




ON A CRUSADE

A RUNDOWN OF THE NON-PROFIT GROUPS WORKING ON BEHALF OF THE OUTDOOR INDUSTRY. BY TOM PRICE

ACCESS FUND

Executive Director: Steve Matous
303-545-6772 • www.accessfund.org


Want to see what conservation ethics matched with industry buy-in can accomplish? Then get over to Boulder, Colo., and check in with the climbers at the Access Fund. In the month of October alone, the Access Fund organized 86 Adopt-a-Crag cleanup events, announced volunteer and corporate awards winners, secured access to new climbing areas in North Carolina, and unveiled a partnership with the National Park Service to monitor Peregrine Falcons. Plus, it switched its newsletter to a digital format in order to save paper. Whew! Sure, the months ahead will bring the usual challenges (closed areas and user conflicts), but with 11,000 active, involved members, and a laser-like focus on issues, look to the Access Fund to continue winning.

 **GT VIEW:** As much a part of the landscape as the rocks it protects, the Access Fund is a model of how an advocacy group can become an integral partner with manufacturers to promote issues of mutual interest.

AMERICAN CANOE ASSOCIATION

Executive Director: Pamela Dillon
703-451-0141 • www.acanet.org

What would you do if you were heading one of the largest, oldest conservation groups in the country, and knew it needed a change of direction? That's the task facing Pamela Dillon, the ACA's new executive director. Since taking over from the previous director in November (he'd served 11 years), Dillon has pondered where to take the country's largest paddlesports group, which was founded in 1880. Some things are going well for the group. Membership is at 50,000, up from 46,000 last year; and it's producing new education and instruction manuals, and organizing new festivals and outreach. But the budget is still tight, as "every other water group is competing for the same members." Meanwhile, ACA is sorting out how to raise awareness that it focuses on rafting and kayaking, too, as well as figure out how to distinguish itself from other, similar groups. First steps: It's doing membership surveys and considering wholesale rebranding, including a name change.


 **GT VIEW:** Unmatched in educational efforts and instructor certification, one of the largest groups now trying to find its way in rough water. Stay tuned.

AMERICAN MOUNTAIN GUIDES ASSOCIATION

Executive Director: Mike Alkaitis
303-271-0984 • www.amga.com

Trade associations need to do one of two things to succeed: deliver benefits for members, or be an outstanding advocate for the industry. AMGA is doing both, and its growth from 680 to 1,000 members this year reflects its determination. On the benefits side, all member guides will soon get Limited Liability Insurance with their certification, and AMGA is exploring health insurance, as


well. On the advocacy side, it's working with the Park Service to ensure access through the new Commercial Use Authorization programs. The new CUA law came with no guidelines, and AMGA is hopeful its work will open all national parks to certified guides, not just those working for park concessionaires. Meanwhile, AMGA saw a 10-percent bump in its training and certification program, and will host a national land manager's conference in the spring.

 **GT VIEW:** Outdoor professionals are notoriously underpaid and un-insured, so it's nice that AMGA is quietly, effectively advocating on their behalf.

AMERICAN WHITEWATER

Executive Director: Risa Shimoda
866-BOAT4AW • www.americanwhitewater.org


When asked what her group has been up to for the last six months, Executive Director Risa Shimoda laughs "a hundred million things." AW is constantly juggling several projects at once, and consistently delivering win after win. Among its many successes in 2002: re-opening the sluggish permit process for the Grand Canyon, and putting 100 miles of river back into use for boaters, with plans to do the same in each of the coming years. Not all news is good news; the changes in Congress have huge implications for the relicensing of hydro-power projects, which could impact access. Another big challenge is membership, which has remained flat at 8,000. Fewer than one in 10 whitewater boaters belong to AW, even though they all benefit from increased access and river restoration.

 **GT VIEW:** A credible player with a proven track record and forward-thinking agenda, AW delivers great bang for membership buck.

CONTINENTAL DIVIDE TRAIL ALLIANCE

Executive Directors: Bruce and Paula Ward
303-838-3760 • www.cdtrail.org

File under "as we build it, they will come." Starting with little more than an idea, much less an actual trail, Bruce and Paula Ward, the twin executive directors of the CDTA, are continuing to deliver on commitments to make this spectacular dream a reality. (Although 70 percent of the trail is complete, huge swaths of the Canada to Mexico trail are still uncharted.) In the summer of 2002, the CDTA coordinated some 800 volunteers on 52 separate trail projects, while initiating a Youth Corps program—20 kids working nine weeks on the trail, then following up with outreach programs with retailers and colleges. Membership has almost doubled since last year to 2,400, and support from REI, Coleman, JanSport "and dozens of others" continues to pour in, as the 3,100-mile trail spanning five states comes ever closer to reality.

 **GT VIEW:** Big plans, spectacular scenery, an ever-growing support base and under-developed partnership potential—what's not to like?

