

WESTERN MONTANA



CLIMBERS COALITION

March 2019 Newsletter

What, April already? It may be a little late to call this a “Summary of 2018” newsletter. Apologies to all our members, old and new! 2018 was a big year for the coalition, and 2019 is shaping up to be even bigger. For starters, after being affiliated for many years with Defying Gravity, the youth climbing team nonprofit, we are now a nonprofit of our own. Many thanks to Defying Gravity for their support, but for a variety of reasons, it was time for us to become independent. Michael Moore spent many hours doing the necessary paperwork to make this happen.

Our board saw some changes, as well. You will find a quick bio and mug shot of the current board members in this newsletter.

And while not a lot of action happened in terms of rebolting and anchor replacement this past year, the coalition was far from idle, from working on access issues to organizing fun events for our beloved climbing community!



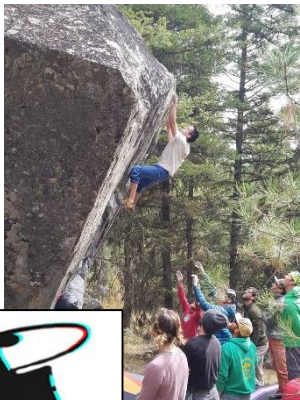
Members get 25% off at [Climbstuff.com](https://climbstuff.com) with code WMCC25

The Lost Minds/Lost Horse Boulder Rally

Planning an outdoor event late September in Montana is a bit of a gamble; will it be pleasant, rain, or even snow? Fortunately, September 29th turned out to be a lovely day, and The Lost Minds/Lost Horse Boulder Rally was a major success! After several years of being on hiatus, the WMTCC revived the "competition." With over 75 competitors and over 20 sponsors, the rally was an amazing celebration of public lands access and the Montana climbing community. The American Alpine Club, Access Fund, and Higher Ground Brewery were the major contributors to the event, along with Mast & Co. Builders, Patagonia, Trango Climbing, Orange Street Food Farm, and so many other amazing companies. The WMTCC was able to raise significant funds, as well as add new members!

Keep your eyes peeled for the announcement of this year's Lost Minds/Lost Horse Rally!





A Fun Evening!

On February 28, WMTC and the University of Montana Outdoor Recreation Program brought the Dawn Wall movie to Missoula. It was a great evening, which started with a showing of Abbey Rhoderick's documentary; created as part of the Big Sky Documentary Youth Fellowship Program, "Inspire" tells the story of Erik Pallister's recovery from a serious climbing accident. With so much talent on and off the climbing walls, Abbey has a bright future ahead!

This was followed with a presentation of WMTC by our chair, Michael Moore, and a raffle – thank you to REI, Patagonia, LB Snow, Freestone and Hunter Bay Coffee for donating prizes.

And finally The Dawn Wall movie, a two hour recounting of not only one of the hardest send ever, but also a deep insight into the life of one of today's greatest climber.

This event was also a membership drive and fundraiser for our collation; many thanks to all who donated, and welcome to our 46 new members!



Rattler Gulch Update

During the climbing season of 2018, the private part of the Rattler Gulch climbing area changed hands. The prior owner had been a hands-off landowner and only asked that climbers park above the BLM gate just past Diver's Wall. The new owner, Ron Booth (Lubbock, TX) bought the property with the idea of running a small cattle ranch. It will be managed by his son, and new fencing was put in last season to keep the cows contained. An extension of the fence ran up past Diver's Wall and was posted as no trespassing.

Coalition board member Michael Moore contacted Mr. Booth about access to the property. Working with Joe Sambataro, Michael and Ron reached an agreement over a four-month conversation that would ensure climbing access to the Diver's Wall and the Wall in Between, which contains St. Louis Direct, Sweet Honey Biscuits and Partners in Crime. Ron Booth is psyched about climbing continuing in Rattler, as is WMTCC.

Ron wants climbers to continue parking above the BLM fence, but otherwise he'll be hands-off. WMTCC will continue with the task of replacing older bolts in Rattler, and plans are being made to replace most of the hardware on the Diver's Wall.

Be considerate and appreciative of Mr. Booth's property while climbing in Rattler. Clean up dog poop, don't play blaring music that bothers others and do NOT have a camp fire. Ron also asks that no one camp on his property.

