

# The Arizona Mountaineer



The Arizona Mountaineering Club

Spring 2020

## Our Quarterly Newsletter

Remember when spring heralded the start of another great climbing season and a fresh cohort of students in our Basic, Anchors and newly launched Canyoneering School? Well, not this year! Due to COVID-19, 2020 has and will continue to generate a unique set of events and stories. During this time, some of us are still finding ways to enjoy our sports and we're developing new ways to share the love and connect with our community. If you haven't visited the AMC Blog launched in response, check it out on the AMC website. Give some thought to sharing some of your stories, sooner rather than later, in the form of articles and photos for future editions of the newsletter. Inquiring minds want to know!

Please feel free to submit any articles for publication to: [newsletter@arizonamountaineeringclub.net](mailto:newsletter@arizonamountaineeringclub.net)

Stephanie Furniss, Newsletter Editor



Photo: Crying Dino in Tonto National Forest

*“Our **Mission** is to provide educational opportunities, climbing experiences, advocacy to protect our climbing resources, and stewardship of the Arizona Outdoors by promoting volunteerism and community engagement.”*

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## 2020 Board and Leadership

By Andrea Galyean

As an all-volunteer club, the AMC is really more of a "who" than a "what." This is a large group of people from diverse backgrounds, united by an enthusiasm for outdoor recreation. To channel that enthusiasm requires some structure—so we have by-laws and policies and procedures and committees—but it's all brought to life by volunteers.

Among the roles those volunteers fill are the Board of Directors, which includes four officers elected annually, four directors who are elected for two-year terms, and a one-year position filled by either the immediate past-President or a fifth director. As a result of the elections held at the member meeting on January 22, the 2020 board is as follows:

President: Andrea Galyean

Vice-President: Ann Revill

Treasurer: Kristin Russell

Secretary: Jerry Smit

Past-President: John Furniss

Director-at-Large (first year of two-year term): Bill Fallon

Director-at-Large (first year of two-year term): Paul Fasshauer

Director-at-Large (second year of two-year term): Stephanie Furniss

Director-at-Large (first year of two-year term): Tzenko Nadialkov

While the board handles issues of governance and administration, most of the club activities are driven by a much larger leadership corps and I wanted to recognize them here.

As both Outings Chair and Classification Chair, Chris Adams manages our outing leaders (to the extent that the outing leaders can be managed) and coordinates the application process for prospective outing leaders.

Speaking of whom, our outing leaders conduct a variety of top-rope, multi-pitch, and other outings throughout the year—except during global pandemics, of course. They are Chris Adams, David Anderson, Erik Evans, Bill Fallon, Erik Filsinger, Stephanie Furniss, Andrea Galyean, Bruce McHenry, Scott Nagy, Scott Picquet, David A. Sampson, John Sasso, Rogil Schroeter, Tom Seeley, and Frank Vers.

Schools Chair Bill Fallon oversees our four official schools programs and provides support for skills clinics.

And those schools are taught by our hard-working Lead Instructors.

Scott Nagy teaches Basic Outdoor Rock Climbing (BORC).

Erik Evans teaches Anchors and handles registration for BORC.

David A. Sampson teaches Lead Climbing.

Tom Seeley teaches Canyoneering and, as Canyoneering Chair, also oversees canyoneering outings.

Erik Filsinger serves as both Land Advocacy Chair and Mountaineering Chair, as well as Ice & Snow instructor.

As Membership Chair, John Furniss processes memberships and resolves a variety of inquiries. He also serves as Archivist and Librarian and, in his additional role as Grand Canyon Clean-up Coordinator, he coordinates the Grand Canyon Clean-up.

Technology Chair Stan Pak oversees our website and other behind-the-scenes infrastructure.

Programs Chair Deborah Roether plans our member meetings and events.

Email administrator Rogil Schroeter, supported by Philip Steele, manages our club-wide email communications.

Tiina and John Perlman coordinate the Queen Creek Clean-up and Thanksgiving at Joshua Tree.

Bruce McHenry is the alpine rental equipment administrator.

Jerry Smit handles shoe rentals for BORC.

Scott Kuchman organizes volunteer instructors for BORC, Anchors, and Lead classes.

Lisa Ruggiero stepped down as Elections Chair after the recent election, but she's done excellent work in that capacity over the past few years. Abby Schneider has volunteered to fill the position this year.

And Stephanie Furniss has shepherded this edition of the *Arizona Mountaineer* into being, as our interim Newsletter Editor.

Thank you to all of our volunteer leaders. Without you as the "who," there really is no "what."

To see photos of each of these dedicated volunteers, visit <http://arizonamountaineeringclub.net/about/amc-leadership-organization/>  
 The club offers a wide array of opportunities to get involved on short-term or long-term projects. If you would like to volunteer in any capacity—perhaps as Newsletter Editor?—email [contact@arizonamountaineeringclub.net](mailto:contact@arizonamountaineeringclub.net)

## **AMC Donates \$2,500 to support The Homestead**

By John Furniss

The AMC Members present at the December 2019 Member Meeting and Holiday Party approved an AMC Board proposal to donate \$2,500 to the Access Fund specifically to be applied to the outstanding loan balance associated with the acquisition of land associated with The Homestead. The \$2,500 was the result of 2019 revenues exceeding expenses and provided the Club with the opportunity to make the donation before the end of the financial year. The amount of the donation required membership approval and the December meeting afforded the venue to put it to a vote. The AMC received a note of thanks from the Access Fund leadership in early January.

