lead, he put me on *Come in Your Lycra*. I didn't know there was such a thing as stick clipping, and was naive enough to think that once I'd clipped the first bolt, all decking potential was gone. I made it all the way to a few moves before the anchors, pumped out, and whipped off.

My first trad lead was *Father and Son*, and since all I had available was a rack of stoppers, I protected it passively. I was pretty exhausted by the time I got to the top, and instead of properly placing my last piece, I just laid the carabiner holding the nuts on the ledge. One of them happened to lodge itself in a crack, and I figured that was good enough. I didn't lead trad again for a couple years, when someone taught me how to place cams. :)

## Artsy Farsi

*Driving home from the Red together, I'd often hear Yasi talking to her mother in a different language. I thought she was trying to hide something... Turns out it was just Farsi. Here's what she has to say about the language:*

Farsi is the language of Iran. It was all I spoke until I went to preschool and learned English. I find it easier to describe something with a phrase in Farsi sometimes - it seems like some languages cover situations and emotions that others don't.

"**Tarof**" is a word for which there isn't really an English equivalent. It describes being excessively generous because traditions dictates that you should be. For example, when I was 14, my mom and I went to Iran for a month. After our first ride in a taxi, my mom asked the taxi driver how much the fare was, and he replied that there was no charge. I started to get out of the car, surprised about the free ride, but not about to argue. My mom, having grown up in the country and familiar with the tradition, had to spend a couple minutes thanking the man for his kindness but asking him to please name a price for the drive. Eventually, he took her money.

"**Inshallah**" is a common saying - it can be translated as "if it is meant to be." It has religious undertones, and can be used so that one doesn't sound as if s/he is presuming to predict the future. I've grown up hearing my grandmother use this phrase a lot.

I figure I'll round it out with some climbing-related terms. :)

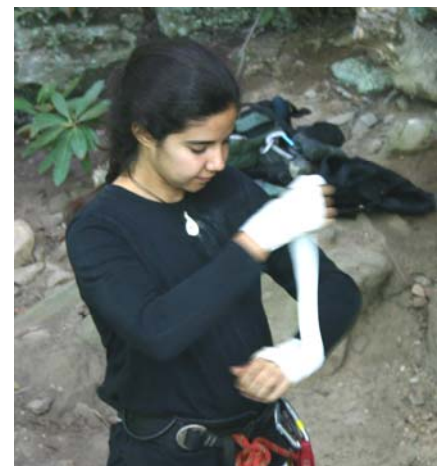
"**kooh navardi**" - climbing

"**begeer**" - take

"**oftadam**" - I fell / falling

"**nayoftadam**" - I sent (literally, I didn't fall)

"**beeroon**" - outside



*Yasmeen Fowler taping up before another trad climbing adventure.*

## Welcome to the RRGCC

By Bill Strachan, RRGCC Executive Director

This year the RRGCC celebrates having been in existence for eleven years. Thus it seems a good time to review how the organization has grown. The bolting frenzy that started in the early nineties initially went unnoticed by all but climbers. However, when the US Forest Service finally looked at what was going on they responded by imposing a bolting ban. Meetings between climbers and the Forest Service resulted in an agreement that the Forest Service would draft a Climbing Management Guide to regulate the approval of bolted climbs. In 1997 the RRGCC was founded as a grass roots organization of climbers formed to negotiate with the US Forest Service concerning bolting and the Climbing Management Guide. These early years were spent focusing on Forest Service regulations and climber behavior related issues. This work required minimal funding and little organizational formality. Major projects undertaken in these early years, including building new trails to Military Wall and Left Flank were funded by grants obtained from the Access Fund.

This early work of the RRGCC culminated in 2000 when the RRGCC and the US Forest Service entered into a Memorandum of Understanding, basically an agreement of how both organizations could work together. Even though we were working together, the pace of new route approval was glacial. Most route developers, frustrated by the thought of having to deal with Forest Service bureaucracy, had already switched their focus for new routes to private property in the Southern Region. The RRGCC was not oblivious to this development. Beginning in 2002 the organization began to pursue a strategy to acquire private land with climbing. Our mantra became, "If we own it, they can't close it."

