

A black and white photograph of a person climbing a rock face. The climber is positioned in the center of the frame, facing left. They are wearing a light-colored long-sleeved shirt, shorts, and a cap. Their right arm is extended upwards, reaching for a crack in the rock. The rock surface is textured and shows various cracks and shadows. The overall scene is a vertical composition.

I M P O R T A N T

CLIMBER INFORMATION

JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL MONUMENT

This brochure was written, published
and paid for by climbers.

W E L C O M E T O J O S H

Within the park's 560,000 acres are over 3500 established rock climbs of all difficulties. Nearly one million people visit Joshua Tree each year, a large percentage of which are climbers. While no formal survey has been done, one is in the planning stages now, it is widely acknowledged that the Monument is one of the most popular climbing areas in the world. With this large number of visitors come park management issues that require everyone's cooperation to solve.

Briefly, the National Park Service mission is to protect the park resources for future generations, while providing opportunities to enjoy these resources at present. This task is obviously a difficult one, given dramatic increases in visitation and lack of funding. Joshua Tree is no different from any other NPS site in this regard, although the Access Fund has pledged funds for climber related improvements. Park managers are concerned about the impacts of visitors and climbers in the areas of trash, soil erosion and compaction, vegetation damage, human waste disposal, cultural resources (Native American rock art and other archeological sites) and overcrowding. The rest of this brochure is devoted to what you, as a climber, can do to limit your impact on Joshua Tree and preserve it for future generations.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Protection of cultural resources is a serious issue facing climbers at Joshua Tree and other parks with significant remains of historic and prehistoric Native American cultures. By law, all archeological sites and remains may not be removed or disturbed in any way. This includes rock art (pictographs and petroglyphs), habitation sites (rock shelters and camp sites), and cultural remains (pottery vessels and sherds, projectile points, stone tools, beads, etc.). While taking a single piece of broken pottery (a sherd) may not seem wrong, it could provide the clue a trained archeologist needs to accurately interpret the activities of Native Americans in this area. At Joshua Tree, climbing within 50 feet of Native

American rock art is prohibited. Pictographs (paintings) and petroglyphs (carvings) are easily damaged, and should not be touched. Skin oils, chalk and boot rubber hasten deterioration of the artwork.

Other areas of the park are closed to climbing to protect sensitive historical sites, private inholdings, and/or potentially dangerous areas. The entire section around Key's Ranch is closed to entry except when accompanied by a ranger. Numerous mining sites can be found throughout the Monument, and should not be entered. Mine shafts are extremely unstable, and are often filled with harmful gases. Please respect the signs and fences in these areas.