CROSS COUNTRY SKI AREAS ASSOCIATION

President/Executive Director: Chris Fratto
877-779-2754 • www.xcski.org

Catching up with the CCSAA is like dropping into a mountain town post office: you get what you came for, plus a little gossip now and then. So it is with CCSAA, which provides soup to nuts advice on everything from tips on marking rental gear, to release forms, to hosting regional meetings focused on professional development, and publishing annual guides and newsletters. It's just kicked off a national promotion campaign, and come January, it'll host a non-manufacturer-specific Nordic exchange booth at SIA. On the gossip front, CCSAA says a hot topic this year is where to get liability insurance, and that it's lined up a new carrier. Another issue it's keeping a close eye on: dog trails at Nordic Centers. "Is it attracting a new niche clientele and source of revenue? We'll see," Chris Fratto said.

GT VIEW: With just two full-time staff, it's pretty impressive what CCSAA gets done. Like its sport, it's nothing flashy, but year in and year out it delivers what member areas need.

NATIONAL SKI AND SNOWBOARD RETAILERS ASSOCIATION

President: Tom Doyle
847-391-9825 • www.nssra.com

You might be tempted to think of a ski shop as little more than a rental outlet, but the act of putting ski to binding transforms your local Ski Chalet into a manufacturer, and in our litigious society that means either develop some standards or get ready for a lawsuit, which is where the NSSRA comes in. Comprised of 200 ski/board shops, it keeps shops updated on changing ASTM standards and practices. "There are consensus standards and there's no obligation" to follow them, explained Tom Doyle. "But if you're not following these minimums, and something happens, you could well have trouble in court," which is why most ski areas urge participation by their on-site shops. NSSRA negotiates discount credit card rates, and publishes every other year a "retail cost of doing business" survey. New this month: a revamped website, where dealers can swap tips, offer old grinding gear and the like for sale, and hear the latest industry gossip.

GT VIEW: Another one of those little safety nets out there you didn't know existed, but are glad to have all the same. NSSRA quietly fills an important niche, ensuring strapping on boards isn't more dangerous than need be.

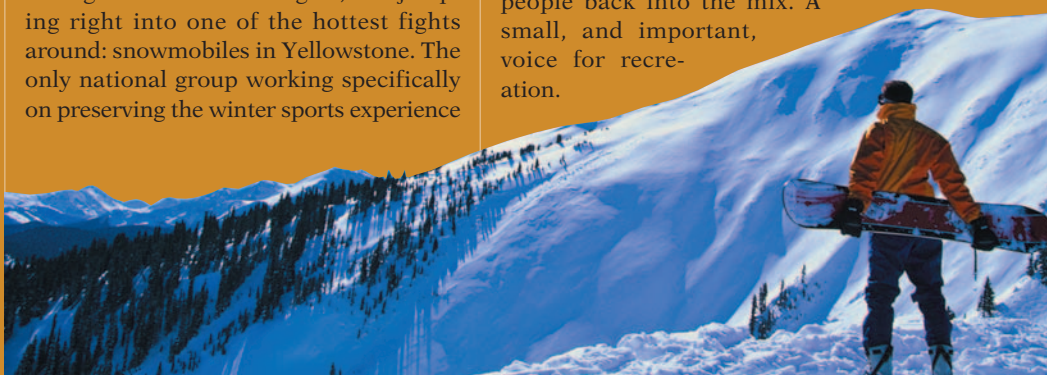
WINTER WILDLANDS ALLIANCE

Director: Ken Miller
208-344-8692 • www.winterwildlands.org

A relative newcomer to the grassroots scene, WWA is putting the recreationist's perspective back front and center where it belongs in conservation fights, and jumping right into one of the hottest fights around: snowmobiles in Yellowstone. The only national group working specifically on preserving the winter sports experience

on public lands, this winter it'll be using video cameras to document the impact of machines on winter recreation, generating comments to the Forest Service and doing media outreach. Locally focused by design, it's sharing what it knows as well, organizing a successful October Grassroots Advocacy Skills Conference, and posting "how-to" info for other locals on its website.

GT VIEW: Big groups often drop the recreation perspective in favor of charismatic fauna and DC lobbyists; WWA is tending to the grassroots and putting people back into the mix. A small, and important, voice for recreation.



An advertisement for Camp USA ski gear. The main image is a close-up of a ski binding, showing the intricate details of the metal and plastic components. The text "ADVANCED TECHNICAL TOOLS" is printed in a bold, sans-serif font across the top of the binding. In the upper right corner, there is a logo featuring a stylized wolf's head inside a triangle, with the letters "CAMP" below it. Below the logo, the text "MADE IN ITALY SINCE 1889" is printed. At the bottom of the advertisement, there is a small text box containing the following information: "Looks Like the renaissance is far from over", "www.camp-usa.com", and "tel: 303.465.9429".