The Homestead represents one of Central Arizona's finest climbing areas with over 250 sport climbs on 12 limestone walls. Access to this treasure was threatened in 2014 when a bank foreclosed on a piece of private property that included portions of the access road, trail head, and several dozen climbing routes. The threat? The potential for the subsequent purchase of the land by someone unwilling to grant ongoing access to The Homestead.

In 2015, the Access Fund acquired the property "With support from Arizona climbing organizations and public land managers, Access Fund utilized \$152,000 of short-term financing from the Access Fund Climbing Conservation Loan Program to cover initial acquisition costs." Since then, numerous individuals and organizations have contributed to paying down the loan. "Once fundraising and improvements are complete, Access Fund will transfer the holdings to a long-term climbing-friendly entity."

Want to contribute? Go to: [www.accessfund.org/homestead](http://www.accessfund.org/homestead).

## COVID-19 Impact on Local Businesses

By Ann Revill

What a whirlwind the last two months have been. It started with the declaration of a global pandemic on March 11th. In Arizona, it was followed by a “Stay home, Stay healthy, Stay connected” directive that went into effect on March 31st, and now, as of May 16th, many of those directives are no longer in effect, although masks are becoming the new normal and physical distancing will be with us for the foreseeable future. What does this disruption mean for small local businesses, especially our beloved climbing gyms and local gear shops? Well, the short answer is that this has significantly impacted business.

While all of the climbing gyms have been closed (more on that below), **Arizona Hiking Shack** has remained open for the duration. Here is what they shared with us:

*We have remained open during this as an essential business due to our contracts with state, county and city contracts which has allowed us to keep our employees on the job. As a result of lower traffic, we have had to adjust our hours a bit but we're staying open as long as we're able. Staying open has come with the responsibility of keep the customers that come in safe. We have upgraded our already strict sanitization of common “touch points” and ensure our employees have face coverings and gloves to perform their day-to-day duties. We also installed air ionizing machines as an additional measure to help with air circulation. We're looking forward to a return to normal, whenever that will be, but until then we're doing our part to responsibly be open for business.*

So, if you are in need of some new outdoor gear (who isn't, really?), and even if you don't need some new outdoor gear now (really? are you sure?) consider heading to the Hiking Shack to pick up that gear, or perhaps a gift certificate to use at a later date.

With the re-opening of climbing gyms, you may also be wondering what they are doing to keep everyone safe. **Ape Index**, which reopened as of May 18 with regular hours, shared the following:

*The CDC has given recommendations on the safest way to conduct business and we are doing everything we can to follow as many recommendations as our business model allows. We will have sanitization stations throughout the gym and encourage everyone to keep an appropriate distance from groups they did not come with. Employees will be wear-*

*ing masks during orientations and when approaching customers. Realistically, people will touch things other people touch in almost every task of the day and the best thing to do is to wash your hands and not touch your face. We also recommend that anyone who falls in the high risk category not visit the gym until health officials give the all clear.*

Other local climbing gyms have similar policies in place. For example, **Phoenix Rock Gym** opened again on May 13 with a new paint job, lots of hand sanitizer available, a plan to keep climbing areas in compliance with physical distancing guidelines, and face coverings for their staff.

**Black Rock Bouldering** has reopened, but only to current and active members. They have reset bouldering problems and moved fitness equipment to adhere to physical distancing guidelines and are postponing any events that encourage large gatherings for the time being. As may be expected, they have enhanced cleaning and sanitization protocols in place that adhere to CDC guidelines as well as hand-sanitizer and antibacterial soap easily available to members.

After a deep cleaning and sanitization (including the ropes, the holds, and the Chalk Eater!), **AZ On the Rocks** is also open to members. Along with establishing “climbing zones” to enforce physical distancing, they require climbers to complete an entrance survey before each visit, sign up for climbing sessions ahead of time, and will be checking temperatures of all climbers. They do have gear available for rent, and this gear will be properly disinfected or quarantined prior to being used again. Lots more information is available on their website.

Finally, **Focus Climbing Center** planned to open again May 26 to members and punch pass holders. Their staff will be cleaning regularly throughout the day and the gym will be also cleaned every night after closing. They are the only gym to offer specific hours for climbers 50+ as well as anyone who would consider themselves at higher risk for contracting COVID-19. Climbers are expected to maintain physical distancing and wear a face mask in shared gym spaces as well as wash their hands once they enter the lobby. Lots more information is available on their website and their COVID-19 FAQ.

