

Relayer

The Friends of Pinnacles Newsletter

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• FOP Editorial • Establishing new routes

Recent new route development at the Pinnacles has prompted me to write a few thoughts concerning the history of how routes have traditionally been established at Pinnacles National Monument.

With few exceptions, the Pinnacles has been a "ground-up" area, where people have established new routes by starting at the ground and working their way up from there. As long as folks have been climbing at the Pinnacles, boldness and adventure have been the name of the game-and this idea is never taken more seriously than when it comes to creating new routes.

To clarify, ground up doesn't mean you must stand in balance and drill (this is known as drilling "in-stance"). Although many classic lines in the Pinnacles have been put up in-stance, most routes at the Pinnacles have been established by the climbers placing bolts while hanging from sky-hooks. To be sure, ground up techniques does not mean you must sacrifice the quality of the bolts. With very few exceptions, new routes in the Monument sport a minimum of 3/8"x3" bolts, while many have 3/8"x3.5" bolts (and believe me, it doesn't take long to drill that extra 1/2" in Pinnacles rock!).

When bolting with a ground-up style, you start at the bottom and climb up until you reach a point where you need to place a bolt for protection. After placing and hanging from a sky hook, you hand drill a bolt hole and install the bolt. In the best form, this is all done on lead, without prior cleaning or previewing. Throughout the climbing history at Pinnacles, the majority of people who've established new routes at the Monument have used these ground-up techniques. As a show of the dedication to this style, the Monument boasts few routes harder than the traditionally established *Vigilante*, which rings in at the solid grade of 5.12c.

As of late, however, routes are appearing that challenge the traditional ground-up methods used at the Pinnacles. Routes of varying grades are going in where the climbers use extensive scrubbing and rap-bolting techniques to create the climbs. Although many sport-climbing areas have been developed using these top-down techniques, most active climbers at the Pinnacles want to keep the area as traditional as possible. The majority of folks who've put up routes during the last 10 years have worked hard to keep the adventure alive for those who put up routes in the Pinnacles-there's even an area where all the routes have been established in-stance.

If you're wondering why I care so much about first-ascent methodology, consider this: Walking to the base of a new route and climbing it from the ground up is the very best that climbing has to offer. The adventure and commitment of a ground-up first ascent is

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• Words from the Prez • A year it's been

Hello All! As we move into the prime Pinnacles climbing season, it seemed like a good idea to touch base with our membership and get everybody up to date with what has been happening at the Pinn's.

Our top priority for 1995 was to work closely with Monument staff to develop a climbing management plan. The climbing plan (which is just a portion of the General Management Plan) will define how climbing will be managed for present and future visitors to the Pinnacles. The FOP board, in conjunction with Monument personnel, hosted four open forums at several Bay Area climbing gyms (Planet Granite, Class 5, Pacific Edge, and City Rock). The main goal of these sessions was to obtain input from climbers on their issues and concerns. Thanks to all those who attended the meetings and a special thanks to Chief Ranger Bill Lester, Climbing Ranger Andy Artz, and Raptor Monitor Wendy Blailock for their extended effort to gather input from the climbing community.

In other news, 1995 saw the adoption of a specific use policy for the Tourist Trap area in response to major erosion problems. The Monument staff reports that compliance to the guidelines has been very good (no more than 6 people at the base of Tourist Trap at any one time). We've also had news that compliance with the raptor-nesting closures has been very good.

In 1996, we plan to continue to work with the park service to finalize the climbing management plan (see "Park Update" for more info). We also hope that a few energetic souls will continue their work of replacing old anchors with new 3/8" bolts (read more about this in "FOP in Action").

For the fall, we're planning another FOP get-together. The last get-together at Pacific Edge was a real success; we all got to schmooze with each other, climb a bit, and even win a prize or two. Our fundraiser raised enough money to help us cover newsletter and climbing brochure costs, and to help fund the materials used in our rebolting efforts. So we're lookin' forward to doing it all again. Who knows, we may even help us cover the costs of our next newsletter.

PLEASE JOIN US! If you'd like to get involved in any FOP activities, we're looking for a few folks who want share some of their enthusiasm by serving on our board. More importantly, if you haven't yet joined the Friends of Pinnacles, now's the time! And it's free-all you have to do is send your name and address to our Santa Cruz headquarters. Also, if you've changed your address, or have a new "edress," send that in to us as well!

In closing, I want to say "Thanks" to everyone for being responsible users of the fragile resource we know as the Pinnacles. Your efforts make it possible for everyone to enjoy some of the best knob climbing to be found anywhere on the planet! See you on the rocks!

• Bruce Hildenbrand

(Editorial, continued from page 1)

second-to-none. Because of this, the unclimbed lines at the Pinnacles hold latent adventure for those willing to grab the adventure. That adventure is there only if you are willing to take the challenge head-on. Indeed, when you climb from the ground up, you take the risk that you might not get to the top. However, that bit of risk only makes the reward of getting to the top that much richer.