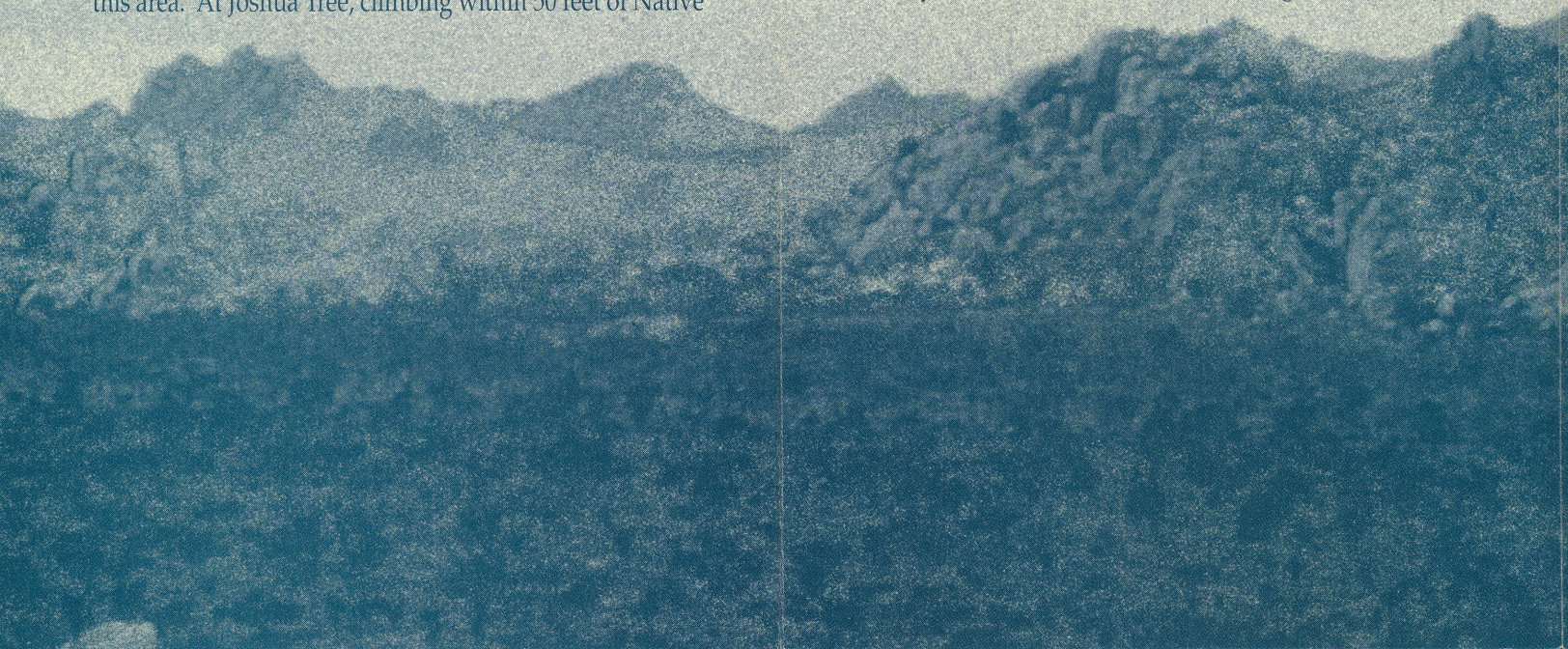
NATURAL RESOURCES

In order to protect sensitive wildlife habitat, the entire Wonderland of Rocks is closed to overnight use. This allows the Desert Bighorn Sheep and other animals to visit waterholes undisturbed. Pets are banned from the backcountry (defined as more than 100 yards from the road) in part to protect wildlife. The scent of a dog near a waterhole could be enough to keep animals away from needed water for days. The Monument is also home to five endangered or threatened plants, four of which grow in the western areas of the park. Three of these rare plant species grow only at the base of rock formations.

Joshua Tree is home to numerous types of birds, including several birds of prey. In the past, specific routes have been closed during nesting season to protect these rare birds. Please abide by these occasional closures, and if birds are encountered while climbing, do not disturb them.

HUMAN WASTE

This is an issue that is clearly on some climbers' minds - one need only to look at the route names in the guidebook! In areas



H U A T R E E

where outhouses aren't available, choose a spot at least 50 yards from any water source, and well away from trails and the base of climbs. Dig a shallow "cat hole" about 6 inches deep, then bury the waste afterwards. Pack out the toilet paper in a "Zip-lock" type bag, and dispose of it properly. Coyotes may dig up the waste later, and if the toilet paper is left, this will be blown around by the wind creating an unhealthy and unsightly situation.

WAYS TO PRESERVE CLIMBERS' FREEDOM

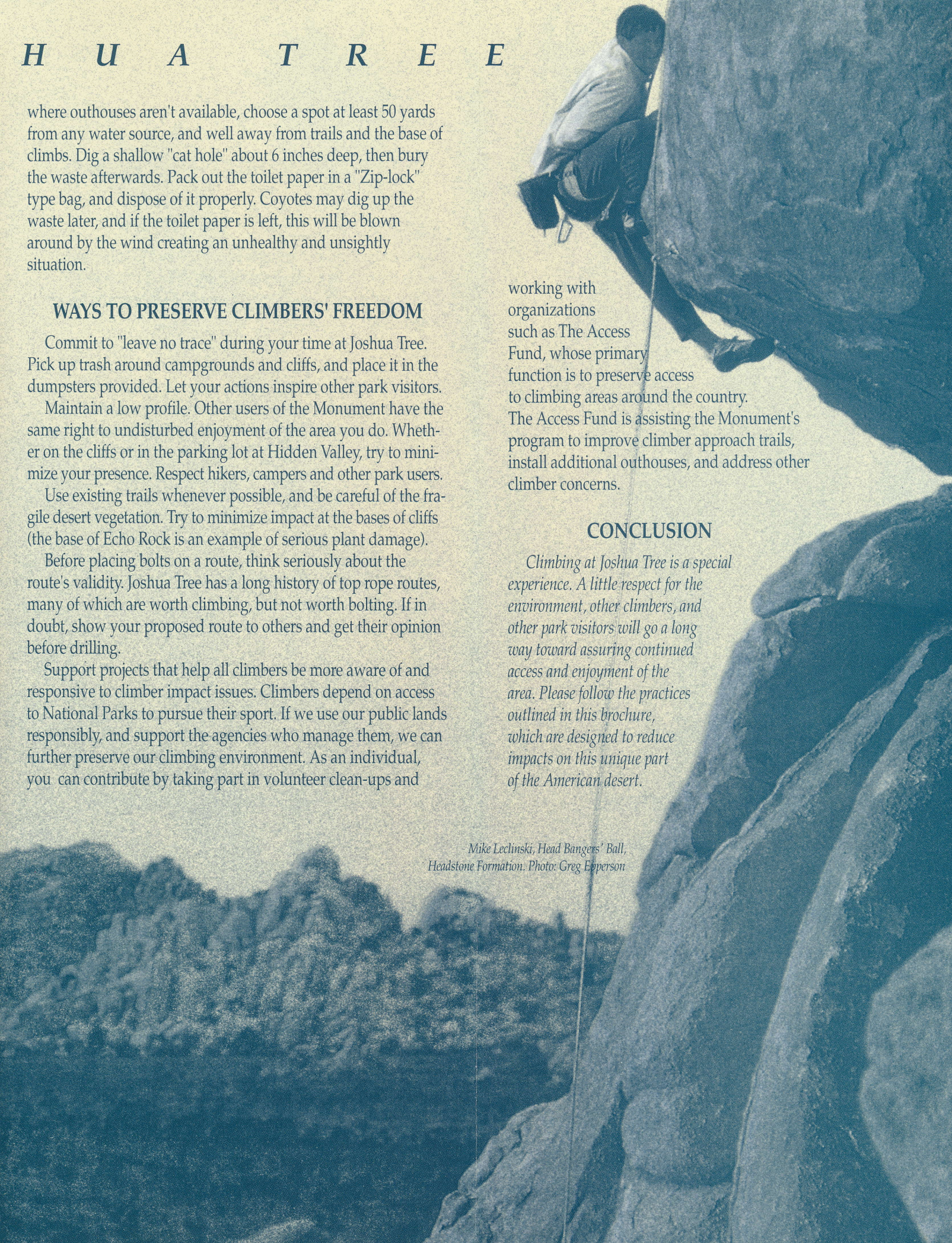
Commit to "leave no trace" during your time at Joshua Tree. Pick up trash around campgrounds and cliffs, and place it in the dumpsters provided. Let your actions inspire other park visitors.