It's important to respect private property owners' wishes; by doing so, access will continue.

WMTCC thanks the Booth family and the Access Fund for keeping this part of Rattler open to climbers.

Kootenai Changes Hands

The big news in the local climbing community this year is the purchase of Kootenai. Due to the laissez-faire approach of the past owners, it is likely that many climbers did not realize that nearly all of the climbing routes in Kootenai are on private property. Fortunately, the new owners are open to welcoming climbers on their property; however, since insurance companies consider climbing a dangerous sport, they need time to resolve liability concerns. Kootenai will remain closed to climbing while this is being resolved. Please respect the closure. The positive news is that the owners, Access Fund and WMTCC are getting close to resolving this issue by entering into a climbing management agreement (CMA).

We are extremely fortunate that the Access Fund recognized the unique value of Kootenai. Joe Sambataro (AF, National Access Director and Northwest Regional Director) has made access to Kootenai a top priority. In late February, Joe flew to Missoula from Seattle; the purpose of his visit was to view and photograph the climbing area and to discuss the CMA with the landowners. Joe and WMTCC board members Dane Scott and Michael Moore toured the area with the owners and then met for a several hours. The result of the discussions seemed to be mutual agreement; only minor and reasonable changes were made to the agreement. The landowners are now discussing the CMA with their lawyer and insurance agent. The CMA is a complicated legal document and we owe a big thanks to Joe Sambataro who drafted the document in consultation with lawyers and WMTCC board members. The CMA will hopefully be signed soon by all three parties.

The purpose of this CMA is to create a mechanism for the climbing community to take responsibility for the costs and impacts of climbing activities on private property. The costs to the WMTCC and AF fund are for signage (approximately \$500) at the area and for insurance to cover climbing. The WMTCC is able to purchase insurance at an extremely reasonable rate by working with the AF - around \$1,000/year. The CMA also creates a framework for the WMTCC to work with the landowners on stewardship projects (e.g., trail work & erosion control) and anchor replacement.

We are optimistic that the CMA will resolve the landowners' concerns and that Kootenai will be reopen for climbing soon. Again, the Missoula/Bitterroot climbing community owes a huge thanks to Joe and the AF for making Kootenai a priority and working hard to restore access to this beautiful and amazing climbing area. Keep your fingers crossed and look for updates this spring.

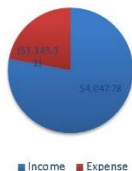
2018 Financial Summary

Kati Burton, Treasurer

Highlights

- Funds generated from membership grew in 2018, directly from individuals or in joint partnership with the Access Fund.
- Over \$3000 was raised from generous sponsors and registration for the Lost Minds Lost Horse Bouldering Competition, which was used to put on the event, buy event shirts, and secure funds for future route maintenance and repair. Many prizes were donated from local and national companies for our talented winners.
- We served as a fiscal sponsor to a local group raising funds to produce a film titled, "Seeking Exposure," a movie about highlining in the bitterroot valley. WMTCC helped them raise almost \$2500.
- In July, 2018, we established a relationship with climbstuff.com, an online realtor of climbing gear and local crag sponsor. ALL WMTCC members receive a 25% off discount on gear with a code and WMTCC will get 5% back at each quarter. We look forward to working with them in 2019!

Income & Expenses



■ Sponsorships ■ Membership/Access Fund
■ Lost Minds Registration ■ Lost Minds Expenses

Meet the Board

Kati Burton (Treasurer): You've probably seen Kati smiling and spending more time socializing than climbing at Freestone, but when the summer hits, she is stemming peaks, holding her breath on the top outs, swimming cold lakes, and skipping around mountain ledges like a mountain goat. When not donning climbing slippers, Kati can be seen fashioning her bright trail runners, trying desperately to be as good at surfing scree as a goat (or Kilian). She specializes in food and nutrition, but puts on her real professional hat as the WMTCC treasurer. Ask her about how to become a member or support local climbing!



