



MOHONK PRESERVE, INC.

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ROCK CLIMBING ON THE MOHONK PRESERVE

Revised Statement of Policy Adopted by Board of Directors
December 9, 1990, April 1, 2001, April 4, 2005, April 11, 2010

For more than fifty years, rock climbers from all over the world have been attracted to the unique geological formation of the Shawangunk cliffs. The Mohonk Preserve has welcomed climbers since its foundation in 1963. In the course of time, many climbers have contributed significantly to the work of the Preserve, as volunteers, staff members, donors, and concerned users of the land. A cordial relationship has developed that has benefited both the Preserve and the climbing community. Accordingly, the Directors of the Mohonk Preserve will confirm their intention to continue climbing as a valid use of Preserve lands.

Drafted by the Climbing Policy Committee, endorsed by the Land Stewardship Committee, and ratified by the Board of Directors, the present policy statement reflects the concerns of many friends of Mohonk, both climbers and non-climbers. Throughout its history the Preserve has welcomed the views of individual climbers; we invite the present-day climbing community to help maintain a long-standing tradition of friendly and productive dialogue.

Although the Preserve does not, in general, permit its land to be used for commercial activity of any kind, an exception is made in the case of paid instruction in rock climbing, in order to foster an understanding of safe climbing practices. The Climbing Instruction Policy (attached), adopted by the Directors on December 11, 1988, forms an integral part of Mohonk Preserve's Rock Climbing Policy and must be read in conjunction with it.

I. ACCESS

A. Responsibility. Climbers must exercise their freedom to choose their own routes and climbing styles, within the limits necessitated by the uniqueness and fragility of the environment and the rights, needs and safety of other climbers and users of the land. Responsibility for safe climbing rests solely with the individual climber. Mohonk Preserve, Inc. does not maintain the rocks, cliffs, or other natural features of the terrain, does not provide supervision or instruction, and is not responsible for the condition of the terrain, or the acts of persons who may be on its property.

B. Fees. Because the Mohonk Preserve is a private, non-profit corporation dependent upon use fees and donations, all visitors other than annual climbing members are required to pay a daily use fee. It is Mohonk Preserve policy that revenues collected from visitors are used to help defray the cost of land stewardship, which includes ranger services and the maintenance of facilities.

C. Other Climbing Areas. The Preserve will take account of the concerns of climbers and neighboring landowners, and will make available to landowners everywhere the knowledge gained in many years' experience of recreational management. In particular, the Preserve will share this experience whenever called upon by land managers for advice in establishing climbing policies and guidelines in other areas.

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II. FACILITIES

A. Parking. It is the intent of the Preserve to make legal, off-road parking available for visitors.

B. Camping. Although the Preserve is predominantly a day-use area, overnight tenting and bivouacking may continue to be permitted in designated locations. The Preserve will strive for improved cooperation with Minnewaska State Park Preserve and local campground managers.

C. Approach Trails. The Preserve will mark and maintain trails to provide appropriate access to its lands, and will actively encourage its visitors to use them.

D. Litter and Sanitation. The Preserve will foster a clean environment by providing trash cans and toilets, collecting litter, discouraging smoking, prohibiting glass containers, and educating visitors in environmentally sound waste disposal practices.

III. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

A. Protection of Specified Areas. Because the Preserve is dedicated to the stewardship of a precious and fragile resource, the Directors may from time to time have to rule certain areas of the Preserve out of bounds or establish carrying capacities in order to protect the land and wildlife. All visitors are asked to observe and help publicize such restrictions. If feasible, the Preserve will consult with users of an area slated for closure prior to ruling it out of bounds.

B. Environmentally Damaging Climbing Practices. It is not the Preserve's policy to foster any particular climbing style or ethic. Rock climbing is an inherently dangerous sport. Skill and training are essential. The Mohonk Preserve provides no supervision, inspection or maintenance of the rocks or cliffs. Mohonk personnel are not authorized to instruct or advise climbers and are not responsible for warning of dangerous conditions or practices. In order to maintain the cliffs as far as possible in their natural state, however, the Preserve forbids all environmentally damaging climbing practices. These include but are not limited to trundling rocks, chipping holds, affixing new holds, cutting trees, placing new bolts and pitons and dry-tooling. The Preserve may, with consultation of the Land Stewardship Committee, add or replace permanent anchors if they improve climber safety. Replacement of such anchors may also minimize damage to vegetation / habitat, reduce visual clutter, and reduce maintenance cycles of existing fixed anchors. In addition, the Preserve views chalk as environmentally degrading and urges climbers to use it with discretion.

C. Use. The Preserve is large enough to accommodate many visitors, provided all respect the right of others to enjoy the Preserve lands in an atmosphere of peace and tranquility. The Preserve discourages irresponsible media coverage of rock climbing. The Preserve does allow responsible media coverage of rock climbing by media representatives who have applied for and received Preserve permission for such coverage. All visitors to the Preserve are urged to support these policies and, in general, to treat one another with the utmost courtesy and consideration.

It is the Preserve's mission to balance public access to and enjoyment of the land with its continued protection. For this reason, and to help keep visitor impact in ecologically fragile areas low, the Preserve has a science-based, carefully researched, and systematically applied land management plan. Among other things, this plan guides decisions on visitor use and experiences in different parts of the Preserve.

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It is with this plan in mind that certain back-country cliffs that offer rock climbing opportunities have purposefully been left undocumented. The Preserve does not object to or discourage the description and updating of climbing routes and boulder problems in locations in the Trapps, Near Trapps, and Millbrook. However, we strongly urge others to not publish or publicize detailed information about climbing and bouldering in locations that are managed primarily as wildlife habitat and natural areas.

Such information includes describing geographic location and name; directions to the base of cliffs and bouldering areas; and the grade, description, protection rating, and name of routes and boulder problems. The Preserve believes that the widespread sharing of such information would encourage the increased use of non-publicized, back country climbing areas.

It is the Preserve's position that visitation to these areas should remain low enough to permit continued climbing and bouldering activity in the future. If this is the case, we will be able to continue to maintain the balance between these recreational activities and the protection of the vital natural resources with which we have been entrusted.

IV. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Recreational rappelling is prohibited but this prohibition shall not restrict the practice when used as an integral part of technical rock climbing.