Maintain a low profile. Other users of the Monument have the same right to undisturbed enjoyment of the area you do. Whether on the cliffs or in the parking lot at Hidden Valley, try to minimize your presence. Respect hikers, campers and other park users.

Use existing trails whenever possible, and be careful of the fragile desert vegetation. Try to minimize impact at the bases of cliffs (the base of Echo Rock is an example of serious plant damage).

Before placing bolts on a route, think seriously about the route's validity. Joshua Tree has a long history of top rope routes, many of which are worth climbing, but not worth bolting. If in doubt, show your proposed route to others and get their opinion before drilling.

Support projects that help all climbers be more aware of and responsive to climber impact issues. Climbers depend on access to National Parks to pursue their sport. If we use our public lands responsibly, and support the agencies who manage them, we can further preserve our climbing environment. As an individual, you can contribute by taking part in volunteer clean-ups and



working with organizations such as The Access Fund, whose primary function is to preserve access to climbing areas around the country. The Access Fund is assisting the Monument's program to improve climber approach trails, install additional outhouses, and address other climber concerns.

CONCLUSION

Climbing at Joshua Tree is a special experience. A little respect for the environment, other climbers, and other park visitors will go a long way toward assuring continued access and enjoyment of the area. Please follow the practices outlined in this brochure, which are designed to reduce impacts on this unique part of the American desert.

*Mike Leclinski, Head Bangers' Ball,
Headstone Formation. Photo: Greg Epperson*



HELPFUL INFORMATION FOR CLIMBERS

Climbing Season

The Joshua Tree season starts in early to mid October and extends through late April or early May. The best months for climbing are usually late October to early December and March through April.

Food and Water

There is no food or water available in the Monument. Stock up before entering the Monument or have a car at your disposal for this purpose. The towns of Joshua Tree, Yucca Valley and 29 Palms have well-stocked supermarkets, many reasonably priced restaurants and "fast-food" establishments.

Showers

Showers can be purchased by climbers at several local motels as well as other establishments.

Camping

Out of the many campgrounds in the Monument, climbers usually stay in Hidden Valley, Ryan, Jumbo Rocks, Belle, or Indian Cove. However, due to its remote location, Indian Cove is only a practical alternative for climbers intending to climb exclusively in Indian Cove or Rattlesnake Canyon. There is a 14 day camping limit per year within the Monument from October 1 to June 1.

Campfires

If you want to have a campfire, you must bring wood with you (it can also be purchased in town). NO natural vegetation may be gathered for fires or any other purpose.

CLIMBING REGULATIONS

- Motorized drilling is prohibited throughout the park.
- Climbers may not begin or end a climb in an occupied campsite without the occupant's permission.
- Climbing within 50 feet of Native American rock art is not allowed.
- Retreat/rappel slings and bolt hangers should not be visible to the general public. (The use of chains and natural colored webbing will help camouflage rappel stations. Bolt hangers should match the rock color.)
- Bicycles are considered vehicles, and can only be used on roads legally open to motorized traffic.
- Pets must be on a leash at all times, and are not allowed more than 100 yards from the road.
- Park cars only in designated parking areas, never off the roadway on native plants.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

(714) 383-5652

(24 Hrs. - call collect in a life-threatening emergency)

If unable to contact emergency personnel, call 911.

Park Headquarters: (619) 367-7511

(8 am - 4:30 pm, 7 days)

FOR MORE INFORMATION

The Access Fund
P.O. Box 67A25
Los Angeles, CA 90067



Joshua Tree National Monument
74485 National Monument Dr.
Twentynine Palms, CA 92277



CREDITS

This Brochure funded by The Access Fund, and grants from Sport Chalet and Adventure 16.

Text by Todd Swain and Gary Garrett, The National Park Service, Joshua Tree National Monument.

Brochure design courtesy of Patagonia, Inc.
Printed on recycled paper.

*Linh Nguyen on Effigy Too.
Photo: Kevin Powell*