The Murray Property, what has now become known as the Pendergrass-Murray Recreational Preserve or PMRP, was identified as having the best potential for purchase. An owner-financed mortgage was negotiated with the Murray family and the largest climber purchase of land with climbing was completed. Along with this purchase strategy came new responsibilities and the need to become more formally organized. Thus in 2003 the RRGCC made the transition from being an informal nonprofit association to being a formal nonprofit corporation by filing Articles of Incorporation with the State of Kentucky. Initially there were five members of the RRGCC Board of Directors but more recently the size of the Board has been expanded to nine members.

The final step taken in establishing RRGCC, Inc. was to apply to have the 501(c)(3) nonprofit status of the RRGCC recognized by the IRS. To obtain that recognition the RRGCC adopted specific language into its Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws. For example, the RRGCC Articles of Incorporation specifically state that we are organized, "for the charitable purposes of gaining, securing, and ensuring open public access to recreational rock climbing opportunities and encouraging the conservation of the natural environment on publicly managed and privately owned land." The RRGCC Bylaws have an entire Article devoted to the Tax Exemption Provision. In part, this article prohibits any distribution of monies except in furtherance of the organization and places limitations on certain political activities

The RRGCC Board of Directors (BOD) consists of nine volunteer RRGCC members who have made a commitment to dedicate a portion of their time to directing and managing the organization. Board members serve for a three-year term and may only serve two consecutive terms before they must leave the Board for at least one year before becoming eligible again. RRGCC Board members act as representatives of the climbing community at large and all formal actions of the Board including the appointment of officers are taken by vote of the Board. To take a position on the Board of Directors you must be 21 years old and have been a member of the RRGCC for at least one year. Any member meeting these requirements may volunteer to be elected to the Board. For the practical functioning of the organization, people with relevant skills and experience are sought for Board service. Past non-profit service and/or knowledge in the areas of accounting, law, fundraising, public relations, business, and environmental issues are examples the types of experience sought in prospective Board members.

So that is it. The RRGCC continues to be an all-volunteer, grass roots organization. Albeit with the PMRP purchase, an organization that is much more formalized and structured. If you are interested in becoming a Board member contact either myself, Bill Strachan (cpstatvk@pipeline.com) or RRGCC President, Dr. Bob Mathenv (mathenvbob@aol.com).

### NEW ROUTES IN THE PMRP

*Beer Belly, 5.13a (S)*  
*Easy Rider, 5.13b (S)*  
*Knees and Toes, 5.12b (S)*  
*Dirty Girl, 5.10a (M)*  
*Aviary, 5.12b (S)*  
*Sexy Sadie, 5.10a R (T)*  
*El Encuentro, 5.13b (S)*

There are plenty more new routes going up all the time. For a more complete list, visit Ray Ellington's [online guide](#).

### MUIR VALLEY

As always, the drills are firing throughout Muir Valley. For more information on walls, routes, and access, visit [MuirValley.com](#)

### How the Route Got its Name

**Smoothy Nut. 10c**  
 By Blake Bowling

Ethan Cumbler was a U.K. Med student who kept a hickory nut in his pocket for an entire season, which he called "smooth nut". He said that he was his little friend that gave him power and endurance. One day at Roadside, I asked him about smoothy nut, he look down in dismay, then somberly said that he had eaten him. "Eaten Him?!!" I asked.

As his head rose and started to look at the sky, and spread him arms, he yelled: "Now, his power flows through my veins forever!"

So I was aiding the dihedral to put some anchors on it, and I got a section near the top and found a hickory nut wedged securely. I thought of Ethan and was glad to see that "smoothy nut" was still alive.

So I ate him.

## Petzl RocTrip Success at the Red

*From RRGCC.org, edited by Paul Vidal*



Joining with the forces of [Petzl](#), the RRGCC hosted an immensely successful RocTrip in last October, raising over \$32,000 towards the annual mortgage payment on the Pendergrass-Murray Recreational Preserve (PMRP). A \$10,000 matching grant from the Petzl Foundation bolstered the fundraising power and provided an added incentive for the nearly 1,000 climbers who attended the event to pitch in for climbing and recreation access in the Red River Gorge area. By the time the tent's were taken down and the anchors were cleaned, the 2008 PMRP mortgage payment of \$30,000 was secured and headway was made on the 2009 payment, the earliest a payment has ever been secured.

