



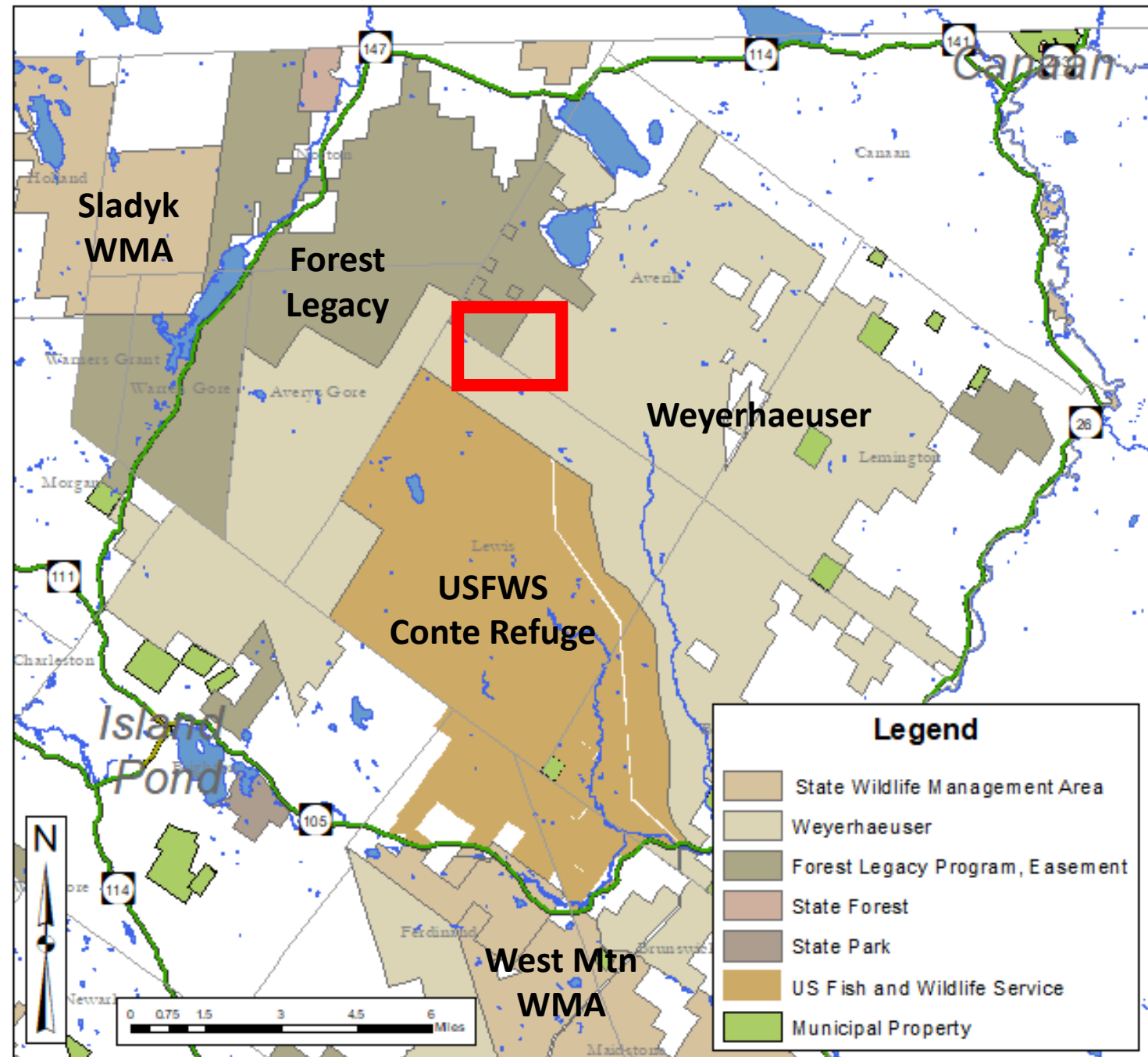
# KHL Climbing Access Management Proposal

