

## Establishing a New Area

So, you have the thumbs up from the land manager or land owner, now what . . .

Keeping an environmental eye on your creation will keep access stable. It is far easier to keep access than try to reopen an area that has been closed.

Open Access = More Sending Time

## The Climbing Area

### Trails

- Plan and lay out trails in conjunction with land agency guidelines/ direction
- Build trails that accommodate existing use while allowing only appropriate future use
  - Will the trail be used by other user groups (hikers, etc.)?
- Consider trail markers to guide boulderers, *especially between boulders*
- Think about erosion issues from the beginning. It is easier to start correctly then to reroute trails and change user habits later. Consider a trail that:
  - Produces negligible soil loss or movement
  - Allows vegetation to inhabit the area
  - Will require little rerouting and minimal long-term maintenance
  - Considers the soil: Sandy, Silty, Clay, Loamy (mixed)

Take a picture of the area before you develop it. After developing the area, take another picture. If the site gets discovered by other climbers, take another picture. A picture is worth a thousand words.

### Soil Properties and Behavior Relevant to Trailbuilding

| Property                        | Sand | Silt     | Clay                               |
|---------------------------------|------|----------|------------------------------------|
| Water-holding capacity          | Low  | Med-High | High                               |
| Drainage Rate                   | High | Slow-Med | Very Slow                          |
| Compactable                     | Low  | Medium   | High                               |
| Susceptibility to Water Erosion | Low  | High     | Low if aggregated:<br>High if not: |

- Try to guide "visitors" away from sensitive areas that from cultural resources or water sources whenever possible

- Consider applying for a grant from the Access Fund ([www.AccessFund.org](http://www.AccessFund.org))
- Look at IMBA website ([www.imba.com](http://www.imba.com)) for trail building suggestions

Landing Zone: This area receives the most impact from pads and people

- Try to preserve the vegetation, do not remove plants, trees, cacti . . . you get the picture
- Are there rare/endangered flora and fauna found in the area? The park may have an inventory of some of the lichens/plants/fauna that are found on and around the boulders. Find out what they are and how to identify them so your actions won't impact them.
- Think about controlling impact around boulders with some sort of "barrier" to limit impact spread, talk with the land agency about possibilities. Some suggestions are...
  - Kick boards, rocks, logs, survey flags,
  - Barrier needs to limit human movement but not limit animal movement or cause water issues. No building dams there, Hoover.
- If the area is already heavily used, consider mitigation tactics to minimize further/increased impacts. Some suggestions are. . .
  - crushed aggregate covered by mulch, site hardening, barriers, rotating exclusion zones, spreading out visitors
  - selective publicity, signage, trail management

The Problems themselves:

- Respect those who came before you. Never boulder on or near cultural resources (pictographs, petroglyphs, milling surfaces, historical structures). Not only is it against the law, it is very karmatically bad.
- You are establishing a route, not a highway. Vegetation and lichen should only be lightly cleaned (cleaning = systematically removing vegetation to establish a route) with a nylon bristle

brush *only* from necessary hand and foot holds, the napalm look is generally not a good one.

- Consider leaving highly vegetated problems undone.
- If your area is sandstone, a soft surface, such as a t-shirt is a better solution. A nylon bristle brush will cause too much erosion and will change the face of the rock.
- NEVER chip, sculpt, or glue the rock. We have home gyms for a reason. The ethic that an area is created with will go a long way to influence the ethic of other users
- Assess the top outs be sure that you are not harming an ecosystem that should be left alone.
- Not all boulder problems need to or should go to the top.

## Other considerations:

### Publicity

*Remember this stupidly simple thing that sometimes gets overlooked, Publicizing a new area may dramatically increase visitor use! Dah! If you choose to still publicize your area, here are some steps you should take.*

- Let the land manager if an area has been publicized, especially if it's the next cover picture on Climbing or BigUP productions has been in the area
- Promote the ethic of your area as much as the beautiful lines you've discovered (one will inspire others to visit, the other will ensure that you can continue to call it your home crag when everyone has gone home)
- Consider not making the place public. (Not really a step you can take but just in case you missed the italic stuff above)

### Dogs, a boulderer's best friend (sometimes our only friend)

- Consider how you want to handle dogs in your area.
- Connect with the local land manager to find out if there is already a policy for pooches in place.
- If furry friends are allowed, some suggestions to mitigate their impact . . .
  - Educational signage at trailhead

- Provide poop-scooping bags at trailhead
- Provide a trash barrel
- If an area contains sensitive plants consider closing that area to Fido
- Provide leashes at trailhead

### Parking

- Legality to park on area roads (may need to contact the Department of Transportation)
- Are there seasonal restrictions that will not make the primary parking area suitability for parking through out climbing season
- If more parking is needed, work with land agency to figure out solutions
- Is the parking area large enough to support potential number of cars

Litter and Human Waste Disposal . . . it's understood

Have fu Daniel sou

*You can wax on and wax off as much as you want, just be sure to climb like the guy from Kung Fu (remember, he didn't make any prints when walking on rice paper). All right, cheesy kung-fu references over. Carry on now.*

V Peace out  
Boulder Project Staff

*“The initial cleaning and development of an area, as compared to ongoing use, probably causes the greatest impact. All too often, land use managers are placed in an uncomfortable reactive, as opposed to proactive, management position. If development could occur proactively (e.g. climbers working together with the Access Fund, local climbing organizations, or the land managers), I think careful planning, surveys, and other means of accommodating development could go a long way toward minimizing impacts and accommodating use.”*

*Roy Zipp, North Cascades National Park Ranger*