

**ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK:
THE CLIMBER'S GUIDE**

High Peaks

Bernard Gillett

**Earthbound Sports, Inc.
Chapel Hill, NC**

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Front : The beautiful, yet seldom visited Palisades on Longs Peak. Photo: Bernard Gillett

Back (left): Climbers on *Yellow Wall* (the Diamond) with Chasm View Wall in the background. Photo: John Gillett

Back(right): Bernard Gillett on the first ascent of *Olympic Games*. Photo: John Gillett

For my wife Sally, and our children Katie, Claire, and Mary

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This work is built on the efforts of earlier writers; it was through their guides that I came to know and love the climbs of the High Peaks. Thanks to Paul and Norman Nesbit, Walter Fricke, Richard DuMais, Chip Salaun and Scott Kimball. Information for a handful of other routes was borrowed from authors Cameron Burns, Peter Hubble, Jack Roberts, and Richard Rossiter.

A special thanks goes out to Ray Northcutt, Steve Komito, Mike Donahue, Billy Westbay, Douglas Snively, Harry Kent, Mike Caldwell, and Roger Briggs. My original intention was to include a short biography for each of these people as a tribute to both their influence on the Estes Park climbing scene, and their influence on my own climbing career. However, by the end of this project, the book had grown so large that much of what I had written needed to be excised. Information from the interviews I conducted with each climber still appears in the history section (found in *Estes Valley Park* volume), and I am grateful to them for sharing their old photographs and stories.

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ACCESS: It's every climber's concern

The Access Fund, a national, non-profit climbers organization, works to keep climbing areas open and to conserve the climbing environment. Need help with closures? land acquisition? legal or land management issues? funding for trails and other projects? starting a local climbers' group? CALL US!

Climbers can help preserve access by being committed to Leave No Trace (minimum-impact) practices. Here are some simple guidelines:

- **ASPIRE TO "LEAVE NO TRACE"** especially in environmentally sensitive areas like caves. Chalk can be a significant impact on dark and porous rock—don't use it around historic rock art. Pick up litter, and leave trees and plants intact.
- **DISPOSE OF HUMAN WASTE PROPERLY** Use toilets whenever possible. If toilets are not available, dig a "cat hole" at least six inches deep and 200 feet from any water, trails, campsites, or the base of climbs. *Always pack out toilet paper.* On big wall routes, use a "poop tube" and carry waste up and off with you (the old "bag toss" is now illegal in many areas).
- **USE EXISTING TRAILS** Cutting switchbacks causes erosion. When walking off-trail, tread lightly, especially in the desert where cryptogamic soils (usually a dark crust) take thousands of years to form and are easily damaged. Be aware that "rim ecologies" (the clifftop) are often highly sensitive to disturbance.
- **BE DISCRETE WITH FIXED ANCHORS** *Bolts are controversial and are not a convenience—don't place them unless they are really necessary.* Camouflage all anchors. Remove unsightly slings from rappel stations (better to use steel chain or welded cold shuts). Bolts sometimes can be used proactively to protect fragile resources—consult with your local land manager.
- **RESPECT THE RULES** and speak up when other climbers don't. Expect restrictions in designated wilderness areas, rock art sites, caves, and to protect wildlife, especially nesting birds of prey. *Power drills are illegal in Wilderness and all national parks.*
- **PARK AND CAMP IN DESIGNATED AREAS** Some climbing areas require a permit for overnight camping.
- **MAINTAIN A LOW PROFILE** Leave the boom box and day-glo clothing at home—the less climbers are heard and seen, the better.
- **RESPECT PRIVATE PROPERTY** Be courteous to land owners. Don't climb where you're not wanted.
- **JOIN THE ACCESS FUND** To become a member, make a tax-deductible donation of \$25.



The Access Fund

*Keeping climbing areas open and
conserving the climbing environment*

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