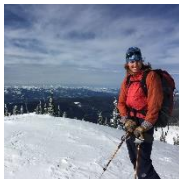
Jay Carroll (Bitterroot) originally from South Carolina, realized his passion for climbing while earning his Ph.D. from the University of Georgia (Athens, GA) studying infectious diseases. He developed his sport and trad climbing skills venturing to developed areas like Foster Falls in Tennessee; Sand Rock in Alabama; and Tallulah Gorge in Georgia. His favorite area to rock climb is the Grand Tetons, due to the great stone, invigorating exposure, and the awe-inspiring environment. When not climbing, Jay can be found on the Ski slopes or hiking trails throughout the Bitterroot Valley. Jay is a Senior Scientist at Rocky Mountain Laboratories, studying several transmissible infectious diseases.

Zak Clare-Salzler (Outreach/Events/fundraising): One of my favorite things about climbing is that it blends athleticism, strength, focus, patience, adventure, and partnership while spending time outside in beautiful places. My favorite local crag by far is Kootenai Canyon. Between the environment (especially in the fall) and the unique climbing style of the canyon, it is one of my favorite places to climb. My favorite climbing disciplines would include steep sport climbs and adventurous multipitch rock routes.



Meet the Board

Elizabeth Fricke (UM Campus): I was born and raised in NC and went to Appalachian State University in Boone, NC where I began rock climbing in the mid 90's. After college, I worked as a climbing and field instructor for the North Carolina Outward Bound School for 8 years, and traveled west for climbing. I moved to Missoula in 1999, worked at the Rock Garden climbing gym and lead multi-week climbing courses for NOLS. After completing my Masters degree, I took a job at the University of Montana directing the Outdoor Program. I will have been there 14 years this fall. My favorite place to climb in Montana is Blodgett, Kootenai and Lost Horse.



Walter Hailes (Freestone) started climbing in the Red River Gorge in the early 90s, and prefers long, steep routes with big holds to this day. He has a tendency toward movement, which has led him to work as a mountain guide with RMI since 2007 and start Freestone in 2011. He gets to spend a lot of time in the mountains while guiding but really enjoys warm sunny days at the crag with friends.

Dave Jones (Anchor/Bolt Replacement): Started Climbing: In high school in Boulder, Colorado some time ago. Favorite Discipline: Tries them all; mediocre at all. Favorite Climbing Spots: City of Rocks, ID, Mickey Mouse Wall, CO, Devils Tower, WY. Occupation: Chemistry teacher at BSHS. WMTCC Interest: Bolt replacement and anchor maintenance, and all the gadgets that go with.



Tim Karst (Tech Support, Website): Climbing since 1983. Favorite local area "Lolo Pass" because of the beauty and remoteness. I have spent my entire climbing life in Montana and explored most of the crags in its hills. I consider myself a trad climber because that's all there was when I began. Although now, I sport climb for its ease to jump off the couch and try my skill out. Don't worry. My rack of cams and stoppers still find use on those Lolo pockets. I enjoy extended climbing trips to destinations outside our area, especially if I travel with the friendliest from Western Montana. I feel blessed to be in this great place, climbing with the best people.

Meet the Board

Cole Lawrence (Anchor/Bolt Replacement): I started climbing in the Bitterroot Range in 2007. My favorite local area is Mill Creek where I have been developing alpine rock climbs for the past ten years. I have climbed all over the Western United States and Canadian Rockies. My climbing style developed with a focus on first ascents and technical trad climbing. I have recently discovered the allure of difficult sport climbing. Regardless of the style my fondest experiences occur when I am climbing at my mental and physical limit. I value aesthetic lines over grades, and supportive, reliable partners.



Damian Mast (Access) started climbing in the North Cascades when he was 16 by taking a class with the Skagit Mountaineers. Shortly thereafter he moved to Montana where he continued climbing in the Bitterroot and Mission mountains. Damian enjoys all types of climbing, especially those that entail some sort of suffering. Over the years, he has climbed in the Alaska Range, the Indian Himalaya and the Fitzroy Range in Patagonia as well as throughout the Western United States. He runs a small construction Company that focuses on well-designed energy efficient buildings.



Michael Moore (Chair) has been climbing rocks and ice since he moved to Montana in 1980. He helped found the coalition in 2014 and was one of the developers of sport climbing at Mill Creek. He's a stay at home day-trader after 32 years with the Missoulian and United Way.



