

CARCASS CRAG ACQUIRED!

CRAG-VT is thrilled to announce that we have acquired one of the area's steepest and best sport climbing cliffs: the Carcass Crag! This winter, CRAG-VT signed a Purchase and Sale agreement to acquire one of Bolton's best cliffs through a boundary line adjustment on our Bolton Quarry property. In early July, we completed the land purchase and added three additional acres to the Quarry, permanently securing public access to this great crag.

Never been to the Carcass? That's not a surprise. As with many local cliffs on private land, the Carcass has been a guarded secret for over a decade. Derek Doucet was possibly the first to envision potential on this imposing cliff when he discovered it by accident in the winter of 1998. Doucet had been climbing ice in the Quarry and was preparing to leave when he noticed his Black Lab, Auggie, was missing. A prolonged search turned up Auggie with his head and shoulders buried in a rotting deer carcass, tail wagging ecstatically. Doucet looked up, and there was the cliff – a place whose name will forever memorialize the hapless deer.

Doucet told some friends about his find and that spring Dave Furman established *Who's Your Daddy* (5.12c), the Carcass's mega-classic line. The *Daddy* was a revelation; a phenomenal route that overnight ushered in the sport climbing techniques and new standards of difficulty that defined the next decade of climbing in northwestern Vermont. It wasn't long before other great climbs were done on the cliff including *Alternative Power* (5.12a), *Worthless Stud* (5.11d) and *Progress* (5.11a); every route tackling that ominous overhang half way up the cliff. Now that the acquisition is complete Vermont climbers own these excellent climbs!

A huge debt of thanks is due the Access Fund for their generous grant and their continued support. We are greatly indebted to Dr. Richard Katzman. Without his level head and tireless diplomacy, this project would almost certainly have failed. Doctor, words fail how grateful we are for your efforts. Thanks to Seth Maciejowski for

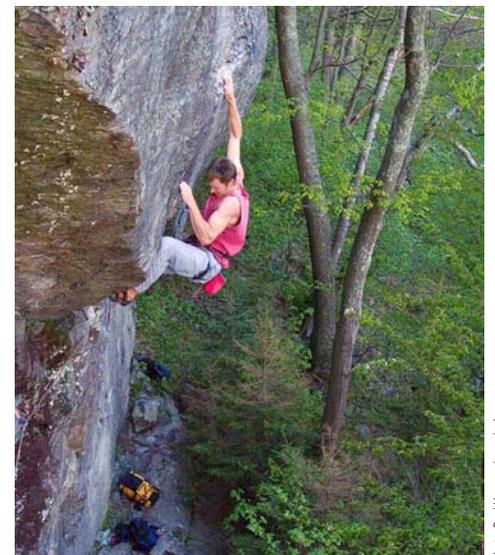


Kevin Ryan sticks the crux of *Who's Your Daddy* (5.12c)

Photo: Dave Yuono / daveyuono.com

writing yet another successful grant! Badass! Thanks to Pam Moreau once again for her legal services and patience. Thanks to the CRAG-VT board for their endless spunk and tenacity, and the great folks in our climbing community that volunteer and support us! Finally, a personal thanks to Paul, Derek, and Dave- climbing with you at the Carcass a decade ago was an inspiration. See you out at the Carcass Crag!

—Travis Peckham
President, CRAG-VT



Dave Furman on an early ascent of *Who's Your Daddy* (5.12c)

Photo: Paul Hansen / ecopixel.com

Peregrine Falcons Are Back



Some of residents we share the cliffs with



Photos: Margaret Fowle

It's that time of year when we're all getting out to the cliffs of Vermont. Peregrine falcons have also returned to their breeding sites and have begun the process of raising young. While it was once a rare treat to see a peregrine falcon on a cliff in Vermont, it is becoming a much more common experience thanks to the amazing recovery of this once-extirpated species.

