



Lower West Bolton Project Moves Forward

On December 31, 2002 the final survey of the Lower West Bolton crag was completed by surveyor Mike Patterson. The survey outlines an approximately five acre rectangular parcel that is bordered on the north, east, and south sides by Patrick Smith's (the land donor) properties, and the west side by the Aitkin property.

tion, Smith has graciously agreed to allow for a 30' wide pedestrian easement on lot #8 as permanent access to the CRAG-VT property from Bolton Notch Road.

A minimum of a 30' access easement is required by the Town of Bolton. This easement would be developed and used only in the event that CRAG-VT lost the existing access and parking area. CRAG-VT has a hand-shake agreement with the Aitkin property owners to allow parking and trail access at the current location.

The parcel is large enough to encompass the access trails on the north and south sides of the cliff. This will allow legal access to the summit for setting top-ropes or gazing at the scenic mountain view.

We are currently working on the subdivision application to complete this transaction. CRAG-VT is scheduled to go before the Bolton Development Review Board (DRB) on February 19th, 2003. Wish us luck!

~Heather Hibbard



Mike Donohue on Wavy Goodbye at Lower West.

Smith has subdivided his property, creating lot #8 to the south, and lot #7 to the east. These will eventually be sold as housing lots. In addition to the five or so acre dona-

About CRAG-Vermont

Welcome to the inaugural issue of The Crag Rag, the newsletter of CRAG-VT (Climbing Resource Access Group-Vermont). CRAG-VT is a local organization working to maintain access and promote the conservation of Vermont's climbing resources. Incorporated in 2002 as a 501c(3) not-for-profit, it is run by volunteers and relies entirely on memberships and grants for funding.

Since much of Vermont's climbing is on private land, CRAG-VT is working with landowners to maintain access through land donations, property purchases, conservation easements, and landowner agreements.

CRAG-VT is an educational resource for climbers and landowners about responsi-

ble climbing, access status, and landowner liability. Members of CRAG-VT have represented climber's views at public hearings for State lands, and provided resource managers with historical climbing documentation.

CRAG-VT also helps protect wildlife and habitat by partnering with conservation organizations such as the Vermont Institute for Natural Science (VINS) and the National Wildlife Federation. Projects include assisting with peregrine falcon chick banding and hosting slideshows about sensitive species. Trail maintenance and erosion control at crags are also important activities.

CRAG-VT's activities would not be possible without members and volunteers.

Kurt Smith Spins Over \$600 for CRAG-VT!

Climber/boulder extraordinaire Kurt Smith's "Kickin Access" party rocked Petra Cliffs Climbing Gym last November 7th. It featured a bouldering comp, a Southeast bouldering slide show, and a raffle of great gear.

Proceeds from the party benefited CRAG-VT to the tune of \$600 and the Access Fund picked up more than 30 new members.



Many thanks to the Access Fund, Kurt Smith, Petra Cliffs, and everyone who attended the party. Local sponsors were the Saint Michael's College Outdoor Program, the U. of Vermont Outdoor Program, Climb High, The Outdoor Gear Exchange, and Petra Cliffs.

© Travis Peckham



Climbers helped Steve Faccio (above) of VINS band peregrine chicks at Fairlee Palisades.

Please join us to help maintain climbing in Vermont. Visit www.cragvt.org to learn more about us.

CRAG-VT is an organization for climbers and landowners. We encourage both to contact us with concerns about climbing access, landowner liability, and natural resource issues. For more information visit www.cragvt.org.

THE CRAG RAG

The **Crag Rag** is the membership newsletter of CRAG-VT. It is published two times/year in the spring and fall.

Issue Vol. 1 No. 1 - January 2003

CRAG-VT Board - 2003

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CRAG-VT is run entirely by volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering or Board membership, please contact us!

Contact Information

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Meetings

CRAG-VT typically meets on the first Wednesday of each month at 6:30pm at the Camels Hump Middle School in Richmond, VT. The public is welcome to meetings. Call or email to confirm the time and date.

Newsletter design by Nicole Ballinger

A Big THANKS to...

- * **Patrick Smith** for donating Lower West to CRAG-VT, which will keep it open to all climbers!
- * **Climb High** for donating \$1000 to CRAG Vermont to support the Lower West land donation.
- * **Outdoor Gear Exchange** for newsletter and brochure printing.
- * **Langrock Sperry & Wool, LLP** and climber/lawyer **Pam Moreau** for providing legal assistance to CRAG-VT. *If you need a 5.14 lawyer, give Pam a call.*
- * **New Members** for supporting the Lower West acquisition and other CRAG-VT activities. Especially **Stephan Syz, Dr. Dick Katzman** and **Alden Pellet** for generous donations.*

**CRAG-VT donations are tax deductible. Contact CRAG-VT if you need a receipt.*



© Paul Hansen/Ecopixel

Nicole Ballinger climbing Hailstorm at Lower West.