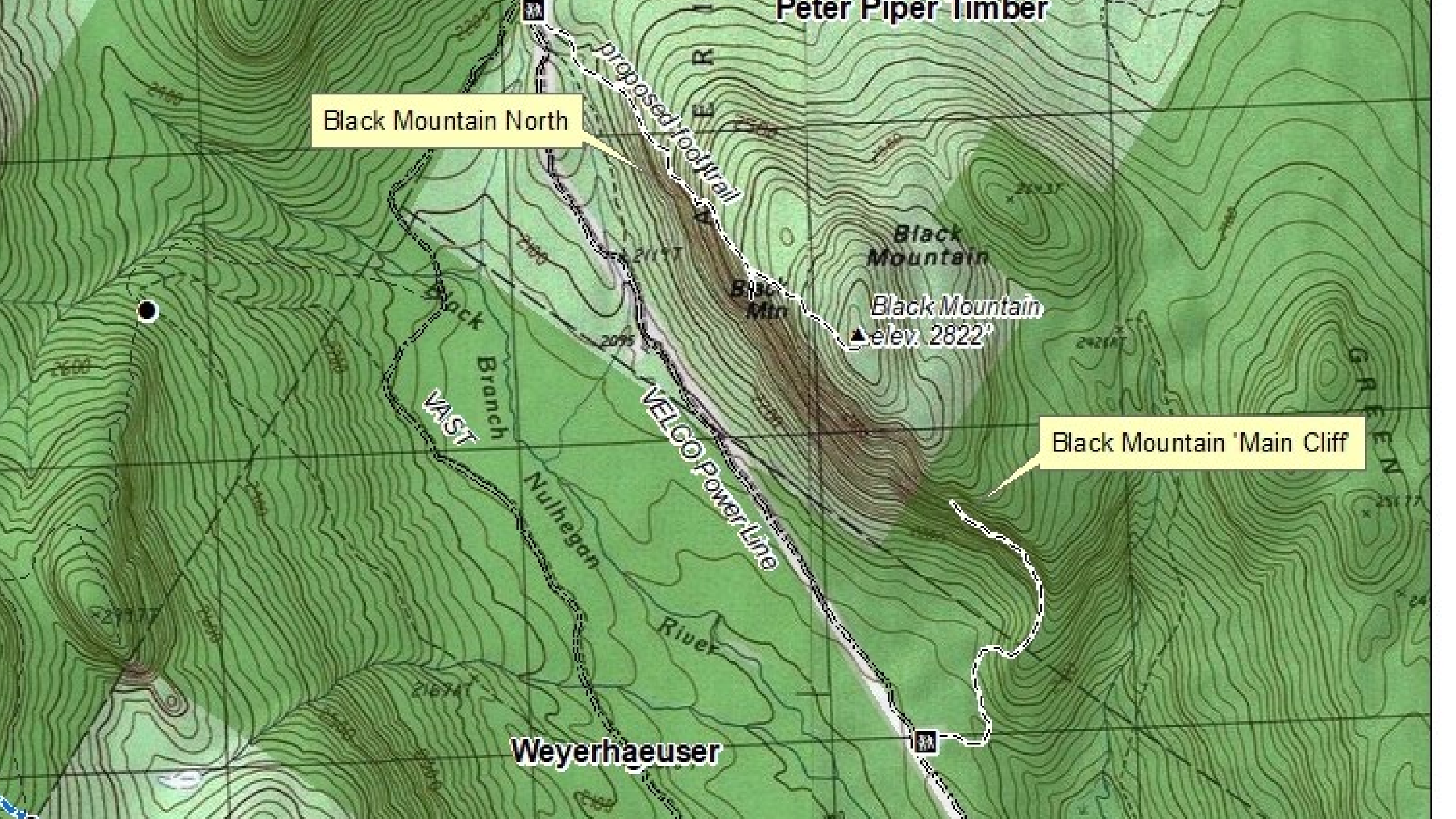


# Northern Essex County Conservation Lands

## Primary Goals of Kingdom Heritage Lands

- Working Forests
- Ecological Protection
- Public Access





Black Mountain North

Peter Piper Limber

Black Mountain  
Black Mountain  
▲ elev. 2822'