Even though all of these gyms are open now, not everyone will feel comfortable climbing indoors yet. So, how can we support these gyms until we do feel comfortable pulling on plastic again? We spoke with the owners of Ape Index, Kyle and Karl, to get their perspective. Here’s what they suggest:

*The biggest thing the climbing community can do for not just our gym*

*but every gym is to keep your membership active even if you are not feeling comfortable being in public yet. Our bills don't stop and payroll is a heavy drain when there is zero income coming into the business. Another great thing that we have seen a little of is people buying day passes, month passes, and punch cards as gifts for people they would like to see get into climbing.*

Ape Index shared that they have continued to pay their employees throughout the pandemic.

If you're in a position to help out, now is a great time to turn your support to these wonderful organizations who have always been great supporters of the AMC.

## **Climbing "Norton's Notion"**

By Bill Fallon, Schools Chair

I wanted to put together an article for this newsletter and started down my usual path, talking about Schools, or more accurately, the "Missing Schools of 2020." But it just didn't seem very interesting or inspiring. I mean, we've always had our schools, canceled the Fall Basic and Anchors, and will resume schools when this scourge passes. That's pretty much that. But interesting and inspiring? "Norton's Notion" comes to mind, a really fun climb that Chris Adams and Tina Leaman invited me to do in January before our world tilted up on edge.

Norton's Notion is a 6-pitch 5.7 trad route on Carney Springs Wall in the Superstitions that was established in 1990 by two of our very own esteemed members Damon Williams and Paul Paonessa. Before I go on, let me digress a moment to trace the origin of the name. Does anyone remember the "Honeymooners" – a 1950's TV show with Jackie Gleason and Art Carney as Ralph Kramden and friend Ed Norton? No? But it's a classic! Well, anyway... If you want more details on the route, see <https://www.mountainproject.com/route/118109606/nortons-notion>.

Back to the January adventure. With the short days of winter, we wanted to give ourselves all the daylight we could, which turned out to be a good idea. The three of us arrived at the Carney Springs parking area at 6:30 AM and headed up to the Wave Cave. The weather was perfect! From the Wave Cave, we traversed right and up for another 20 minutes looking for the start of the



Photo: Start of pitch 2

climb along the left side of Carney Springs Wall. We wandered and scrambled for a bit until we were pretty sure we had found the start. When we dumped our packs and finally got oriented, we realized we had scrambled up left of the first pitch and were standing at the start of pitch two. No problem now, but it turned out to be a hassle for the rappel; more about that later.

Our beta said we could link pitches 2-3 and 4-5. We had two 70M ropes, a full rack to #4 along with my trusty Aliens and Chris on the sharp end. What could go wrong? Happily, nothing but a great adventure this day.

Chris launched off on the

first pitch with Tina belaying. It was a combination of crack and chimney climbing with all kinds of variations to keep it interesting and fun. I will say this route is on the chossy side and we were kicking off a fair amount of rock; mandatory helmet terrain, for sure! There are a number of good options for comfy ledges and solid trad belay anchors. After about 60M, Chris found a nice ledge and brought up me and Tina.

Chris then launched into pitches 4-5, heading up a steep 12-foot crack, then disappearing around a corner. Shortly after, Tina and I hear "What the heck?!" In unison, Tina and I ask, somewhat alarmed, "What!?" The always helpful Chris just replies "You'll see" and continues climbing. I came up next and discovered what Chris had reacted to. All of a sudden I came across a deep chasm early on that 4<sup>th</sup> pitch. The protection is good and it's just a little heady to climb left around it. I will say that a longer reach is helpful, which may explain a few choice words from Tina when she finally got her chance.

The fun and variety continued on pitch 6. After a little face work, the route moves up and left around the backside of the formation and into a classic



squeeze chimney. I mean this thing was skinny! I had to get on my hands and knees to crawl through a wider spot to get into the chimney that widened a bit with the wall to my back and a crack facing me. Up I went, after some grunting, to join Chris on the summit. Tina joined us shortly thereafter and we all took a well-earned break. What a beautiful Arizona winter day in warm sun with a beautiful view!

The beta told us to traverse over to an adjacent summit for the rappel, at the top “DeGrazia”. However, the traverse was definitely unappealing and it looked like a clean rappel off our summit. Thankfully, Tina was prepared with webbing and a rap ring, so we slung a solid boulder and launched off. Two more rappels—a long one followed by a shorter one—brought us to a broad ledge that was the actual top of pitch one. We had to go through some she-nanigans to retrieve our packs and make the final short rappel to the actual start of the climb. Hint: find the actual first pitch (easy bolted slab) and leave your packs there.

Whew! Almost done, we thought. Well, it’s a good thing we had our head-lamps! It seemed like it should be pretty straightforward picking our way downhill until we picked up the main trail to get back to the parking lot, but dang it took a while and got very dark in the meantime. It was a solid 12 hours truck-to-truck. I was pretty beat the next day, which I hated to admit until Chris called and said he was feeling trashed. Wow, that sure perked me up; any day I can keep up with Chris is a very good day!

Well, there it is. Norton’s Notion, a grand adventure!