To best continue this success story, it is important to respect any closures you encounter when out on the cliffs of Vermont. There is an updated list of closures around the state on the VT Department of Fish and Wildlife's website (www.vtfishandwildlife.com). Most closures attempt to close only the portion of the cliff the peregrines are using, but in some cases, an entire cliff may be closed. Any cliff where the pair does not nest or whose nest fails early during the breeding season will be reopened as soon as possible.

If you are out on a cliff that isn't posted but has falcons present, please be aware of the birds' presence and retreat if you see any signs that you are causing them disturbance. A peregrine that is agitated will fly off its nest or perch and may swoop at anyone on the cliff (and can hit people with their talons). The bird will call out "cack cack cack" – a very loud call – for an example, go to http://identify.whatbird.com/obj/59/overview/Peregrine_Falcon.aspx.

Currently, peregrine falcons are protected by a federal law called the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. This law protects all native birds, their nests, and their young from harm. Any action that causes the death of a falcon can be considered a violation of the act. Repeated disturbance to a nest site, which causes the eventual failure of that nest, would also fall into that category. Seasonal cliff closures are intended to minimize the risk of causing a peregrine falcon pair's nest to fail due to repeated human disturbance.

Thanks to three decades of monitoring, breeding site protection, and public education, peregrines are now considered a recovered species in Vermont. They were removed from the federal list of endangered and threatened species in 1999 and the Vermont State list of endangered species in the spring of 2005. The species is not completely out of the woods, however. Their continued success is dependent upon the public's awareness of the falcons' need for privacy during the breeding season. Vermont's climbing community has been an essential component to that success.

The VT Peregrine Falcon Recovery Project, which is now a partnership between the VT Department of Fish and Wildlife and Audubon VT, monitors and protects active breeding sites throughout the state. The project also monitors the population as part of the federal post-delisting plan, which requires states to monitor a subset of their populations every three years for a total of five monitoring years. This post-delisting monitoring period, which is required by the Endangered Species Act, will end in 2015.

Vermont's rock climbing community, with the help of CRAG-VT, has been a great asset to the Vermont Peregrine Falcon Recovery Project over the years, and the project's partners greatly appreciate your support. If you have any questions about the project or any cliff closures, please contact Margaret Fowle at mfowle@audubon.org or (802) 238-0046.

—Margaret Fowle

CRAG-VT ONLINE

Find out more: www.cragvt.org

Join the discussion: forums.cragvt.org



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CRAG-VT is run entirely by volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering or Board membership, please contact us!

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MEETINGS

CRAG-VT typically meets on the first Tuesday of each month at 6:30pm at the Camels Hump Middle School in Richmond, VT. The public is welcome to meetings. Please call or email to confirm the time and date.

Newsletter design by Kevin Karn
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The Choss Pile

Vermont Climbing News



Alden Pellett orders a stiff *Scotch & Water* (WI5X) in Smugglers' Notch.

Photo: Jeremy Dowdy

Ice Season Round Up

This year's ice season proved once again that winters in New England are about as predictable as a roll of the dice. Things started out promising, with a very early season ascent of *Pinnacle Gully* on October 15th by Alden Pellett and Seth Maciejowski. Expecting to find barely-attached verglas, Pellett and Maciejowski arrived at the base of the route carrying only two ice screws on the rack. Much to their surprise, the route was in great shape and went easy, starting the season off early. It was quickly apparent, however, that conditions were not to last. *Pinnacle* received a few more ascents before temperatures shot back up a few days later and stayed that way through mid-December. Needless to say, ice climbing was out of the picture, but rock climbers took advantage of the friendly temps to knock off outstanding projects.

