

**WESTERN MONTANA**



# **CLIMBERS COALITION**

**Spring 2016 Newsletter**

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## **Outdoor Alliance Montana (OAMT)**



WMTCC joined forces with the SW MT Climbers Coalition, the Bitterroot Climbers Coalition, the MT Backcountry Alliance, the American Alpine Club, American Whitewater, the International Mountain Biking Association, and the Winter Wildland Alliance, to create Outdoor Alliance Montana.

OAMT is a statewide partnership that serves as a platform for member organizations to coordinate their efforts to protect public lands, waters and snowscapes. Our collective voice increases the leverage our communities can apply to federal and state level decisions affecting public lands and recreation.

Please check out the OAMT Facebook page and “Like” it to follow this exciting development: <https://www.facebook.com/oamontana>

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### **Mill Creek North Rim Update**

The Mill Creek saga continues, despite unrelenting efforts from WTMCC to persuade the Forest Service to take positive action. Recently, the FS has issued a series of letters regarding continuing the bolting moratorium and closing certain cliffs due to alleged raptor presence. WMTCC continues to work directly with Stevensville District Ranger Tami Sabol and Bitterroot NF Supervisor Julie King in regards to these ongoing issues. We want the FS to be more transparent about how they make raptor closure decisions and feel that closing off the whole canyon to bolting does not follow a legal precedent.

At the end of March, Ranger Sabol reiterated to WMTCC that the FS plans to visit the climbing area in the upcoming weeks. She explained that “the purpose of our field visit is to conduct an assessment of current conditions and engage resource specialists in a productive discussion about potential rehab options. After our folks have seen the climbing area, I will personally get in touch with you to set up another meeting.” The FS continues to express that they really do want to collaborate with WMTCC and are interested in taking actions to keep Mill open to climbing by re-establishing belay platforms and making an official trail. We will keep our members posted regarding upcoming developments as they unfold.

## Featured Route

### DYMAXION 11 b/c Kootenai

FA Erik Pallister

Be sure not to miss the new route Dymaxion on the First Butte at Kootenai Canyon. Dymaxion is pumpy and fun, with good exposure as you climb around the arete and on to the face, making big moves to good holds. Access it by carefully scrambling up to the ledge below Razorback Arete, travel east to the belay bolts.



## Mill Creek Report Back in Action



The Mill Creek Report, a climbing blog authored by local climbers is back up and running after a long hiatus. The blog began “as a way to share news and information for the opening of the North Rim climbing area in the Bitterroot Valley of western Montana” but now has evolved to include “general topics of interest to the region and beyond.” Check it out to find:

- Climbing gear reviews
- Training tips
- Climbing news
- Quick access to the Mill topo

[www.millcreekreport.blogspot.com](http://www.millcreekreport.blogspot.com)

## Defying Gravity's Gnar Pirate Spring Team

It's shaping up to be a great year for the Gnar Pirates, Missoula's very own youth climbing team which is managed by the non-profit Defying Gravity. There are 10 kids on the team this spring and they are both preparing for upcoming roped climbing competitions and staying in shape for the fall bouldering season. The Gnar Pirates welcome their new assistant coach Justin Willis, who has competed around the world in both sport and ice climbing. Brooke Hess, who was last year's assistant coach, will serve as head coach this year. To learn more about the Gnar Pirates or Defying Gravity, visit their new websites: <http://www.gnarpirates.org> [www.defying-gravity.org](http://www.defying-gravity.org)



## New Board Members

We are happy and pleased to welcome our new board members and look forward to working with them this year!

**Zak Clare-Salzler, Treasurer:** "Climbing outside in Western Montana profoundly contributes to my sense of place as a resident in this area. I joined the WMTCC board to have a more direct connection to the climbing community and to help preserve access to climbing areas in Western Montana."



**Fred Roderick:** "When I started climbing there were few resources and even fewer people willing to show someone new to the sport how to climb effectively and more importantly safely. I am passionate about equipping the next generation of climbers with the skills needed to allow their own passion for this wonderful sport to grow and flourish in a safe and healthy environment."

**Conner Given, Membership Chair:** "I joined because I wanted to try and make a difference in the local climbing community, insofar as trying to be involved in the Mill Creek resolution and help the general climbing population present a more unified and concrete front, both to non-climbers and land managers alike, and to promote a positive public image for our group and our pursuits as a group."



**Caroline Psaltis:** "I joined the board because I wanted to become more involved in the Missoula climbing community"

### WMTCC Board of Directors

Chair: Claudine Tobalske

Vice-Chair: Michael Moore

Secretary: Brian Martens

Treasurer: Zak Clare-Salzler

#### Committee chairman:

Access: Dane Scott

Education: Brian Martens

Membership: Conner Given

Outreach/Events: Carleigh LeBlanc

Anchor/bolt replacement: Erik Pallister

#### Members-at-large:

Jay Carroll, Walter Hailles, Tim Karst, Kurt Krueger, Cole Lawrence, Mackenzie Moore, Caroline Psaltis, Dave Jones, Damian Mast, Fred Rhoderick



## National Forest Plan Revisions Can Affect Climbing!

The Bitterroot and Lolo National Forests will soon be revising their Land and Resource Management Plans, which “set desired conditions, objectives, standards, and guidelines for the management, protection, and use of the forest.” Although these plans provide board guidance to the forest, they can certainly affect climbing. Plans establish “management areas and management area direction (management area prescriptions) applying to future activities in that management area,” including what recreation may be allowed in certain areas and the rules regulating this recreation.

Luckily, the planning process *requires public participation* and citizens who care about the forests are encouraged to submit their thoughts, comments, and concerns during the planning process. The revision process for the BNF and LNF will begin in 2018 and WMTCC is getting prepared for by establishing working relationships with the forest managers. We are also working with Access Fund policy director Erik Murdoch, who provides guidance for our conversations.

This planning process is but one example of why having a coalition dedicated to working for climbers rights and access to public spaces is so crucial. Single individuals have a difficult time being heard in the large bureaucracy. However, if we stick together and present a united voice for hundreds of climbers in the area, our concerns will not go unnoticed. These forest plans are intended to provide management direction for multiple decades, making it even more important that climbers get their voices heard now.

As always, if you are interested in helping to work with forest managers on access issues, we encourage you talk to one of the WMTCC board members about getting involved. We are going to have more and more on our plate over the next few years, and having knowledgeable, passionate people working to fight for climbers rights is what WMTCC is build on.

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**To stay up to date with things, be sure to check our website ([www.wmtcc.org](http://www.wmtcc.org)) and our Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/westernmontanaclimberscoalition](https://www.facebook.com/westernmontanaclimberscoalition)) for the latest information about access issues, area openings/closures, events, and contests.**

**Have questions? Feedback? Concerns? Contact us:  
[wmtclimberscoalition@gmail.com](mailto:wmtclimberscoalition@gmail.com)**