Photo: View from summit

## Stories from the McDowells

By: Erik Filsinger (copyrighted)

One of the neater elements of writing our McDowell Rock: A Climber's Guide was reconnecting and reminiscing with many of the original "hardmen" of the McDowells. Back in the 1980's and 1990's when many of the first ascents were secured I was climbing more or less on my own and also sometimes with the AMC. During forays into the McDowells I would run into some local legends like John Ficker, Jason Sands, Jim Zahn, David Gunn, Chuck Hill, Chris Dunn, Glen Dickinson and Jim Waugh. They would swap a story and a smile – good times.

Through my work with the City of Scottsdale on a variety of boards, committees, and commissions I became identified as the Climber Liaison to City Staff. That meant that I was the central point for collecting climbing information to incorporate into City Planning for the McDowell

Sonoran Preserve as well as the primary point of communication back with the climbing community. I spend literally thousands of hours checking out climbing crags, routes and access paths. The fruits of these labors were incorporated into the official City climbing plans and maps. And I was able to get to know the McDowells and its climbers like no one else.

Somewhere around the time of City Council officially adopting those plans (2012-ish), Scott Hamilton, the City Planner for the Preserve (and now Preserve Manager) joked with me, "Isn't it about time your wrote a guidebook?" The idea had been juggling around in my mind, but Scott's question was the catalyst for committing to the project. My significant other, Cheryl Beaver, and I began collecting the necessary information, materials and photos.

In researching the materials and history I started to check-in with some of my old friends and contacts – the original hardmen of the McDowells. Cheryl and I decided to make the guidebook more than a "route collection" and include some of the climber history. I sought out stories from those guys and wrote

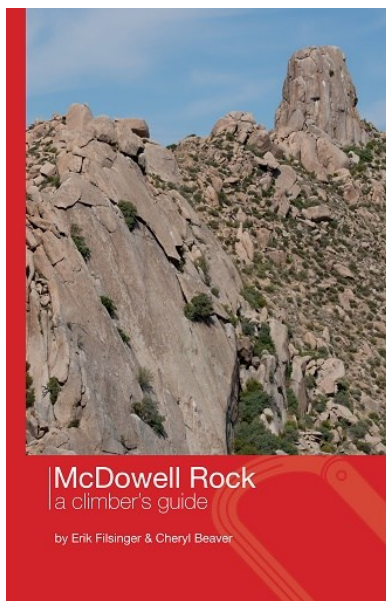
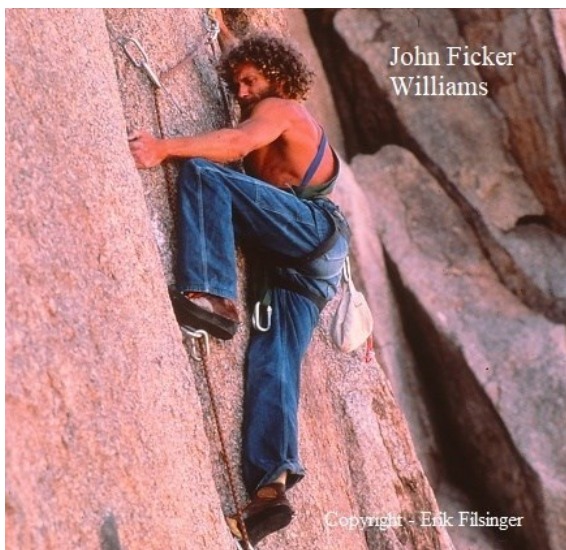


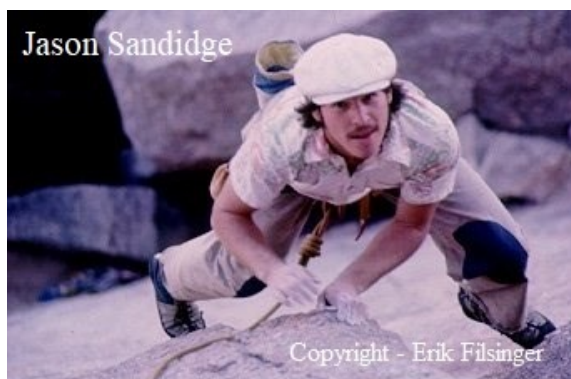
Photo: Book cover

them into the book. Feedback from readers indicates that it was a smart decision and adds depth and interest. Here I intended to provide a preview of some of those climber recollections.

