ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project was made possible by the efforts of Jeremy Park, from the WCC Board of Directors, and Ashley Siple, WCC Board President. Assistance in survey distribution was provided by Kristina Ciari, Membership and Marketing Director at The Mountaineers. Heather DuBrall generously provided images for both the online survey and this report.

SUGGESTED CITATION


WCC CONTACT

For questions regarding climbing advocacy and stewardship in Washington:

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The WCC is an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) nonprofit made up of climbers who believe that we must work together and cooperatively with land managers and other groups with an interest in the places where we climb. Without such cooperation, we risk losing access to places we cherish. We take care of where we climb and strive to keep climbing areas open.

Our mission is to make Washington a better place to climb through advocacy, stewardship, and education.

Our Message

Washington possesses a remarkably diverse array of climbing areas, with every type of rock, landscape, and climate imaginable and a full range of difficulties and disciplines.

It can be tempting to take this incredible gift for granted, however, every time we climb we are visitors on the land. Even if it is public land, we do not control it. The climbing community needs to work together to make sure that our climbing areas remain open and free, both for our own enjoyment and that of future generations. The WCC keeps Washington climbing vibrant by working with land managers and property owners on climbing access issues, educating climbers about legal, environmental and resource concerns, and promoting climber stewardship of our cliffs and boulders.

You can get involved in several ways:

- Be a good steward of the climbing environment
- Join us for stewardship events
- Volunteer for projects
- Support us with a donation

Heather DuBrall
This survey was conducted by the Washington Climbers Coalition (WCC), in collaboration with Dr. David Carter, assistant professor of public policy at the University of Utah. The overarching survey objective was to offer a snapshot of Washington climbers’ characteristics, experiences, and perspectives. Survey findings will be used to inform and improve climbing stewardship and advocacy initiatives throughout the state of Washington.

METHODS

The survey was carried out online from October 1 to November 6, 2019. To reach the greatest number of Washington climbers possible, requests for participation were sent via email to the WCC’s contact list and published on its social media channels. Survey advertisements were also shared with industry and nonprofit partners, such as The Mountaineers, the American Alpine Institute, and Alpine Ascents International. A total of 987 completed surveys were collected, alongside data from 45 partially-completed ones, for an overall response of 1,032 climbers.
CLIMBING BACKGROUNDS

Part 1 of the survey asked questions regarding participants’ climbing backgrounds, experiences, and preferences.

QUESTION 1
How long have you been climbing?

QUESTION 2
How often do you climb (both indoors and outdoors)?
QUESTION 3
What type of climber do you think of yourself as?

Gym climber 21%
Trad climber 43%
Boulderer 9%
Top-roping climber 5%
Sport climber 23%

QUESTION 4
How frequently do you engage in the following types of climbing? For outdoor climbing, respond with the frequency during your preferred climbing season.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Climbing Type</th>
<th>More than once a week</th>
<th>Roughly once a week</th>
<th>2-3 times a month</th>
<th>Once a month or less</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gym</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport (outside)</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trad</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boulder (outside)</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alpine</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aid</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
QUESTION 5
How important are the following motivations in your decision to climb?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation</th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>Moderately important</th>
<th>Somewhat important</th>
<th>Not at all important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To be outside and/or in nature</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To improve or maintain my mental health</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To spend time with friends and/or family who climb</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To improve or maintain my physical health/fitness</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To learn more about myself</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To engage the risks inherent in climbing</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QUESTION 6
What are the lower and upper ends of your preferred range of climbing route grades?
**QUESTION 7**
Which of the following best describes where you first learned to climb?

- Outside: 24%
- Inside: 30%
- Mostly outside: 15%
- Mostly inside: 12%
- Even between inside and outside: 20%

**QUESTION 8**
How important was mentorship from one or more mentors when you were learning to climb?
*For this question, a “mentor” is a climbing partner with more climbing experience who gave you one-on-one climbing education and/or experience.*

- Very important: 64%
- Somewhat important: 22%
- Not at all important or never had a mentor: 15%
QUESTION 9
How important were the following other education/mentorship sources when you were learning to climb?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>Moderately important</th>
<th>Slightly important</th>
<th>Not at all important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literature (books, mags, etc.)</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional videos</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free/mostly free groups</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organized club(s)</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational clinics</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guides or guiding services</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University/college classes or clinics</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QUESTION 10
What climbing organizations are you a member of? Select all that apply:

- Access Fund: 491
- American Alpine Club: 389
- The Mountaineers: 181
- Washington Alpine Club: 96
- Boeing Alpine Club: 20
- Another not listed: 186
Did you have a climbing gym membership at some point in the last 12 months? If so, which gym(s)?

- No membership: 172
- Vertical World - Seattle: 260
- Seattle Bouldering Project: 181
- Stone Gardens Seattle: 114
- Stone Gardens Bellevue: 104
- Vital Climbing Gym - Bellingham: 91
- Momentum Climbing Sodo: 82
- Vertical World - North: 69
- Vertical World - Redmond: 67
- Edgeworks Climbing Gym: 56
- Riverfront Rock Gym: 37
- Climb Tacoma: 25
- Summit Everett: 23
- Wild Walls Climbing Gym: 19
- Island Rock Gym: 15
- Cirque Climbing: 13
- Bloc Yard Bouldering Gym: 12
- Riverstone Climbing Gym: 4
- Source Climbing Center: 2
- Another not listed: 85
**Question 12**
How frequently do you climb at the following areas *during your preferred climbing season(s)?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>More than once a week</th>
<th>Roughly once a week</th>
<th>2-3 times a month</th>
<th>Once a month or less</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leavenworth</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vantage</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exit 38</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington Pass/ Mazama</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Si</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mt. Erie</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tieton</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold Bar</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equinox</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newhalem</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td></td>
<td>86%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Another not listed</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
QUESTION 13
How many climbing trips outside of Washington do you generally make in a year?