

GROWING SMART

Climbing & Bouldering Areas on High Knob

The High Knob Region's cliffs and boulders present a wealth of climbing and bouldering opportunities. But those same rock faces are home to some of our rarest species. The below tips can let climbers and communities coexist with rare and sensitive wildlife.



Habitat at “The Labyrinth” in Norton heavily damaged from users cutting vegetation away from the rock face (top); a nearby healthy rock outcrop habitat not damaged by climbing development (bottom).

Tip 1: Develop Sites Responsibly

Cutting back woody vegetation near rock faces damages rock outcrop habitats and kills rare, outcrop-associated wildlife. Develop new crags and bouldering areas responsibly by developing routes and boulder problems around existing vegetation, rather than cutting vegetation back.

Tip 2: Limit Impacts at Staging Areas

Heavily-used staging areas at a crag are at risk of erosion issues and other resource damage. In extreme cases, this damage can cause climbing areas to be closed. Develop formally-designated staging areas at your climbing site to limit impacts, and constrain users to these areas with signage, barriers, and well-marked access trails.

Tip 3: Educate and Communicate

Be proactive about encouraging sustainable climbing practices at your site through outreach materials on kiosks and user engagement. Best practices include minimizing brushing and chalk use, refraining from cutting unofficial trails or woody vegetation, and cleaning up after a climb.

Tip 4: Be Careful with Graffiti Cleanup

Climbers abhor graffiti, but removal methods—including chemical removers and high-pressure washing—can damage rock faces and kill resident wildlife. Consult with wildlife officials in your area before planning a cleanup project to discuss low-impact removal strategies.



Learn more sustainable climbing practices and access resources to assist in managing climbing areas in Chapter 5 of the free *Growing Smart on High Knob* planning blueprint. Available at <http://bit.ly/highknobblueprint>