John Ficker was a legend whose stories are still repeated. It is told that John's routes are way under-rated. Upon checking with John, who now goes by the full name as John Ficker Williams, indeed many of his routes are graded as 5.7's. There were two reasons – one was that he told his wife after his sons were born that he wouldn't climb anything harder than "5.7", but as the first ascensionist he could truthfully report

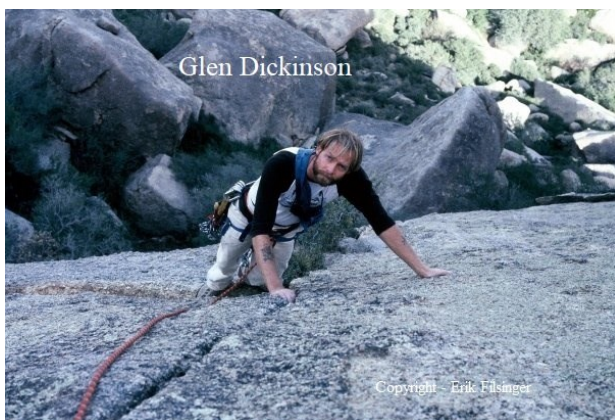


back that his efforts that day were on a new "5.7". To the rest of us, a Ficker 5.7 is really a 5.9 or harder. The other reason was that the custom of the day was to grade the climb "after the first bolt" not on the sometimes more difficult first moves off the ground. At any rate, take a Ficker 5.7 as a doggone serious effort. John smiles broadly when recollecting this history.

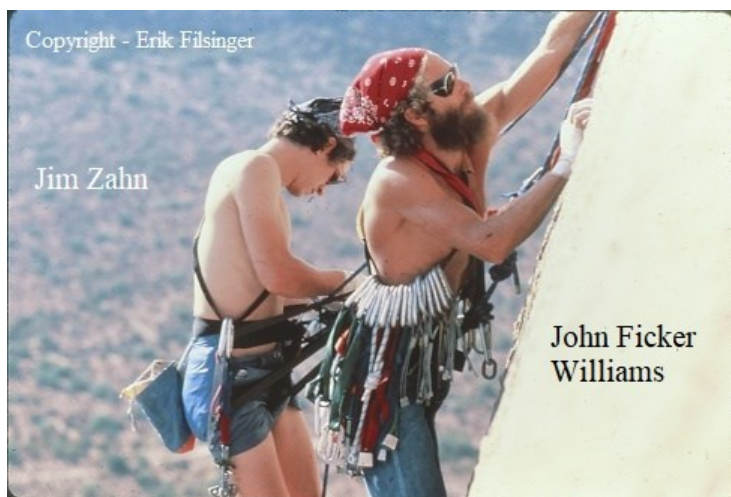


In another case of multiple backstories, John told me that he and Jason Sandidge (aka Jason Sands) named Hog Heaven because of the javelina herds they found in the vicinity, but also shared that some of their other partners accused the pair of "Hogging" all the first ascents so Hog Heaven had another meaning.

Derivation of the names was always an interesting discussion - Space Cadets was named by first ascensionists John Ficker Williams and Glen Dickinson due to their forgetting their climbing shoes at the crag. Because of the lateness of the hour reaching their cars they had to back another day to retrieve them.



Goat Hill was named for the goat herd the original private land owners – the Corrigan-Marley family – ranched in the McDowells to obtain favorable property tax treatment. When I moved to Arizona in the 1970's rumors were swirling that Kemper Marley, a liquor tycoon and land tycoon, was involved in the mob-hit of an Arizona reporter named Don Bolles (folks, I'm just stating the rumors I was hearing at the time – Phoenix police found no connection that Marley was involved). Later, as I was researching the book, I arranged with Glen Dickinson to tour some of the routes up there but unfortunately Glen died in the Arizona backcountry doing what he loved to do most. I do recall almost ankle deep goat droppings in the main gully during my treks to the top of East End in the late 1970's.



Then there were thoughts shared comparing how things were done then with how they might be done now. Jim Waugh disclosed that he thought many of the classic first ascents he put up should be re-bolted and the bolts replaced in better locations. He did most of his routes ground up using hooked features to place bolts, whether or not they were where a modern-day climber might want to “clip” a bolt because of a stance. He also said that his standard for bolt placement was simply not to hit the ground if he fell so sometimes bolts were placed further apart the higher he got on a route. Today he would rebolt with a few more bolts to provide more reasonable fall path.

As was a common early practice (compare the first and second guidebooks, for example) Chuck Hill shared that the various routes he put up on Gardeners Wall with separate names on the first pitch and second pitches that were later combined by the author of a guidebook. Chuck also showed me the Leeper Hanger that broke on a fall on Glass Dome during which he broke his foot. He’s a tough dude. He also had a bunch of photos of the wild parties the gang would have at the old parking lot underneath Gardeners Wall. Those didn’t make it into the book!

Marty Karabin shared a story of a late night encounter with the biggest and meanest rattlesnake ever below the Jerry Garcia cave...

And Tom Kreuser reminisced about the early days...the original route to Tom’s Thumb was from the now-gated neighborhood NW of the peak.

There is also a category of memories where the “facts” are probably lost to the Sands of Time. A couple of times my independent conversations with two equally credible first ascensionists and using photos of the crag lead to different locations for the originally named climb... I guess “it” really doesn’t matter. They both chuckled.

Good times.