Local hardman Matt McCormick continued his quest to dig out radical new mixed climbs in the northeast with two significant new routes. *Bossman* (M9+) takes on a line of ice smears and hangers dripped down steep ground left of the Adirondack classic *Multiplication Gully*. The line has repelled some of the best local climbers and at least one notable North American alpinist. McCormick teamed up with New

Hampshire guide Bayard Russell over a couple of days in January to work out the moves on the line before sending the route. During the Catskills Ice Festival, McCormick proceeded to crank out the first ascent of what is probably the Catskills' hardest mixed line, *Hydropower* (M9 WI5-), in the Black Chasm. The route, an older unfinished line, takes the tallest part of the cliff up 90+ feet of steep drytooling before launching onto a free hanger. McCormick managed to send the line after two days of effort.

At the Smugglers Notch Ice Bash in January, Alden Pellett and Jeremy Dowdy headed up to the notch hoping to squeeze in an ascent of *Cloak and Dagger*. However, when they arrived at the base, they noticed an unusual runnel of ice had formed on the wall to the right of *Cloak* and the mixed ice and dirt classic *Surf and Turf*. An all-day effort on the two-pitch 350-foot line by Dowdy and Pellett yielded *Scotch and Water* (WI5X). In true Notch style, the route went ground up onsite, sparsely protected with tied-off icicles and stubbies. Pellett returned a week later with Seth Maciejowski to add an uninspiring variation start to *Scotch and Water* called *Blackwatch* (AKA *Blockhead*) (M5), which takes a mixed line up a dubious combination of frozen dirt and loose blocks to reach the first pitch belay of *Scotch and Water*. After blowing a knifeblade during a leg bruising whipper on

the route, Pellett commented, "You'd have to be a blockhead to get on this route!"

The comp scene

In spite of the warm local conditions, Vermonters Josh Worley and Will Mayo made the pilgrimage to the Ouray Ice Festival, taking 5th and 3rd place, respectively. Nice work, guys!

An Early Start to Rock Season

Ice season came to a rather abrupt, early end in the beginning of March, as high temperatures made short work of the ice and kicked off an early start to rock season. Matt McCormick, taking advantage of the warm temps, worked to send an outstanding project on the right hand side of the 82 Wall. This route was a combined effort of a wide cast of local climbers. Alden Pellett placed an anchor at the top of the route and a few bolts on the line a while back, but never got around to finishing the line. Dave Vuono took up where Pellett left off and placed the remaining bolts on this seemingly endless steep blunt arête, but didn't get to work the route. Finally, McCormick dispatched the line after a number of attempts together with Parker Weber and John Tomb. *Team America* (5.13a) is one of Bolton's hardest, offering up a long, sustained line of overhanging crimps.

After repeating *Team America*, Nate Popik and Travis Peckham teamed up to establish *Police State* (5.12d). This excellent variation links the bottom of *Encryption* and the top of *Team America*, taking out the no-hands rest and adding another V4 crux section in the transition. Never seeming to run out of energy, Peckham also established two more pitches at Upper West Bolton – *Fresh Meat* (5.10b) and *Old Bones* (5.11c). *Fresh Meat* climbs steep jugs and bear hug moves to an anchor below *Old Bones*. *Bones* continues the fun, with thin crack climbing over small gear to the top of the crag.

As June drew to a close, an early lifting of the peregrine ban at Upper Upper West Bolton cliff permitted Seth Maciejowski and Alden Pellett to complete *Full Term* (5.8), a nice face climb on the far left side of the crag. Once again, locals have proven that many great lines lay waiting to be discovered!

Compiled by Seth Maciejowski

Minimizing Impacts at the Crag

A few topos of nearby crags recently arrived in my Inbox. I almost immediately forwarded them to 6 other local climbing friends. Some might view this speedy circulation of crag beta as detrimental. But these crags are no secret. Everyone knows they exist. I wanted to inspire others to explore these areas and climb with me. People seem to be polarized in their opinions relating to access and sharing beta about climbing areas. No one wants to wait in line to get on a climb,



Photo: Kevin Karn

Devon Karn and Sasha Posner enjoy a peaceful afternoon at Upper West on 5.7 Corner.

spend the day surrounded by rowdy disruptive groups, or see trash scattered in the woods of a once pristine forest.