And it wasn't only climbers that came from around the nation: RocTrip attracted the attention of the media on regional and national levels. Even NPR's "[It's Only A Game](#)" radio program took interest, sending a journalist to cover and participate in the weekends events and broadcast the segment to its national audience on October 27<sup>th</sup>. Globally, the event generated buzz on [8a.nu](#), a widely trafficked sport-climbing website that now spotlights the Red River Gorge as one of the top ten climbing destinations in the world.

The Petzl RocTrip, now in its sixth year, has proven successful in bringing the international climbing community together in celebration of the sport, from New York's Shawangunks, Squamish, British Columbia, Kalymnos, Greece, and Millau in the south of France. Over 35 high-profile sponsored climbing athletes, including Chris Sharma, Emily Harrington, Tony Lamiche and local prodigy Katie Brown, attended this year's RocTrip. Open to climbers of all ability levels, the 2007 Petzl RocTrip / Rocktoberfest engaged climbers in a festival of competitions, clinics, and celebration while raising funds and awareness for access issues locally and nationally. "We owe the success of this event to the local community - the volunteers, the RRGCC Board, area businesses, and the one thousand plus people who came out and put dollars down in support of the Pendergrass-Murray Preserve," said John Evans, Marketing Director for Petzl North America. "I highly recommend other outdoor companies include this outstanding grass-roots event in their outreach programs for 2008. I guarantee Petzl will be back to support this great cause."

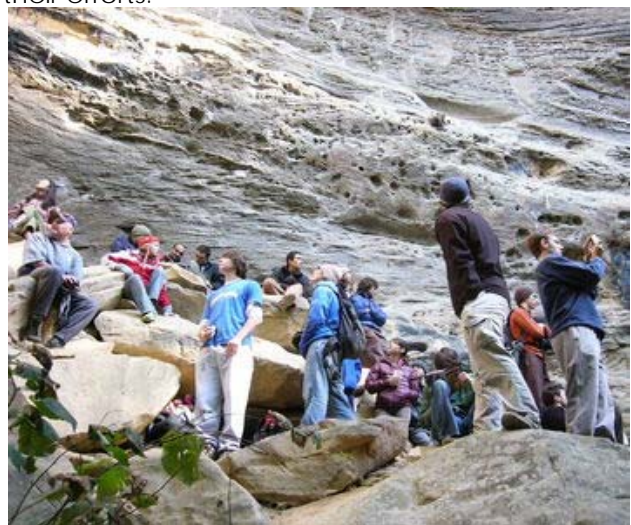
If you weren't lucky enough to attend, be sure to catch the [video on YouTube](#).

The RRGCC sincerely thanks all of the sponsors of RocTrip 2007, which, in addition to Petzl included: Miguel's Pizza, [Prana](#), [Avery Brewing Company](#), [Keen Footwear](#), [La Sportiva](#), [Rock and Ice Magazine](#), [Red River Outdoors](#), [Sterling Ropes](#), [Smart Wool](#), [Solid Rock Climbers for Christ](#), [Paradox Sports](#), [Five Ten](#), [Red Bull](#), [The Warrior's Way](#), [RockQuest Climbing Center](#) and [The Access Fund](#).

And, of course, the Coalition thanks all the volunteers who showed their incredible spirit and dedication to the community. The successes are all as a **direct** result of their efforts.