## CANYON CORNER

By Tom Seeley, Canyoneering Chair

### CRACK ADDICT CANYON, AZ

Location: Arizona, Coconino County

Rating: 3A-II (III if hiking bottom up)

Longest Rappel: 160'

Crack addict is a straightforward short trip through a fault crack that seems to see action when people are out enjoying the Sedona area and looking for something short with fun payoff. Throughout the trip there are approximately 10 rappels encountered, most dry, but typically a shallow (waist deep) pool roughly two thirds of the way through and a pool (up to shoulder deep) at the base of the last large drop near the end. We typically travel through with a couple 200' ropes and a 100' to cover the drops, along with an insurance policy. Mind your rope placement and pull on the final large drop as there is a crack near the bottom that seems to be a rope magnet on occasion during the pull. It may be possible to bypass the first of the two pools, but typically the final pool has at least one member getting a little wet.



There are a few ways to approach the canyon and depending on your situation, one could drive in and simply loop back up Sterling back to your vehicle, set up a shuttle along 89A, or by hiking in from 89A via Sterling Canyon. Looping around back to the top will most likely be the option that saves the most

time, assuming your vehicle can travel down the sometimes very rutted 535A. Driving in to set up a shuttle is an 11.8 mile journey that allows you to park, walk five minutes down a hill, and start the journey. This of course requires two vehicles and the road here can be rather rough especially on 535A and high clearance would prove beneficial on occasion.

The third option is entry by hiking up Sterling Canyon, working up the hill, and hiking over to the drop in. This requires slightly more effort to complete, but allows access by a single vehicle with no special off road capabilities as the parking location is directly off the pavement of the 89A. The track in blue represents where parking has been traditionally used for the shuttle route, while the track in green depicts the tank loop route. One thing to note, is that there is a gate on 535 that gets locked in the winter to prevent access due to snow. If this is the case, it's my experience that hiking in to complete the canyon can be slow, dangerous, and probably not the best idea. Checking to see if this road is open prior to heading out will most likely save you from a long miserable day in a snowy canyon.

## **President's Corner: AMC Response to USFS Draft Plan for Tonto National Forest**

By Andrea Galyean

*Hello AMC members:*

*As you may know, the U.S. Forest Service is in the process of revising the Land Management Plan for the Tonto National Forest. The U.S.F.S. released a draft of the proposed Plan and invited public comment before March 12. As the draft Plan raised certain questions about rock climbing on the Tonto, and as the mission of the Arizona Mountaineering Club includes "advocacy to protect our climbing resources," Land Advocacy Chair Erik Filsinger recommended that we submit a formal statement regarding that Plan. After working with Erik and other club members (thank you all!), I submitted the following letter on behalf of the AMC. We will keep you apprised as we continue to work with the U.S.F.S. on these issues.*

The Arizona Mountaineering Club is a non-profit all-volunteer club with more than 300 members and a focus on mountaineering and rock climbing. Founded in 1964, the AMC teaches climbing and canyoneering skills; promotes safe and responsible outdoor recreation; and works with land management agencies to preserve access to climbing resources in central Arizona. This has be-

come increasingly important as we have seen the sport grow rapidly in popularity, with an estimated 7.7 million Americans now actively participating in outdoor climbing each year and additional participants in related activities like canyoneering.

Due to its proximity to Phoenix and plethora of exposed rock, the Tonto National Forest has a long history of rock climbing, with some routes in use since the 1960's or earlier. AMC members are among the many visitors from around the world who climb and canyoneer on the Tonto year-round, and we trust that the Forest Service will continue to protect these activities as part of the multiple-use concept.



Accordingly, we read with interest the recently released Draft Land Management Plan for the Tonto National Forest. We were gratified that the Plan recognizes rock climbing as an important recreational activity on the Tonto. And we were pleased to see that the Forest Service is seeking to partner with local climbing groups, as the AMC has a long and successful history of working with other land management agencies, including the city of Scottsdale, with whom we have developed a comprehensive Climbing Management Plan to guide route development and maintenance within such areas as Pinnacle Peak Park and the McDowell Sonoran Preserve. We are eager to collaborate with the Forest Service to ensure that climbing remains a sustainable activity even as the number of climbers increases.

We would therefore like to call your attention to a few elements of the draft Plan that might be interpreted to reduce or restrict access to rock climbing on



the Tonto. With regard to those issues, the AMC respectfully submits the following for your consideration:

1. On page, 29, under Guidelines for Non-Motorized Recreation (REC-DIS-NMO-G), item 5 states: *Where rock climbing is an appropriate recreational activity, permanent fixed anchors or bolts for rock climbing and rappelling should be allowed only by prior written authorization, if demonstrated impacts to at-risk species, scenic integrity, cultural resources, or user-conflict concerns have been communicated to the public, and there are no other safe means of descent available and the area is impassable by the use of removable anchors.*