But there can be a place for everyone to climb outside. The etiquette and attitude of neighboring parties can have more influence on an experience at a crag than numbers alone. A pair of arrogant, disrespectful climbers slamming beers and tossing cans in the woods has far more impact on an area than a group of four with a guide who are appropriately encouraging, respectful and leave without a sign that they were ever there. Those who desire solitude or to climb routes that have seen few ascents can still seek those experiences by putting in the time and work to earn them. The effort to reach locations farther from roads and population centers will be rewarded by personal satisfaction and the intrinsic nature of the place. And because a smaller percentage of the climbing population will break into the very difficult grades, those routes will inherently see less traffic as well.

The preservation of enjoyable days outside is not the only thing at stake as climbing areas receive more visitors. Plant communities and wildlife habitat also face potential degradation. As outdoor climbing gains popularity, information circulates and access to crags improves, respecting the natural features of an area becomes paramount. Ecological integrity of an area remained intact for eons before the inundation of the human species. This is true for even the close-by, seemingly commonplace tracts of land where many routes have been established. These areas support rare plants and provide critical habitat to threatened and endangered species. The very presence of people may stress these environments but our impact can be greatly reduced with minimal additional effort.

Keeping climbing areas aesthetically enjoyable and ecologically healthy requires sound management decisions but even more importantly – education. Cultivating a strong culture of stewardship, leave no trace practices, and an understanding of climbing etiquette in the community could significantly reduce the impacts of people at a climbing area. Taking an honest analytical look at our own habits while out for a day would be a good place to start. If everyone makes a conscientious effort to minimize their own impact at an area, the effect of greater numbers may barely be noticeable.

A few tips to minimize your social and environmental impact at a climbing area:

- Use established trails; this concentrates impacts and allows the rest of the forest to remain ecologically productive and undisturbed.
- Walk and sit on durable surfaces (aka rocks) whenever possible.
- Pack out EVERYTHING you bring in.
- Establish concise communication and commands with your partner before leaving the ground to avoid shouting matches.
- Know and obey any regulations or restrictions. They are in place for good reasons, not just to ruin your personal agenda.
- Be respectful and considerate. (I think we were all taught that in kindergarten.)

—Cristina Rose Mastrangelo



One day. Twenty-four hours. One thousand four hundred forty-four minutes. That is how long you will have to push your body to its limit. To test yourself and see what lies at your core. To figure out what you will do when you reach the darkest moments and happiest hours. To punish your body and discover the depth of your soul. Welcome to *24 Hours In Waterbury*, August 28-29th.

The event consists of a 24-hour or 12-hour fun run on an eight-mile loop throughout the Perry Hill Trails in beautiful Waterbury, VT. All proceeds will benefit CRAG-VT. To register, volunteer or learn more, go to www.24hoursofwaterbury.com.

PEBBLE '09

Boulder problems are a lot like puzzles for me; fun to solve once, but not nearly as fun the second time around. When I first started bouldering in 2005 it seemed like the established bouldering at Smugglers' Notch, Bolton, and Groton was nearly infinite. Unfortunately, I discovered that if one climbs only a day or two per week, one can climb through these areas in only a few seasons. This has forced some of us further into the woods, in search of new problems to climb.