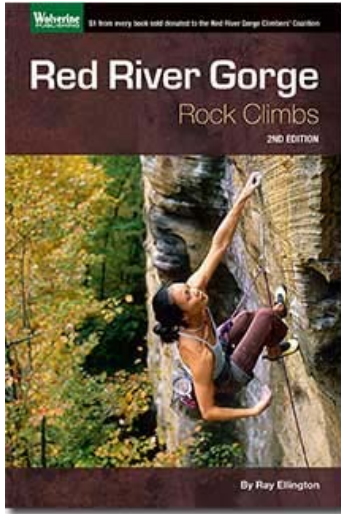
*Women's Trad Clinic taught by Lynn Hill & Katie Brown*



*The Motherlode was packed with people for the Flash Rally*

## Climbers Await LAC Decision

*Bill Strachan, Executive Director Red River Gorge Climbers' Coalition  
 Edited by Paul Vidal*



Ray Ellington, author of the new "Red River Gorge Guidebook", and Dave Pegg (Wolverine Publishing) have generously donated more than \$4500 of their profits to climbing organizations in the RRG area. Already Dave Pegg has donated over \$3000 to the RRGCC! Visit [wolverinepublishing.com](http://wolverinepublishing.com) or the "Buy Now" link below to purchase your copy.

**Buy Now**

For more on the LAC process, visit [rrgcc.org](http://rrgcc.org) or visit [Limits of Acceptable Change](#).

The Limits of Acceptable Change public input process has ended and the recommended alternative has been given to Daniel Boone Forest Supervisor, Jerome Perez for a final decision. The alternative recommended by the LAC group is Alternative 2 – "Balance Recreation and Protection of Resources". With the end of the LAC process, there's hope that the moratorium on new sport routes will be lifted and development of new routes can resume. The moratorium was initiated during the revision of the Forest Plan for the entire forest and was extended through the three year LAC process.

The last stage of the LAC process focused on management actions to be taken if recreational impacts exceed LAC standards. In the Red River Gorge, measureable impacts were found at 245 "climbsites", or staging areas at the base of one or more climbs, though only 25 of these climbsites exceed LAC standards. Proposed management actions to mitigate impacts above standards include trail relocation, climbsite modifications using native materials to reduce size and erosion, and site hardening using non-native materials. Additional management actions in support of the RRGCC's goal to make all climbing exemplary include signage, education efforts, and evaluation of ways to reduce impacts even where LAC standards are not exceeded.

The results of the Red River Gorge LAC process are precedent setting and not just for climbing. Throughout the process, climbers have worked hard to make sure that LAC efforts to limit impacts do not at the same time limit climbing. The final results of LAC are expected to lead to a Climbing Management Plan that will provide procedures and guidelines for new routes and areas to be developed. This outcome would not have been possible without the dedicated efforts of the climbers involved in almost monthly meetings over the last three years: Dwight Bradburn, *RRGCC Treasurer*; Shannon Stuart-Smith, *past RRGCC Executive Director and Board Member*; Jim Holzman, *past RRGCC Board Member*; Chris Carr, *Recreational Ecologist*; and Rita Wehner, *USFS Backcountry Ranger*.

### The LAC

Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) is a nine step U.S. Forest Service planning process that is currently being conducted for the [Daniel Boone National Forest](#). For more information on the past meetings, LAC progress, and the LAC process as a whole, please visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/r8/boone/lac/> and be sure to visit [rrgcc.org](http://rrgcc.org) for more updates as progress continues.

**Helpful Links**  
[The Gorge Process Workshops](#)

### REBOLTING IN THE CLIFTY WILDERNESS AREA

In discussions between the RRGCC and the USFS, Daniel Boone National Forest, Cumberland District Ranger, Dave Manner advised that any request for a temporary exemption from the Wilderness Act to allow for the use of power drills in the Clifty Wilderness to maintain existing bolts would be rejected by the Regional office in Atlanta. Mr. Manner said, however, that no special permission is needed for climbers to maintain existing bolts in Clifty Wilderness as long as hand drills are used. When old bolts in the Wilderness are replaced the Forest Service has asked climbers to camouflage the hangers.

### BOLTING ON FORREST SERVICE LAND

Since 1996, there has been a bolting ban for new routes on U.S. Forest Service land in the Red River Gorge. However, existing routes are still open and re-equipping previously existing hardware is permitted. **Also, if you are interested in bolting a new line, there is an approval process that will allow you, upon review and approval, to establish a new route.** For more information on the bolting regulations and new route application process, please visit [Forest Service website](#) and the [RRGCC](#) for the new route application packet.