ACCESS ALERT!

According to Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR), Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, group-climbing permits will no longer be given for the Prospect Rock area in Johnson. This policy change seriously impacts guide services and university programs that have regularly used the area.

In a letter to Brad Moscovitz of Johnson State College (JSC), the agency noted concern about damage to two uncommon-rare plant communities, bolted routes, and an active nest of a large bird near the bolted routes.

Brad spoke with the ANR and their largest concern was broken beer bottles, garbage and television sets hurled off the cliff. He assured the ANR that climbers don't tend to pollute or disrespect the

environment. Brad is continuing his efforts and may arrange a stewardship agreement between JSC and the ANR to promote a pristine environment and responsible recreational use.

A privately owned crag near Prospect Rock, The Secret Squirrel, has also been closed to climbers, not just groups. The area is now posted and the landowner ejected climbers from his property on more than one occasion last fall.

Brad Moscovitz opened a discussion with the landowner who is very concerned about liability. Local climbers are hopeful that an agreement can be reached. Until then, please respect the landowner's wishes and do not climb at this crag until further notice.

~Travis Peckham

CRAG-VT's President Rocks!

Climbing Advocate Receives Access Fund Awards

The Access Fund, a national climbers' advocacy group, has awarded the Regional Coordinator of the Year Award to Heather Hibbard of Richmond [Middlesex], Vermont, for her "outstanding advocacy for climbers over the years." Hibbard's efforts include leadership in climber education, support with peregrine issues, development of CRAG-VT, efforts to acquire the Lower West Bolton crag (see October VST), and efforts to preserve climbing opportunities for present and future generations.

Hibbard, president of the newly formed CRAG-VT (Climbing Resource Access Group), was presented a plaque and an official letter, and was recognized in a feature article in Access Fund's Vertical Times and e-news. *This article originally appeared in Vermont Sports Today, December, 2002.*



©Broudy/Donohue Photography

Heather Hibbard

~Berne Broudy

Volunteer Opportunities

It won't be long before the ice melts. Help CRAG-VT get the crags in shape for climbing. Spring activities will include:

- * Trailwork at local crags like Lower West
- * Distributing CRAG-VT information
- * Climber education and outreach

Email info@cragvt.org to get involved with these or other activities.

The CHOSS PILE Vermont Climbing News...

Got Choss? We've got it here - a roundup of what's happening on the ice, rock, boulders, and in the gym in Vermont...

ICE

FAT ICE! The season is in full swing and local axe-wielders report great conditions everywhere. Smuggler's Notch is getting more traffic this winter, with many testing the sharp end on Jefferson Slide for their first season leading ice. Some climbs that rarely form, like Three Sheets, have seen repeated ascents. The mixed direct line of Dominatrix, (M6,WI4) which finally saw a second ascent last winter, has formed up nicely but apparently has not been attempted yet this season.



© Alden Pellet

Ice climbing on Ragnarock at Smuggler's Notch.

Lake Willoughby has also been busy. With some parties hardly waiting for ice to get thick enough for stubbies, the hard grade 5 routes have seen numerous ascents. Mind-bender came in early and fat, relinquishing many ascents including at least one free solo. Last season saw at least one climber from Sherbrooke, Canada leading Willoughby's harder ice routes with leashless tools.

ROCK

Local Pete Kamitses is rumored to have said that when he climbed 5.14, he'd cut his dreadlocks. He retains his Rasta coif, but the day has come! Kamitses sent Cold War (.14a) at Rumney last summer, likely becoming the first local climber to bag the grade. Congratulations to Pete for an amazing effort!

Many new local routes were established last summer, including Alden Pellet's first ascent of Stealing Feathers (.10b) at Lower West. It follows the featured face and cracks between Hush Mamma Thrush and Orgasmic.



© Alden Pellet

Paul Hansen leading the 2nd pitch of Ganesh (.10c).

Travis Peckham and Paul Hansen freed their project, Ganesh, a four-pitch route (.10b, 10c, .11c, .10d) on the Elephant's Head in Smuggler's Notch. The route largely follows an aid line established by John Bouchard, solo in 1971, and tackles steep cracks, corners and arêtes up what has been described as one of the East's most exposed climbs.

Lower West has seen improvements since the beginning of the CRAG-VT acquisition. The cliff's recent popularity with numerous climbers and outing clubs has impacted the access trails. To prevent increased erosion and tree damage at the summit, several bolted top-rope anchors were installed on popular climbs. Anonymous volunteers have more clearly defined access trails to discourage herd-paths. CRAG-VT is planning further trail improvements this spring.