There are a few items of concern in this statement. First are two technical points: 1— while fixed anchors do remain in place following installation, they are not truly "permanent," as they will eventually need to be replaced when the hardware is no longer safe or reliable, and 2— the above language appears to recognize fixed anchors or bolts only as a means of descent, but they are also used in ascending routes where opportunities for removable protection are inadequate. Second, the phrase "where rock climbing is an appropriate recreational activity," opens the question of who decides where climbing is appropriate and how that decision is made, communicated, or enforced, creating confusion about where rock climbing is allowed. Third, this language does not describe how existing bolts or anchors would be maintained and whether authorization would be required before replacing old or damaged hardware. Fourth, the proposed requirement to obtain prior written authorization before installing fixed anchors or bolts creates a series of practical problems. While we recognize that the Forest Service must serve diverse user groups and protect the land itself, we are concerned that a complex or lengthy authorization process might either halt the development of new routes—which help both to serve the growing demand for climbing areas and to disperse the impacts of rock climbing by spreading climbers across more areas—or discourage compliance entirely. We are also mindful of the burden that such authorization requests would place on Forest Service staff, who might have little context for evaluating the appropriateness of climbing anchors. Additionally, the Plan does not describe how such authorization might be obtained, specify who is responsible for granting it, or provide guidelines for such authorization, which leaves us unable to evaluate the feasibility or fairness of such a process.

However, as mentioned earlier, we note that the Management Approach detailed on p. 29 calls for the Forest Service to: "Collaborate with established local and national climbing, caving, and canyoneering organizations

to monitor popular and desirable climbing routes and develop best practices and management plans for these areas (e.g., cave management plans, climbing zones, vertical trails, individual route applications, and canyoneering routes). Coordinate with local partners and climbing groups to either remove or implement maintenance and replacement of existing fixed anchors and to consider new routes when necessary to improve recreation opportunities and mitigate resource impacts (e.g., cultural or riparian resource damages)."

We therefore suggest that the AMC partner with the Forest Service to develop a Climbing Management Plan that would include prescriptive language that clearly specifies the appropriate conditions for establishing new climbing routes and for installing fixed hardware, as well as detailing best-practices and responsibility for maintaining existing routes, anchors, and access trails, and addressing impacts to at-risk species, scenic integrity, cultural resources, and user-conflict concerns. Properly crafted, such a Climbing Management Plan could obviate the need for route-by-route authorization, while still protecting the forest from reckless use and development.

Proposed language:

**Guidelines for Non-Motorized Recreation (REC-DIS-NMO-G), item 5:**

*Fixed anchors or bolts for rock climbing and rappelling should be allowed in accordance with the Climbing Management Plan (to be developed), and where there are no other safe means of protection available, and the area is impassable by the use of removable anchors. Such fixed anchors and bolts should be maintained and replaced in accordance with the Climbing Management Plan.*

If additional prior authorization is still deemed appropriate, we request that the Plan add language that details the application process, the decision-making authority, parameters or guidelines for such decisions, the appeals process, and a reasonable timeline for obtaining authorization. The lack of such language creates confusion among climbers and raises concerns of an ad hoc process in which Forest Service staff might arbitrarily deny access for rock climbing or route development.

2. On page 28, Desired Conditions for Non-Motorized Recreation (REC-DIS-NMO-DC), item 4 states: *Unauthorized fixed anchors for rock climbing and rappelling are not present on the landscape or natural features.*

While we recognize that the intent of this item is to impose reasonable control on the number and location of fixed bolts, it overlooks the fact

that there are already hundreds of climbing routes across the Tonto that rely on fixed anchors for safe ascent and descent. The above language does not describe how those existing anchors would be authorized or maintained. The AMC would be willing to assist the Forest Service in documenting these routes for the purpose of retroactive authorization, but such a process would be cumbersome and could be avoided with a statement that recognizes those climbs and anchors and incorporates them into a Climbing Management Plan. Accordingly, we suggest a modification to the Desired Conditions.

Proposed language:

**Desired Conditions for Non-Motorized Recreation (REC-DIS-NMO-DC), item 4:**

*Fixed anchors and bolts for rock climbing and rappelling are present on the landscape or natural features only in accordance with the Climbing Management Plan (to be developed). Anchors already in place prior to the adoption of the Land Management Plan shall be considered authorized and shall be managed as such.*

3. While the draft Plan includes an overview of the management of Wilderness-designated areas within the Tonto, there is no mention of rock climbing within Wilderness boundaries, despite the presence of many long-established and historical climbing routes in those areas, including routes with fixed anchors. While we appreciate the need for heightened regulations in the Wilderness setting, we are concerned about access to traditional Wilderness climbing routes and the need to replace aging bolts in those areas in order to protect current and future climbers. The bolts and anchors that conform to the best practices protocols that we endorse are minimal, visually inconspicuous, and innocuous to plants and wildlife, which we believe is in keeping with the Wilderness Desired Conditions expressed on page 130 (DWMA-DC), item 5: *Modern, human-made developments are rare, substantially unnoticeable, and use natural or complementary materials. They are present only when needed to provide for public safety, resource protection, or to reflect the historic and cultural landscape.*

We suggest adding language that recognizes rock climbing within the Wilderness-designated areas of the forest, and either states that it will be managed in the same fashion as the rest of the Tonto or clarifies what specific limitations might be put in place, including protocols for replacing old or damaged bolts.

