

OAC ACCESS SENDS 2015/2016: Summary

CLIMBING AREAS

- Cape Croker re-opened
- Tiffany Falls (ice, Hamilton) opened

CLIMBING COMMUNITY

- Beaver Valley Climbing Festival
- Southern Ontario Ice Fest
- OAC Approved
- Gym rep program/Gym to Crag
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- OAC Facebook Group

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- Ontario Rock Climbing and Bouldering Forum
- Biosphere Reserve Network
- Crag Stewardship Day (Conservation Halton)

OAC ACCESS SENDS 2015/2016

CLIMBING AREAS

Cape Croker – The Ontario Access Coalition is thrilled to announce that climbing at Cape Croker has been re-opened effective June 15th 2016! Access to the cliffs at Cape Croker is through the property of the Chippewas of Nawash First Nation. The OAC would like to extend a special thanks to portfolio managers Drs. Harry Hoediono and Patrick Lam for negotiating with Park officials and the Band Council to reach an agreement. As always, climbing on other peoples' lands is a privilege, not a right. Please be on your best behaviour. In particular, tread quietly and lightly, respect the OAC Code of Ethics, and adhere to Leave No Trace principles. This will help preserve access for future generations.

Tiffany Falls (Hamilton Conservation Authority) – In November 2015, along with One Axe Pursuits and the Alpine Club of Canada, the OAC engaged in discussions with the Hamilton Conservation Authority about the future of ice climbing and risk management on their properties. For the winter season ending in March 2016, group ice climbing was allowed for One Axe Pursuits and Alpine Club of Canada members. The OAC is continuing to work towards making the HCA properties available to more recreational climbers and at more locations.

Niagara Glen – We remain on good terms with the Niagara Parks Commission and constantly work to improve our relationship. We are in communication with them about the future of the Niagara Glen permit system. The NPC encourages boulderers to purchase their 2016 permits if they have not already done so.

CLIMBING COMMUNITY

BVCF – The 3rd Annual Beaver Valley Climbing Festival took place in July 2015 and was a huge success. We attracted close to 200 people and raised funds to support future OAC projects. The weekend was packed with games, clinics, vendors, competitions, entertainment, yoga, massage, music, dancing, a huge bonfire and tasty food. The event was a rare opportunity for the Ontario climbing community to come together and celebrate the beauty of the Beaver Valley. Don't miss this year's BVCF, July 15-17th 2016!

SO Ice Festival - The OAC helped sponsor the first Southern Ontario Ice Fest Feb 25-27th in Maynooth, ON. The event brought together the growing ice climbing community and helped raise funds to support The Rural Overland Utility Transit, a fully accessible public transit service in the north half of Hastings County and one Haliburton County municipality located in a rural region of

Southeastern Ontario. The event also helped increase local awareness in regards to the economic benefits provided by ice climbing.

OAC Approved program – The OAC Approved program highlights events and products that contribute to climbing access in Ontario.

Events and products that receive approval showcase the “OAC Approved” Seal, indicating that:

- the event or product is aligned with the OAC’s Missions Statement and Code of Ethics; and,
- the projects were created in collaboration with appropriate land managers/owners.

Gym rep program – Last year, OAC volunteer coordinator Laura Banks created an OAC Gym Rep program whereby gyms would have at least one volunteer who would work an OAC table on a regular basis. This year, Mylissa Prisner took over the program and is working diligently to enhance the program and streamline the logistics. We are always looking for keen volunteers to assist with this program. Email info@ontarioaccesscoalition.com if interested.

Gym to Crag – Two years ago the OAC partnered with the Access Fund to co-brand our logo onto their Gym To Crag poster. The poster promotes responsible crag practices in a fun way. The poster should be found in most Ontario climbing gyms and MEC locations. If not, contact the OAC for one!

Crag Status Doc – We released an up-to-date version of our Crag Status Document which provides a quick reference to the access status of all the commonly asked-about crags in the province. This version also provides more detailed information: links to route information, Google map links, and notes on typical conditions, permits and fees.

OAC calendar – The OAC continues to produce a high quality calendar showcasing the beautiful and diverse climbing areas in the province that we are lucky to call our local spots. All calendar proceeds go to the OAC and support access. Our social media outlets were again inundated with submissions to our second annual photo contest. Keep those submissions flowing in again this year!

OAC survey – A record 216 climbers responded to our annual survey. The results of the survey provide data which inform our ongoing discussions with land managers. See detailed report.

OAC Facebook group – We surpassed 1350 likes as a result of revitalizing the OAC Facebook group and regularly posting updates relevant to the climbing community. This was a 30% annual increase.

CONNECTING WITH OTHERS

Ontario Rock Climbing and Bouldering Forum – On September 11, 2015, in Owen Sound, the Ontario Access Coalition played a key role in the first ever rock climbing and bouldering knowledge share forum for Grey County and Bruce County. The OAC met with many of the conservation land owners in Grey/Bruce to formally introduce rock climbing and bouldering as sustainable recreational activities on the Escarpment. The goal of the forum was to promote a coordinated approach to rock climbing and bouldering as recreational activities where appropriate in the Grey/Bruce region. Community agencies had the opportunity to share and learn about the environmental, social and economic impacts of rock climbing and bouldering. The forum fostered dialogue on how management plans examine recreational activities and also improve liaison, shared resources, and coordinated action among various community agencies. The second Grey/Bruce Rock Climbing and Bouldering Forum took place on May 20 in Walkerton, Ontario. Building off the momentum of the first meeting, the second meeting focused on the following discussion points:

- The way access to climbing areas is being framed in current/forthcoming Ontario rock climbing guides.
- The thriving climbing gym culture in the GTA and southern Ontario and how it will likely increase climber visits to Grey/Bruce.
- Climbing activity management plan discussions for areas that will be developing new/revised management plans over the next several years (eg. Lion's Head, Devil's Glen).
- Bolt usage and replacement at Ontario climbing areas.
- Adding signage at selected Grey/Bruce climbing areas to promote environmental stewardship.
- Putting into action a sustainable parking plan for Devil's Glen.
- Promotion of Grey/Bruce communities at this year's Beaver Valley Climbing Festival.
- Ontario Parks Lion's Head cliff-face analysis to begin this summer with the use of drones.

Conferences – Tony Berlier, Randy Kielbasiewicz, and Graeme Taylor represented the OAC at both a winter and early summer Biosphere Reserve Network events led by the NEC.

Conservation Halton – We continued to cooperate with Conservation Halton to run the annual Crag Stewardship Day in early May 2016. OAC volunteers once again helped fight off the invasion of Garlic Mustard which is proving to be highly successful. This event improves climbers' visibility at some of our most popular crags.