## **RRGCC MISSION STATEMENT**

### **PREAMBLE**

The Red River Gorge Climbers' Coalition Incorporated (RRGCC) is a group of rock climbers who have come together to protect, promote and ensure responsible climbing at the Red River Gorge in Kentucky. We are committed to preserving and appreciating the natural environment in which we practice our sport, as well as respecting others. We will accomplish all this through self-awareness, education, support, and dedicated efforts with one another, non-climbers, and land managers, alike.

### **PURPOSE**

The intended effect of the RRGCC is to ensure open public access to quality, climbing opportunities that meet the needs of the recreating climbing public in, and around, the Red River Gorge of Kentucky on public and private land, while encouraging the conservation of the natural environment.

### **BUSINESS**

We will accomplish this by dedicating ourselves and this organization to protecting, promoting, and ensuring responsible climbing.

### **VALUES**

We intend to achieve this goal through trusteeship-holding climbing at the Red in trust for the public good-acting cooperatively as good stewards and strong civic and community leaders with a commitment to mission, personal responsibility, mutual respect, personal integrity, and taking the initiative.

## Turning the Corner..

Last year represented an immense change in fortunes for the RRGCC and access throughout the RRG. Consider that, for the 2007 mortgage payment, the \$30,000 number wasn't hit until March or April. Contract that with this year's payment, which was in hand by the end of the Petzl and RRGCC RocTrip in October 2007. Not to mention that funds for the 2009 payment were already rolling in.

The change in condition is the result of a community effort. By getting the word out, expressing passion and commitment to the goal, we all worked to make sure access would be available for all. Particular thanks, though, must go out to Bentley Brackett, Director of Corporate Fundraising, and Morgain Sprague, Volunteer Coordinator, for attracting the large corporate sponsors and have the guts and vision to believe that the community could pull this off in style.

While the importance of attention from major corporate sponsors can't be understated, the strength that will keep the Coalition together and access open *has* to come from you, the community. That strength is manifest in many forms, from telling a friend to organizing an event, from giving a dollar to offering a donation match, from picking up a wrapper to rehabilitating a trail – every form helps access throughout the region. And consider how you might expand that action – get others involved. Donating \$50 a year is incredible.. but what if you could get five more people to give \$50 a year?

Even if it's drumming up \$10 a month taking it easy on your adrenal glands a few mornings, the community thanks you. No matter how small you might think it is, it means to world to the community.

Momentum is with us. Help us build it, maintain it, ride it into the future. Get the word out. Tell people what's going on. Be a solid representative of climbers through your actions. And, most importantly, get out and climb!

## **PMRP**

More than just an acronym and a lot of land, the PMRP represents security, freedom, and a future for climbing in the Red River Gorge. Since land use is always subject to the owner's discretion, the only way to guarantee climbing access is by owning it. The PMRP is owned, managed, and [payed for by the RRGCC and climbers like you](#). **If we own it, they can't close it**



*Blake Bowling on his route, "All That Glitters" at The Gallery, one of several crags in Sore Heel Hollar on the PMRP Property.*

*Photo by [Ben Cassel](#).*



## How you can help...

There are about as many ways to help the Red River Gorge Climbers' Coalition as there are routes in the RRG. Given the breadth of our purpose, there are many fronts that are in need of a few good foot soldiers. Trails will always need maintenance, routes will always need re-equipped, flyers will always need to be developed and distributed. All present themselves as opportunities for you to give back to the Red and take ownership of what you enjoy. With so many different options, there's surely a niche for you to fill; one that will challenge you, help you develop personally, and reward you with a sense of ownership and action.

### Represent!

Your behavior is one of the most influential ways you can help secure access. Please be kind and courteous to everyone you meet. Remember, you're an ambassador for the sport.

### Get the word out!

Help the cause by educating people about the situation. Most people don't realize the current access issues facing the Red. Update them on current closures, area rules, and the latest RRGCC efforts. Consider being an area/region representative. And be sure to direct them to one of our BOD or to [rrgcc.org](http://rrgcc.org).