Black Mountain "Main Cliff"

Weyerhaeuser

VA-57

VELCO Power Line

Black Branch

Nulhegan River

# *Long Term Access Plan for Private Timberlands*

governed by

## Champion International Working Forest Lands Grant of Public Access Easement

Held by Agency of Natural Resources  
and the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board

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Champion International = Kingdom Heritage Lands

Working Forest Lands = Weyerhaeuser property in Vermont

CRAG-VT = Climbing Resource Access Group of Vermont



## The purposes of the Easement are:

- 1) To **provide perpetual public, recreational access** to the Property for traditional purposes, including fishing, hunting (including training and using hunting dogs), trapping, equestrian, birdwatching, hiking, bicycling, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and **other recreational uses which may not be traditional but are compatible** with the foregoing uses and with the other Purposes of the Easement.
  
- 7) To accomplish the above objectives in a manner **consistent with the purposes and limitations** of certain development rights and conservations restrictions (hereafter “Conservation Easement”) conveyed by The Conservation Fund to the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board and the Vermont Land Trust, Inc .

## Requirements of the Corridor Manager:

- 1) Written notification that corridor manager is assuming responsibility for maintenance and management of a recreational use (Rec Corridor).
  - 2) Evidence of adequate insurance coverage to indemnify and holding Owner harmless from any claims.
  - 3) ANR must determine that the Corridor Manager is qualified and has the capacity to manage the resource.
  - 4) Provide contact information for a representative of the organization that can address issues.
- ... and have a plan to manage the public use.



# CRAG Vermont

A non-profit 501(c)3 organization, founded in 2003. Our mission is to support Vermont's climbing community by securing, protecting & conserving access to cliffs and other climbing resources.

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## Secure Climbing Access to Vermont Cliffs

- We build long-term relationships with landowners to maintain access to cliffs located on private property
- We work with the VT Agency of Natural Resources as a recreation partner, meeting annually and as-needed to manage climbing activities on state lands under the terms of a statewide MOU.
- We have worked with the VT Agency of Natural Resources and Parks and Rec. to develop the state's climbing management plan.

## Steward Vermont Climbing

- We organize trail maintenance and volunteer clean-ups
- We collaborate with the Vermont Nongame and Natural Heritage Program to protect the threatened and endangered species that live in cliff ecosystems
- We inform climbers, land managers and the public of access, environmental and historical climbing information

## Build Community

- By hosting events, including member meet-ups, stewardship days, speaker series, film showings, and the Vermont Climbing Festival





# Black Mountain

Black Mountain was discovered by climbers in 2014 and has steadily increased in popularity since. The pure granite cracks presented by the unique geology found at Black Mountain offer climbing opportunities unlike anywhere else in Vermont.

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## A Unique Resource

- Since its discovery, information about the climbing routes at Black Mountain has spread via word-of-mouth. Even with little information, the area climbing activity has grown steadily with over 70 climbing routes being established.

## A Need for Management

- Each subsequent year sees more visitors from Vermont, as well as other parts of New England and Quebec.
- Trails from the road to the cliff have developed in an ad hoc fashion and have not been formally constructed, signed, or maintained. As traffic has increased at the cliff, erosion control and mitigation on this trail network are becoming increasingly necessary.
- Existing parking utilizes an old log landing that was not originally intended as a long-term parking solution.

## A Plan

- A formal Corridor Manager designation and adoption of the Climbing Management Plan will allow CRAG-VT to guide climbers in responsible recreation, reduce user conflicts, and ensure minimal ecological impact.







# Climbing Management

The purpose of the Climbing Management Proposal (CMP) is to identify and preserve existing climbing access and address potential environmental and use conflicts on the Kingdom Heritage Lands.

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## Proactive Management

- This Climbing Management Proposal (CMP) provides a formal mechanism for climbing recreation management on these lands, consistent with applicable easements and landowner interests.