BOULDERS

The boulders were busy last season and Smuggler's Notch is still a focal point. It is incredibly popular with locals and increasingly so with out-of-staters. Bill Patton and Collin Rickert barnacled on the Notch rocks, establishing the scary highball slab problem, Howler (V7), on the Asteroid Boulder. Rickert, who established A Dirty Job (V7) on the Guinness Boulder in July, has also attempted to repeat Red Cross (V9?), rumored to be the Notch's hardest problem. Patton challenges, "The sit down start for Red Cross remains undone... [this would]

Climbing COMMON SENSE

Much of Vermont's climbing is on private land and some is on public land. Access on private land is a delicate matter. The following guidelines will help ensure good relationships between landowners/managers and climbers:

1. If you don't know, ASK.

Where to park? Where to hike in from? Is the cliff closed to peregrine nesting? If you don't know, ask the landowner.

2. Turn down the volume.

Noise travels easily in many areas. Keep noise to the bare minimum on the approach and while climbing. Leave boom boxes and barking dogs at home.

3. Leave No Trace.

"Take only photos, leave only foot prints..." Stay on existing trails. Pack out garbage whether it's yours or someone else's. Don't place or leave fixed anchors without landowner consent.

4. Use common sense & courtesy.

Be smart and polite to landowners, neighbors and other recreational users. Climbing on private land is a privilege, not a right.



© Paul Hansen/Ecopixel

Derek Doucet bouldering in Duxbury.

make the hardest problem in the Notch substantially harder." Get motivated boulderers, and send this one next summer!

While the Notch gains popularity, other northern Vermont areas remain obscure to but a few enthusiasts. Josh Worley established Alone (V7) on the Hilltop boulder and Generations (V7/8) on the Oak

continued on back page...

Care for Your Crag - Become a Member!

Your tax-deductible donation will help CRAG-VT protect climbing in Vermont and finalize the Lower West Bolton acquisition. Mail your membership to PO Box 614, Richmond, VT 05477, or donate online at www.cragvt.org.

Name: _____
Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____
Email: _____
Phone: _____

Yes, I'd like to join!

\$15 \$25 \$50 other ____

To pay by credit card please visit www.cragvt.org

My check, payable to CRAG-VT, is enclosed.

The Choss Pile, continued...

Boulder, while Toby Stegman finished his problem, The Bolton Stretch (V7) on the 45 Degree Wall at Upper West. Of the new problems, Worley claims, "All remain unrepeated despite numerous attempts by... well nobody."

Worley and others, including Justin Robbins, Roger and Amy Klinger, Eli Worley, Jay Hollingsworth, Pat Tracy, and Chapman Smith, established over 100 new problems in Duxbury over the last two years.

GYM

Winter is high season at Petra Cliffs Climbing Center, which has been hosting the ABS Regional Bouldering Series. The competitions have been well attended by competitors from all over the country. In the men's division, Giampaolo Salvo of Washington D.C., Tom Durant of Scotia NY, and Vasya Vorintikov of Nashua NH have each taken one win.

In the women's division, Burlington local Nikki Whalen has dominated by win-

© Paul Hansen/Ecopixel



Nikki Whelan cranking during the ABS competition at Petra Cliffs.

ning every contest. Whelan's awesome series of wins makes her a serious contender for the ABS Nationals in Berkeley, California this March. By taking 1st place in three ABS comps, and placing well in many national competitions, she's a hopeful for the US Climbing Team. Other goals include climbing 5.13 in 2003. Congratulations Nikki!

Petra Cliffs is also hosting winter clinics to hone summer skills, including aid climbing, trad climbing, sport leading, anchor construction, movement, and introductory classes. For more information visit www.petracliffs.com.

~The Choss Pile was compiled by Travis Peckham. Thanks to those who helped: AP, BP, JW, BM, CS and others. Email local climbing news to chosspile@cragvt.org. We need your reports!

Upcoming Events...

- ☼ **Catskills Ice Fest** - Jan. 26th, Feb. 1st, 8th, 12th & 18th Rock & Snow, 845-255-1311.
- ☼ **Banff Mountain Film Fest** - Feb. 8th @ 4, 6:30 & 9pm, UVM Billings Theatre. Tix: \$8/show @ SkiRack, (802) 658-3313.
- ☼ **ABS Bouldering Comps** - Feb. 8th, Mar. 15th @ Petra Cliffs, 802-65-PETRA.
- ☼ **Mt Washington Valley Ice Fest** - Feb. 20th-23rd, IMCS, (603) 356-7064.
- ☼ **Festiglance du Quebec** - Feb 21st-23rd, Pont Rouge, QC, www.festiglance.com.



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THE CRAG RAG
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