Pebble Quest '09 has found me bushwhacking further than Pebble Quest '08 ever did. It is always the same: you spend days hunting down leads, pouring over satellite images and topo maps, trying to guess where you might find new blocs. Then you hike. Winter is the best season for searching – no leaves to block your view, always scanning for the tell-tale floating line of white: the snow capping a boulder. I frequently find boulders, sometimes many and large, but more often than not they are choss, or featureless, or both. Another situation that comes up often is that I find a boulder deep in the woods with some potential, but nothing special. This forces me to make a decision, is it worth carrying all my stuff (perhaps 50-60 pounds or more) here to



Rendering: NYSDOT

CROWN POINT Bridge Update

Contractors have removed the remnants of the old Crown Point Bridge from the depths of Lake Champlain near Addison, VT, and construction on the new bridge—called a Modified Network Tied Arch—has begun. This bridge has historically provided Vermont climbers easy access to the great year-round climbing in the Adirondacks. While the Crown Point Ferry has been taking passengers and vehicles across Lake Champlain, you also can access New York from the three other ferries that run out of Charlotte, Burlington, or Grand Isle. The new bridge is expected to be completed by September of 2011.

—Ross Perry

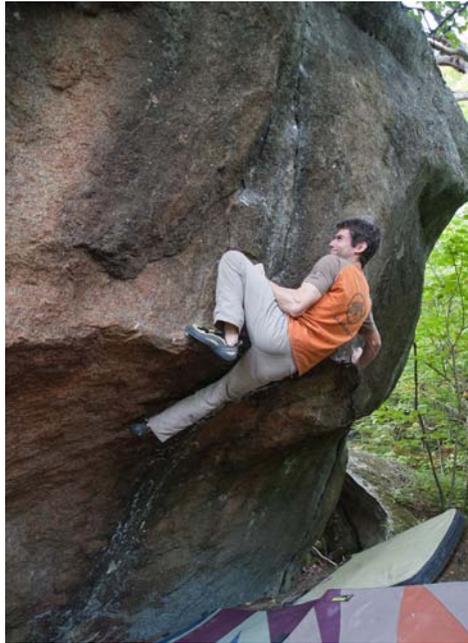


Photo: Caroline Bell

Tyler Sandberg finds a V10 hiding somewhere in the Adirondacks

climb this one mediocre problem? Or should I focus on trying to find something better?

It has always seemed to me that a boulderer should be rewarded for hiking by finding more and better boulders than are found along roads. Unfortunately, it doesn't seem to work this way. Why is it that almost all the best boulders in Vermont are within sight of a road? Climbing here can be a bit of a roller coaster for me. Sometimes I get depressed when it seems like there's nothing left to climb, then I find another boulder and get to climb a few lines. If I'm lucky, a boulder may even last for more than one outing. Then it's back to searching. The cycle continues. So far I've climbed well over 100 new lines. Others have found and established new climbs as well, so for those willing to search, rock can be found. But many of these lines will probably never be repeated due to remoteness. How many people are willing to hike over two miles to climb a mediocre, three-move V10 with nothing else around, not even a warm-up? Not many. Moss will most likely reclaim the majority of my lines, perhaps to be rediscovered for another FA years in the future.

—Tyler Sandberg



Climb Local tees are still available at the Outdoor Gear Exchange. All proceeds benefit CRAG-VT.

4TH ANNUAL Smuggs Ice Bash

The 4th annual Smugglers Notch Ice Bash was a gully full of fun again this winter. A variety of events were held from January 29-31, 2010, and a great time was had by all who attended. The Ice Bash, hosted by Sunrise Adventure Sports, LLC, of Jeffersonville, brought together climbers and vendors from all over New England and beyond.

After a festive Friday night pre-Ice Bash gathering at the Brewski Pub and Grill, Saturday morning brought climbers and vendors together so folks could test out the season's new gear. Demo gear was signed out and climbers headed up to the Notch to participate in the clinics, climb with a Sunrise guide, or just climb on their own.

Following Saturday at the crag, climbers gathered at the Brewski for some social time as well as a slideshow by accomplished hardman Matt McCormick called "Northern Revival," which looked at the next generation of Vermont and New England climbers pushing their limits on ice, rock, and mixed terrain. His multimedia work wowed and inspired anyone who was there to observe! Following Matt's slideshow, a raffle was held that benefited CRAG-VT's ongoing efforts to secure climbing access in northern Vermont. Raffle prizes were generously donated by La Sportiva, Alpinist magazine, Sunrise Adventure Sports, Outdoor Research, Outdoor Gear Exchange, MSR, and Mammut/Climb High.