In addition to ground-up styles, I also firmly believe that when you establish a new route, you should make every effort to keep scrubbing and rock breakage to a minimum. As more people climb a given route, lichen and loose rock get scrubbed from the necessary places. Another benefit to this methodology is that unscrubbed routes give other parties the feeling of climbing a new line, much like what was encountered on your first ascent.

In contrast, when you scrub and rap-bolt, you risk nothing in your adventures. Instead, you steal the possibility for adventure from those who are willing to make a commitment to their skills. In essence, rap-bolting throws away the possibility of a first-ascent adventure.

When contemplating a first ascent, I know it's easy to think that starting from the ground requires too much work or that "cutting edge" routes must be rap bolted if they are to exist. However, many rap-placed bolts in the Monument have good hook placements next to them. Please be responsible and remember that establishing new routes means much more than just slamming bolts into rock.

• Kelly Rich

• FOP in Action • Rebolting Efforts

Keeping busy, some members of the Friends of Pinnacles have been replacing the old, untrustworthy bolts on many of the older Pinnacles classics. All the rebolting is done by hand, and employs Rawl 3" x 3/8" five-piece bolts. **Hats Off!** to Bruce Hildenbrand, Brooks White, Brian Sassone, Seizo Sakurai, and Hiroshi Watanabe for increasing the safety factor on these routes. Here's a list of recently completed work:

Bolts have been replaced on: Ordeal, Entrance, Swallow Crack, Portent, Monolith-Regular Route, Monolith-Piton Traverse, First Sister, Dragonfly Dome, SideHorse, Egg Shell, Freedom Dome, Chockstone Dome, Toog's Formation, and Fly-Bye (belay bolts).

Chains have been added to the rappels for: Stupendous Man, Monolith-Direct Route, Monolith-Regular Route (nice way to get off a crowded summit), Dragonfly Dome, SideHorse, Egg Shell, Freedom Dome, Chockstone Dome, and Toog's Formation.

When it comes to rebolting anchors, we can always use a hand. However, please make sure you know all the issues with bolt replacement before you begin to randomly replace bolts. If you are interested in this type of activity, please contact FOP. We'd be happy to tell you the methods involved with upgrading old bolts. We even have a list of "hot" areas that we feel need the most attention. And be assured, we're not interested in policing anybody-we just want to ensure that route maintenance gets done in the most environmentally sound manner.

Friends of Pinnacles
208 Woods Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95062
(408) 458-9151

Pinnacles National Park
Paicines, CA 95043
(408) 389-4485 (Voice)
(408) 389-4489 (FAX)



• What's New(s) • Raptor closures

Raptor closures (in effect since 1-15-96) will stay in effect until the young have fledged in early- to mid-July. These protective measures increase the potential for the reproductive success and sustained presence of these magnificent falcons and eagles in the Monument.

See the enclosed listing of the specific areas affected by the closures. Additional information on the closures has also been posted at the trails heads of both the East and West sides of the Monument.

• Telegram for Mongo • Letters to Relayer

Well, we really haven't had any letters this time around. Next time, however, we hope to get at least a post card (and not just one from Chip, who's vacationing on Maui).

• Park Update • The General Management Plan

As many of you know, the Monument Staff has been developing a climbing management plan for Pinnacles. The Plan deals with the style, location, and number of routes that can be created. Working with FOP members, the Monument staff is trying to meet the needs of all types of climbers and styles. The policy they determine will serve the climbing community for the next decade.

As we go to press, we're still waiting for news on the Pinnacles General Management Plan, of which, the climbing management plan is a part. If all goes well, we'll have a review copy in hand within the next couple of months. Many thanks to Chief Ranger Bill Lester who has gone out of his way to hear the needs and desires of all of us involved in the climbing community.

On a sad note, Bill Lester has recently taken ill and will soon be leaving the post of Chief Ranger at Pinnacles. No one has worked harder for the Monument and for the climbing community than Bill. All of us at FOP will miss Bill, and we wish him the very best for a quick recovery.

• Final Notes • New Routes

Although the new climber's guide is just out, there's always someone out there trying to outdate the guidebook. Of interest is *The Bazaar*, located down the trail and across from *The Unmentionable*. This line went up clean (no hammer), and uses a #6 Friend in a hueco to protect the opening tier. Above, the climb finishes with a 5.9+ finger crack, protected with SLCDs and nuts. Also in the area is *Fallout*, a moderate boulder problem located just right of *Mushroom Cloud*. Classic Pinnacles climbing can be found on the left side of the Heffalump face, where you can unearth 8 new bolts leading to the top of a striking .10+ line. And keeping up with the times, new additions on the prow of on the Monolith show two sets of new bolts: *Yo Mama* (.12+) and the controversial *Übermanch*, which reports of redpoint put it at the most difficult line in the Monument.

Relayer Staff:

Editor: Kelly Rich
Contributing Editor: David Rubine
Contributing Writer/FOP President: Bruce Hildenbrand
Design & Production: Brooks White