Meet the Board

Erik Pallister (Anchor/Bolt Replacement)

started climbing as a mountaineer in Alaska and has since de-evolved into someone who also enjoys bouldering on an 8-foot piece of plywood in cold garages. He finds great satisfaction from the creative process of developing and climbing new routes, but almost equally loves repeating polished classics. Favorite climbing areas are wherever he is currently climbing, and quite unexplored areas in the mountain west accompanied by friends.



Jeff Peabody (Outreach/Events/Fundraising): I started climbing indoors in Phoenix AZ about 10 years ago. Quickly I moved to flagstaff and started climbing outside. The sandstone spires of Sedona and basalt columns of paradise forks became my most cherished spots to climb. Climbing has brought me to so many adventurous locations and introduced me to so many inspiring people. This passion has rooted my investment in the climbing community. It is my hope for everyone to have the chance to experience these landscapes in such a special way, including my son, Kaibab.

Damien Powledge (Photography) grew up in the Blue Ridge Mountains of SW Virginia. He remembers “bouldering” on a plywood wall at his local YMCA in junior high, then climbing outside for the first time a couple of months later in the sweltering humidity of the South. He has called Missoula home since 2002 when he fell in love with the Bitterroot Range while studying Geology at UM. The community, exploration and conservation of wild places, history, and physical movement has kept him engaged with climbing over the years. Damien continues to chase the balance of climbing while working at St. Patrick Hospital, and seeking out family friendly crags where he and his wife can climb with their young son in tow.



Meet the Board

Caroline Psaltis (Freestone): I began climbing as a gym rat back in Virginia and finally branched out to the outdoors (mostly sport climbing) when I moved to Missoula over three years ago. Currently, you can find me at Freestone Climbing teaching kids how to climb or climbing myself while it's still pretty cold outside. My favorite place to climb so far has been Ten Sleep, Wyoming, but there are still so many places I'd love to explore out West and out of the country!

(Photo credit Anastasia Wilde)



Dane Scott (Access) started climbing in the mid-1970s in Joshua Tree, Yosemite and the High Sierras, pre-lycra and mullet. His favorite climbing spot is the Needles, in the southern Sierra near Sequoia National Park. Scott enjoys nearly all aspects of climbing, trad, sport, mountaineering, and especially the interesting people and wild places. He doesn't like bouldering on plastic and is grateful that his physical therapist has forbidden it. Scott is a professor at UM, teaching and writing on ethics and public policy.

Claudine Tobalske (Membership/Newsletter) started climbing in France in the mid-80s, and although she's since learned to place gear and enjoys the occasional day in Blodgett, her favorite climbing style is still clipping bolts, especially on techy crimp vertical routes (Rattler! Maiden!). She recovers from (frequent) overuse injuries behind her computer on campus, modeling species distribution for the Montana Natural Heritage Program.



Meet the Board

Austin Watling (Tech Support, Website)

has been a consistent member of the climbing community for the last year and a board member of the Western Montana Climbers Coalition for the last 3 months. He is passionate about expanding the awareness of climbing related issues ranging from ethical maintenance and development of the surrounding climbing areas and routes to educating new climbers on how to climb in a safe yet progressive way. When he is not climbing he is working as a Systems Administrator for Biomimicry 3.8, doing yoga or out exploring.



Alex Wardwell (Secretary) hails from Wyoming, but calls Montana home now. She especially loves exploring the Bitterroot Mountain Range with her family, friends, and dog. Climbing for Alex is all about the community, fresh air, snacks, and brewery stops after a day or week at a crag. She loves being a mountain mama, playing in her band, and countering desk life with long runs and big climbs. She is a Visual Director at a local marketing studio.



Some parting words... Let's remember to be good stewards of our local crags, and good neighbors! Carpool as much as possible, keep noise and disturbance to a minimum, make sure dogs are well behaved, do our best to travel and stand on durable surfaces while the ground is soft from snowmelt, pick up after ourselves... TrainingBeta recently put out a podcast worth listening to:
<https://www.trainingbeta.com/media/access-fund-2/?portfolioCats=72>

Thank you for supporting the coalition, please spread the word! The more members, the more weight we carry when meeting with local land managers and private landowners; access issues are likely to keep cropping up as climbing in western Montana continues to rise in popularity.

Thanks for your donation!
Every dollar helps protect
climbs and protect climbers.
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