## Partnership

- CRAG-VT, ANR, and the private timberland owners have recognized the need to manage the existing climbing areas at Black Mountain, and this formal plan has been developed at the request of the landowners.
- Management considerations include user education, vehicular access and parking, trail access, cliff site management, potential environmental or ecological impacts, rare, threatened, and endangered (RTE) species, use conflicts, and forest management activities, among others.

## A Shared Resource

- Consistent with the Long-Term Access Plan, CRAG-VT understands and recognizes the use of these corridors for multiple activities, including hiking, driving on access roads, parking, and camping by hikers, hunters, equestrians, and wildlife enthusiasts.



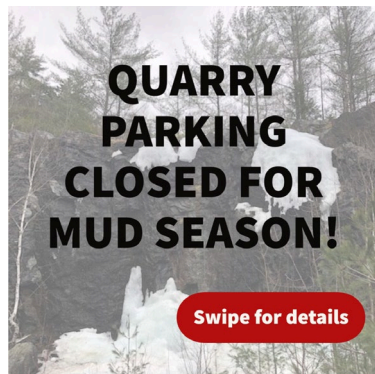
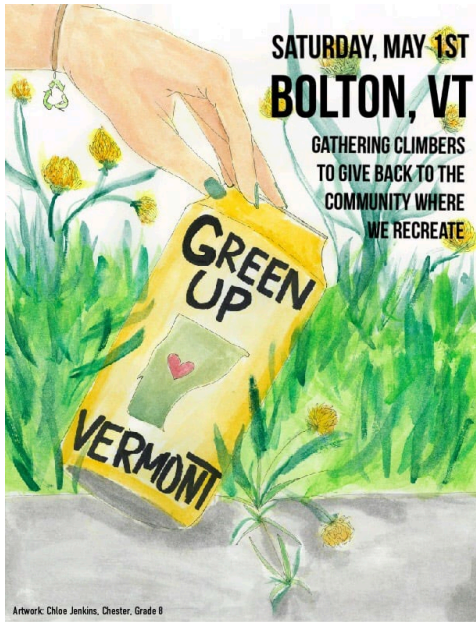


# Goals

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1. Proactively manage climbing activities while protecting the natural and cultural resources of Kingdom Heritage Lands.
2. Clearly define a set of management objectives for climbing within Kingdom Heritage Lands that will allow for climbing and related activities.
3. Establish management guidelines and best practices that land managers can use in decision making and to educate climbers visiting Kingdom Heritage Lands.
4. Enable productive and efficient working relationships with land managers, landowners, and the climbing community to address any potential issues and manage the area in a cooperative manner.





# Communication and Outreach

- CRAG-VT has strong communication channels to educate and manage the climbing community.
- CRAG-VT issues regular email newsletters and updates to nearly 1,000 subscribers.
- CRAG-VT is active on social media with over 1,400 Facebook and 3,000 Instagram followers.
- CRAG-VT hosts regular climbing-related events to connect with our community.



# Important Factors

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- Access/Gate/Mud Season
- Risk Management
- Overnight Use
- Monitoring
- Natural Resources Concerns
- Closures
- Hunting Season
- Active Forestry

## Proposed Actions

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- Address erosion concerns on approach trail and staging areas
- Install a kiosk with responsible recreation information
- Install signage to keep users on designated trails
- Improve parking
- Monitor overnight use







# Next steps:

- 30-day comment period
- Draft responsiveness summary
- Update CRAG-VT proposal based on public and partner feedback
- Amend LTAP relative to CRAG-VT
- Prepare Corridor Manager Agreement
- Present to ANR leadership, VHCB, and Weyerhaeuser for approval
- Prioritize and implement actions following on-site review and approval





# Comments

By email:

[anr.fprdistrict5@vermont.gov](mailto:anr.fprdistrict5@vermont.gov)

By mail:

Vermont Department of Forests  
Parks and Recreation  
374 Emerson Falls Road, Suite 4  
St. Johnsbury, VT 05819

Deadline is June 6





**Questions?**