## IN THE TRENCHES...

### VOLUNTEER FOR THE RRGCC

Please help us in our effort to secure climbing in the PMRP and at the Red River Gorge by volunteering. To volunteer, please contact Morgain Sprague at [spragumm@hotmail.com](mailto:spragumm@hotmail.com). Below are some areas in which you can help.

**Access:** Attend LAC meetings and work with BOD members to secure access on USFS land and parks.

**Stewardship:** Participate in trail days and bolting clinics to develop and preserve our climbing areas.

**Membership:** Help with mailing lists and distributing important RRGCC information to keep climbers updated.

**Pinch-Hitter:** Volunteer at our fundraising events to keep them running smoothly.

### Make a Donation

## COME ON! COMMON SENSE

Access is an extremely sensitive issue in the RRG with much of the climbing on USFS and private land. Recently, Torrent Falls was closed due to climber behavior. Here's the easiest way how you can help keep climbing open in these areas.

### 1. Know where you are.

Do you know where to park? Are there people nearby that are seeking quiet? Are there route closures at the wall? Should you bring your pets? If you're unsure about the area's rules, ask the landowner. Visit the [RRGCC Forum](#) for any answers to most any question you might have.

### 2. Leave No Trace.

Stay on existing trails. Pack out what you pack in. If there isn't a portajohn or designated bathroom for the area, please bury your waste and pack out any TP. All trash should be cleaned from the area. And yes, that includes banana peels and apple cores.

### 3. Make mamma proud.

You may be the only climber some people meet. That makes you an ambassador for the sport. Remember, how you act impacts our access in the Gorge and nationwide. Please be courteous to landowners, neighbors, hikers, campers, workers, and anyone else you might see around the area. Remember, *climbing on private land is a privilege, not a right.*

## Support the RRGCC – Become a Member!

The RRGCC is a 501(c)3 organization, meaning your donations are tax-deductible. And all donations will go to helping preserve and expand access throughout the Red River Gorge area. Mail your membership to PO BOX 22156, Lexington, KY 40522-2156 or donate online at [rrgcc.org](http://rrgcc.org).

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

### Yes, I'd like to join!

\$25  \$50  \$75  Other \_\_\_\_\_

My check, payable to RRGCC, is enclosed

## Wall and Route Closures and Reasons

| <u>Area and/or Routes</u>   | <u>Reasoning</u>                                       |
|---|--|
| <b>At Hen's Nest:</b><br>Finger Lickin' Good; Sultans of Stem; Close to the Edge; The Edge (TR)                 | Protection of Sensitive Resources                      |
| <b>At Western Sky Bridge Ridge:</b><br>Refraction; Guideline; Icarus; The Great Arch; The Hook and the Pendulum | Protection of Archeological Sites                      |
| <b>Pocket Wall</b>  | State Park Property                                    |
| <b>Arena, In-Between Wall, Oil Crack</b>  | No Foot Traffic Permitted on Charmane Oil Company land |
| <b>Torrent Falls</b>  | Landowner's Request – Follow RRGCC for more details    |

Several routes in Muir Valley have been closed for maintenance of for safety reasons. For Closures in Muir Valley, please visit [muirvalley.com](http://muirvalley.com).

## Upcoming Events

Here are a few of the events that will be taking place in the RRG during the next few months. Please visit [rrgcc.org](http://rrgcc.org) for more information.

|                          |             |                |
|--------------------------|-------------|----------------|
| Red River Reunion        | April 18-20 | Miguel's Pizza |
| RRGCC Open Board Meeting | June – TBD  | Torrent Falls  |
| Johnny & Alex Trail Day  | August 9-10 | PMRP           |
| Muir Valley Trail Day    | August 30   | Muir Valley    |

### MUIR VALLEY

As of January 1, **no dogs** are allowed in Muir Valley. Violators will be asked to leave. Please help maintain access and respect the landowners policies. For more, visit [muirvalley.com](http://muirvalley.com).

### WHY YOU NEED TO RESPECT THE CLOSURES

1. Respecting the closure shows both the wall's landowners and other landowners around the area that we will respect them and their wishes. In the future, this could help us negotiate with them to set up rules and regulation with access.