Proposed language:

**Desired Conditions (DWMA-DC), item 10:**

*In Wilderness Areas, fixed anchors or bolts for rock climbing and rappelling should be allowed only in accordance with the Climbing Management Plan (to be developed), and should be maintained in accordance with the Climbing Management Plan.*

Again, on behalf of the Arizona Mountaineering Club, I extend my thanks to the Forest Service for its ongoing stewardship of the Tonto and its special places. Thank you, as well, for the opportunity to participate in this review process. We recognize that rock climbing is only one of many activities that take place on our national lands and we appreciate your consideration.

With participation in climbing and related activities increasing, and with the population around the Tonto National Forest also growing rapidly, we see this Land Management Plan as a critical opportunity to collaborate with the Forest Service and other recreational organizations to develop a thoughtful strategy for managing climbing on public land. An effective Climbing Management Plan would address the concerns we see in the draft Land Management Plan, support the mission of the Tonto, provide consistent guidance to rock climbers, enhance multiple uses, minimize friction between user groups, and provide forest supervisors with clear guidelines. We hope to help you develop it.

I have entered the above comments in the online CARA tool for the public record, and will contact you directly to discuss how the AMC might become a useful partner to the Forest Service and help develop a meaningful Climbing Management Plan that balances the needs of the rock climbing community with the goals of the Forest Service and responsible stewardship.

I look forward to working with you,

Sincerely,  
Andrea Galyean  
President, Arizona Mountaineering Club



Photo: Crying Dino rappel

## 2020 Programs Update

By: Deborah Roether, Programs Chair

It has been awhile since we have had an AMC member meeting and it is not yet clear when we'll be able to gather together again. During this time, I have been busy booking and re-booking a great line up of events in preparation for when we can meet again. To keep you informed, please review the program schedule below. Please look at our Meetup page for locations and updates. Hope you are all well and I can't wait to see you at our next meeting. In the meantime, stay healthy!

- ♦ Monday, April 20, 2020 — Rescheduled for April 18, 2021 (Clinic) and April 19, 2021 (Presentation). **Laura Sabourin** for Arno Illgner's **Warrior's Way** clinic and program. For more information on these programs check out: <https://warriorsway.com/>
- ♦ Wednesday, May 27, 2020 — Rescheduled for Sept 2020 (See info below)
- ♦ Wednesday, June 24, 2020 — Rescheduled for Spring 2021, exact TBD. **Damon Williams**, yoga teacher and certified personal trainer will speak about **fitness, developing strength and preventing injuries for climbers**. For background information on Damon: <https://www.mindfulenergyleadership.com/staff-bios/>
- ♦ July 2020 — No member meeting. Head to higher, cooler temps!
- ♦ Wednesday, August 26, 2020 — **Beta, Boasts and Beer**. We are hoping that we will all be able to meet up and celebrate.
- ♦ Wednesday, September 23, 2020 — Presentation by **Anne Lorimor**: The oldest person to climb **Mount Kilimanjaro** (5,895 metres; 19,340 feet) in Tanzania. She reached Uhuru Peak at 3.14 p.m. local time on 18 July 2019, aged 89 years 37 days. Lorimor and seven others set out on 12 July and scaled Kilimanjaro on the Rongai Route – the only route that approaches the mountain from the north – led by guide Elibahati Mamuya; the group returned on the Marangu Route. The round trip from base to summit to base took nine days. Lorimor completed the climb unassisted, with no oxygen or artificial aids. For more information about Anne and her work: Lorimor ChildEmpowerment Foundation Creating Exciting Futures. <https://www.creatingexcitingfutures.org/>
- ♦ Wednesday, October 28, 2020 – Legendary **Jim Waugh** will present about

putting up the first ascents on **Baboquivari**, which is located southwest of Tucson, Arizona. I've been told by a reliable source that Waugh may have more first ascents in Arizona than any other climber. For more information about climbing Baboquivari check out: <https://www.mountainproject.com/area/105738022/baboquivari-peak>

- ♦ Wednesday, November 18, 2020 (an earlier date to accommodate the Thanksgiving holiday) — Presentation by **Jim Donini**, who is credited with first ascents spanning some 40 years in Patagonia, China, and Alaska, including the first ascent of Torre Egger in Patagonia with John Bragg and Jay Wilson in the mid-1970s. In 1978, he, Michael Kennedy, and George and Jeff Lowe nearly completed one of alpine climbing's greatest objectives: 23,442-foot **Latok I in Pakistan**. Despite countless attempts by other teams, the route remains unclimbed. And, at 73 he keeps cranking out the climbs. Here's one of many good tales about Donini: <https://www.patagonia.com/stories/an-outing-with-donini-entry-fee-part-one/story-18471.html>
- ♦ Friday, December 4, 2020 — **AMC Holiday Party** at the clubhouse!

Comments, questions and suggestions can be emailed to me at: [deborahloether@gmail.com](mailto:deborahloether@gmail.com)

## Seeking a Newsletter Editor

We're looking for a volunteer to be the Newsletter Editor for our quarterly newsletter, *The Arizona Mountaineer*. If interested, please send email to [newsletter@arizonamountaineeringclub.net](mailto:newsletter@arizonamountaineeringclub.net).