Aside from the vendors listed above, thanks also goes to Black Diamond, Darn Tough, Julbo, Ortovox, GU, Petzl, Kayland, Sterling Rope, and Rock & Ice magazine. Keep an eye out for next year's Ice Bash in January 2011. See you there!

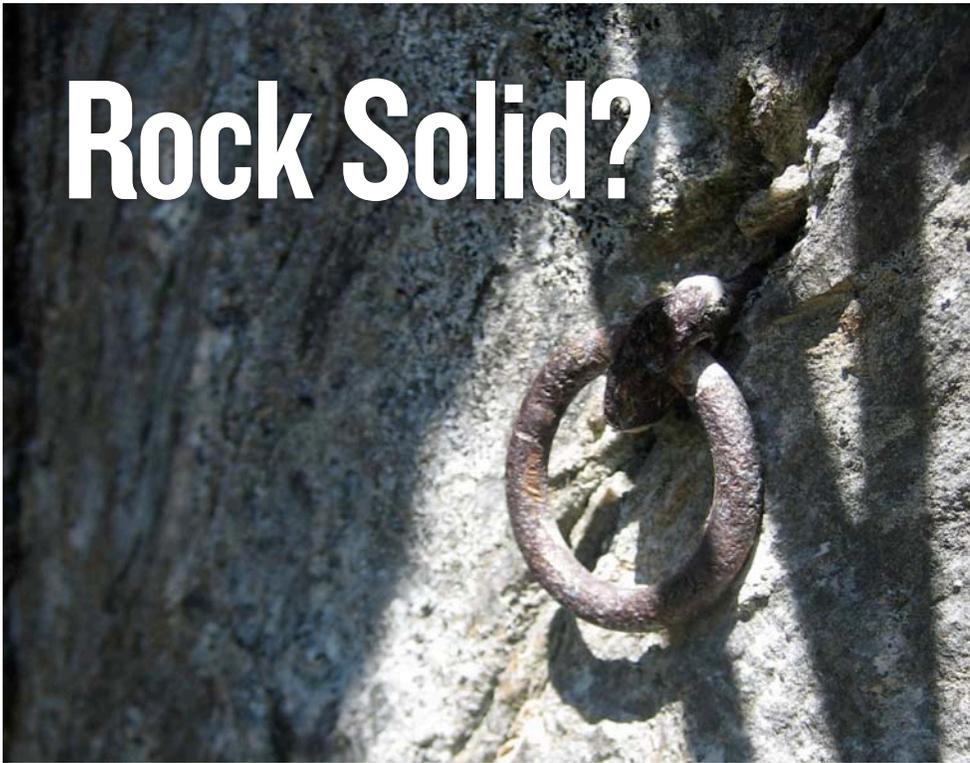
—Ross Perry

Upper West Bolton Management Plan Completed

With the assistance of Ecologist Allaire Diamond of Goldthread Consulting, CRAG-VT has recently completed a new management plan for the Upper West Bolton cliff. The plan lays out strategies for mitigating climber impact on the unique natural features present at Upper West Bolton, and ensures that property will be maintained with the goals of recreation and conservation as top priorities. Look for the plan to be publicly available in the near future.

—Seth Maciejowski

Rock Solid?



An ancient ring piton at Upper West Bolton

Springtime swept into Vermont with so much momentum this year that it's now summer. Everyone has been racing to put away their crampons and hit the rock routes. But before you tie in, climb up, and clip into cliff-side anchors, it is important to keep in mind that it is up to each and every climber to thoroughly inspect their anchors and to only clip in once they are comfortable that the anchor is secure.

