



# An Overview of Climbing in Northeast Ohio

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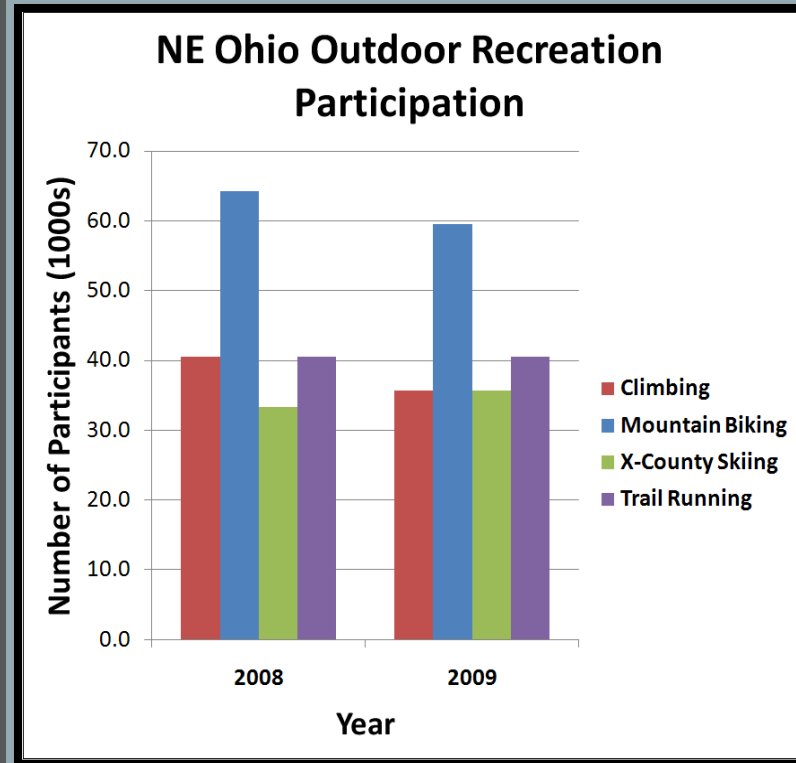
NEOCC Founder and President  
Access Fund Regional Coordinator

## Abraham Nabors

**Northeast Ohio Climbers Coalition:** Our mission is to ensure public access to rock climbing areas by working with the climbing community, authorities, landowners and property managers while encouraging environmental conservation and responsible climbing.

## Need for Change

- The 2008 and 2009 climbing participation rates translate to over 35,000 participants in Northeast Ohio's 5 largest counties.
  - Cuyahoga, Summit, Lorain, Lake and Medina
- 58% of Ohio college students plan to leave the state within the first few years of finishing school.
  - Finding a place that is “active, exciting and fun” was the highest priority after job opportunities.
  - Climbing is part of the Outdoor Recreation Economy which generates \$730 billion and 6.5 million jobs.
- Cuyahoga Valley National Park, Cleveland Metroparks, Metro Parks Serving Summit County and Lake Metroparks have a combined size of more than 72,000 acres, but only 1 outdoor climbing area.
  - Metro Parks Serving Summit County would be the only outdoor climbing destination in Summit County
  - Families and individuals would enjoy this free recreational opportunity.



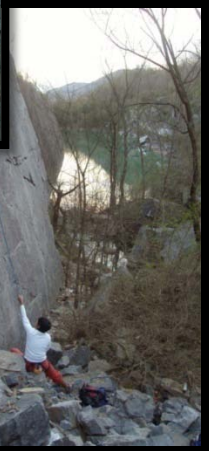
# Environmental Impact

- While all outdoor recreation has some environmental impact, climbers are very conscious of such effects and are eager to mitigate them.
  - Willing to help with layout, building and associated costs of access trails
  - Every year climbers hold over one hundred stewardship events across the U.S.
- Climbers and land managers implement creative ideas to reduce impact
  - Areas such as the New River Gorge (WV) and Red River Gorge (KY) use seasonal closures and trail routing to protect raptors and sensitive flora.
  - Fixed anchors and bolts prevent the use of trees and the need for cliff top access. These can be camouflaged to lessen visual impact.
- Legitimate use of these areas will discourage vandalism and other illegal activities.



# Liability

- Ohio's Recreational Use Statute provides immunity to public and private landowners who permit recreational users to enter and use their land. (Ohio Revised Code 1533.181)
  - A recreational user is “a person to whom permission has been granted, without the payment of a fee...to enter upon premises to hunt, fish, trap, camp, hike, or swim, or to operate a snowmobile, all-purpose vehicle, or four-wheel drive motor vehicle, or to engage in other recreational pursuits (ORC 1533.18).
- Ohio's Supreme Court and lower courts have upheld this immunity since 1963.
  - McCord v. Div. of Parks & Recreation (1978), Moss v. Dept. of Natural Resources (1980), Marrek v. Cleveland Metroparks Bd. Of Com'rs (1984), Johnson v. Village of New London (1988), Adams v. Willoughby (1994), Gullett v. Willard Reservoir (2003), Theaker v. Portage Lakes State Park (2006), Touvell v. Ohio Dept. of Natural Resources (2009), Tepker v. Hueston Woods State Park (2010), Johnson v. Catawba State Park (2010)
- By excluding climbing as a permitted recreational use, Metro Parks Serving Summit County is NOT protected from liability to climbers under Ohio's Recreational Use Statute.



## References

- “Outdoor Participation Report”, Outdoor Industry Foundation, 2009 and 2010
- “The Active Outdoor Recreation Economy”, Outdoor Industry Foundation, Fall 2006
- “Losing Ohio’s Future”, FDR Group, June 2009