2. Closures often are in place to help prevent damages to sensitive resources in the area. For instance, white-haired golden rod is an endangered species that is sometimes near climbing area. If you notice a sensitive resource in a climbing area, please contact us at [rrgcc.org](http://rrgcc.org).

3. Some closures are temporary. For instance, with funding from the Access Fund, there's currently research underway that's exploring ways to protect the archeological resources around Military Wall while still allowing recreational access to the cliff.

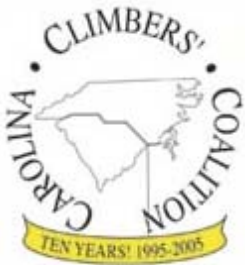
### Back In The Day...

By Larry Day

When the Seibert's and I did "Things That Go Bump" I was sporting cutting edge footwear (EBs) but Tom and Ellen were still climbing in big ol' monster hiking boots. You know the kind, full grain leather, steel shank, massive Vibram soles, full welt. Man, Tom could sure climb hard in those things, and of course we had no cams, just hexes and stoppers.

I'm pretty sure we did it in two pitches. I can't remember why we started so late in the day, but I lead the first pitch, digging dirt out of the little dihedral for holds and placements as we went. It seemed like most of the dirt landed in my huge 'fro and slowly sifted down to my scalp, always hated that. Anyway, Tom lead the slabby pitch in his big assed clunky hiking boots,.. in the dark. The whole thing kind of scared the crap out of Ellen, who came up with the name.

Click on the images to visit the donations pages.



Special Thanks goes to Josephine Neff for making sure this newsletter was finished in spite of the so-called editor.

**Thanks Josie!**

## Around the region...

The **Friends of Muir Valley** is a local organization focused on issues facing Muir Valley as well as participating and supporting action around the Red River Gorge. For up-to-date information on what's happening in Muir, visit [muirvalley.com](http://muirvalley.com). Also, please remember this is private land owned by Rick and Liz Weber. Please be sure to respect their [warnings and rules](#) as outlined on their website and in the waiver you **must** fill out before climbing there. [Click here](#) for the legal release form.

The **Southeast Climbers' Coalition** continues to impress everyone this spring. Crazy as always, they have a jam-packed lineup. April 5 is their [Little Rock City Trail Day](#). Then on May 16, you can party with them at the [Dirty South "climbing" Film Fest](#). If you still haven't had your fill, join the SECC for the [National Trails Day at Boat Rock](#). All this is in addition to the annual [Triple Crown Bouldering](#) Series, which takes place every fall. For more information on the SCC and how you can help, please visit [seclimbers.org](http://seclimbers.org).

The **Carolina Climbers' Coalition** continue their efforts to pay for their historic purchase of Laurel Knob. They would also like to remind you that Whitesides, Big Lost Cove, Shortoff, Table Rock, Whiterock Cliff, and Looking Glass are all closed areas until **Aug 15** or until further notice. These areas are protected due to nesting falcons. At least 7 pairs have produced young. Please respect the closures! For more information, visit [carolinaclimbers.org](http://carolinaclimbers.org)

The **New River Alliance of Climbers'** is ramping up for the 6<sup>th</sup> annual [New River Rendezvous](#) this May 18-20, 2008. **Pre-registration begins March 1**, and is required to attend. Their annual fundraiser includes slideshows, bouldering & climbing & dyno comps, dinner, crash-pad sumo wrestling, slacklining, dance party, midnight snacks, pancake breakfast, clinics & camping! For more information on the events and issues in the New River Gorge, please visit [newriverclimbers.net](http://newriverclimbers.net).

For more news about issues facing climbers and climbing access around the nation, please visit [accessfund.org](http://accessfund.org) or read up on the [Vertical Times](#), the AF's national publication.



**Want to receive the newsletters on a regular basis?** Email [members@rgcc.org](mailto:members@rgcc.org) to add your email to our mailing list.

**Do you have content for the next RRGCC Newsletter?** Articles, news, and entries are due by May 16 to be considered for the June 30<sup>th</sup> publication. Please submit all content to [Josephine.Neff@gmail.com](mailto:Josephine.Neff@gmail.com). If you include a photo, please include photo credit whenever possible. Thanks for your help – we look forward to your submissions!