While CRAG-VT owns The Quarry and Upper/Lower West Bolton climbing areas, it assumes no responsibility for the condition of intermediate protection (e.g. bolts or pitons along a route) or "in-situ" (existing) anchors. The same is true at numerous other Vermont climbing areas owned by the state, non-profit organizations, or private landowners (e.g. Smugglers' Notch, Eastside Crag, and Wheeler Mountain). So, it's up to you to make the decision. Paul Petzholdt, who founded the famous NOLS outdoor school, claimed that "Rules are for fools." (Not surprising, given that he also climbed the Grand Teton in cowboy boots!) That said, there are some good general precautions to keep in mind before deciding whether to trust your life to a piece of intermediate protection or an in-situ anchor. Here are a few:

- **Webbing/cord** Sunlight, rain, rot, and rock fall are just a few of webbing and cord's many enemies. Check all around the object that the webbing/cord is tied to, making sure the material hasn't been damaged, and make sure the knot connecting it is one you

recognize and that it is fully tightened with adequate tails. Unless you know the original color of the material, it is difficult to tell how much wear it's seen. Look around the knot for indications of the material's original color, but "when in doubt, whip it out"—webbing and cord are cheap and life is not, so always carry some spare that you're ready to leave behind. When putting new webbing/cord on an anchor, do us all a favor and cut off the stiff and crusty stuff that only serves to clutter the anchor and confuse the situation—this is definitely a case where less is better.

- **Rap rings** Rap rings take a variety of forms: aluminum or steel "bull rings," "quick-links," and "leaver-binners" are the most common. Aluminum and steel have vastly different properties. While steel will bend before breaking, aluminum tends to go catastrophically, so it's very hard to tell the condition of an aluminum ring...and if it breaks, it will break big time. Aluminum rings are subject to rope wear and most aren't designed or tested for climbing use. Redundancy adds security—two or more aluminum rings showing no signs of rope wear is a good place to start. Steel rings and quick-links are more resilient, but most of these items aren't designed or tested for climbing use either, and steel rusts. The name "leaver-biner" should explain some of the concerns with left-behind carabiners—would you leave your newest, nicest carabiner at an anchor? Also, since most leaver-binners are of the non-locking variety, you'll need some of

the athletic tape in your first-aid kit to tape that gate shut.

- **Bolts and pitons** Just because there is a bolt or a piton doesn't mean it's good. There are many old "buttonhead" bolts out there—and they've been there a long, rusty time. Even new bolts can become loose through freeze-thaw and other factors—this becomes exponentially more important when trusting pitons. Many of the pitons placed in Vermont rock were placed during ice climbs when the rock and dirt were frozen solid, and once those thaw you can remove many pitons with your fingers. Also, keep in mind that wet climates and cracks create rust, so even a piton appearing firm may just be rusted into place.

- **Natural anchors** Trees are the typical natural anchor at Vermont cliffs. Just because a tree has slings doesn't mean it is at all suitable as a rock-climbing anchor. Those slings may have been placed there in the ice season when frozen water and soil made it a much more viable anchor. Even in areas that are mainly for rock climbing, make your own decision about the health, size, and root strength of the tree. And whatever you do, please don't put your rappel rope around the tree and then pull it—the friction will girdle the tree and eventually kill it.

The tips above aren't an exhaustive list of everything you should look for before committing to intermediate protection or an in-situ anchor—ultimately, it is up to you to become educated about the entire range of things to inspect and correct. However, we hope this list will serve as a friendly reminder of some of the key concerns to keep in mind. So, when you get out your harness this season, be sure to clip some extra cord, a few rap rings, and a knife so that you can always be confident your anchor is bomber. And when you put on that harness, make sure you also put on a critical eye, assessing every intermediate protection and anchor that you trust your life to. Climb confidently and climb often!

– Kel Rossiter

CRAG-VT is an organization for climbers and landowners. We encourage both to contact us with concerns about access problems, landowner liability, and natural resource issues. For more information visit www.cragvt.org.