

SOUTHEASTERN CLIMBERS COALITION



SOUTHEASTERN  
CLIMBERS  
COALITION

# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

Created by Andrea Hassler, SCC Executive Director

Photo Credit: Bob Farley, SCC Board Member



# 2020: A GLOBAL PAUSE, REST & RESET.

2020 brought about many challenges that shook our way of life as we knew it. As climbers in the South, we did what we do best – we came together, supported one another, and found creative ways to weather the storm.

We were prepared for climbing to debut in the Olympics, but as a global pandemic swept its way across the Nation our focus quickly shifted. The uncertainty of the COVID-19 Coronavirus left many of us shuttered at home, wondering if it was okay to see family and friends – or go climbing.

Terms like "social distant" and "flatten the curve" quickly became a part of our vocabulary. City and County governments ordered "Stay at Home" mandates, requiring non-essential employees to work remotely and businesses to shut their doors. Congregating in large groups was not allowed and wearing masks in public became mandatory. As racial disparity surfaced from the pandemic and resulting economic downturn, coupled with a series of events across the country, a reckoning on issues of systemic racism called us into action to ensure that our work protecting climbing areas where everyone was welcome.





# Flattening the Curve

## COVID-19 & The Great Outdoors

### CLIMBING DURING COVID-19

#### OUR CHOICES IMPACT OUR COMMUNITY.



**SOMETIMES THE BEST CHOICE IS TO STAY HOME (AND THAT'S OK.)**



#### PLAN & PREPARE

Check current closures & park hours.  
Avoid popular areas and times.  
Have a backup plan.

#### MITIGATE RISK

CLIMBING IS INHERENTLY DANGEROUS.

Hospitals with COVID patients have few resources.  
First responders cannot social distance in a rescue and have limited supplies of PPE.



#### STAY LOCAL

Respect shelter-in-place orders.  
Consider vulnerable gateway communities near access to climbing.  
Be careful when stopping for supplies, or fuel up close to home.

#### SOCIAL DISTANCE

STAY AT LEAST 6 FEET FROM OTHERS.

Is there enough space for passing hikers or climbers while belaying or spotting?  
Will stepping aside damage plants or the trail?



#### SMALL GROUPS

Ditch the squad and avoid crowds.  
Climb with people in your household.  
If the crag or boulder is occupied - keep walking or go home.

#### KEEP CLEAN

Wash your hands before and after climbing.  
Use hand sani or alcohol in between routes.  
Wear a mask, cover your coughs and avoid putting things (rope, gear) in your mouth.



**IF IT IS FULL, IS THERE SOMEWHERE NEARBY?**

**IF YOU CAN'T DO THIS, SIMPLY DON'T GO.**

Questions? Email us at [info@seclimbers.org](mailto:info@seclimbers.org)

In March, uncertainty mounted on whether COVID-19 spread on shared surfaces or in crowded outdoor spaces - two common situations encountered while climbing. The SCC board voted to close our properties and cancel all in-person events, following a trend of local and federal land managers and organizations throughout the region. We began hosting Virtual Pint Nights (termed "QuaranPint Nights") to offer information and support for climbers throughout the region.

Eventually, public health officials encouraged spending time outdoors as a healthy activity during quarantine. As COVID-19 cases continued to rise, we saw visitation to outdoor spaces increase significantly at public lands across the country. Overcrowding, parking, and trash became more prevalent. SCC stayed in close contact with public land managers, rallying volunteers and sharing information to help lighten the load whenever possible. SCC Executive Director, shared beta about our efforts to LCO's across the country during an Access Fund Webinar "Climbing During a Global Pandemic". In May, SCC decided to reopen our properties with new COVID-19 guidelines.

During this time, SCC advocated locally and nationally for preserving access to the outdoors due to the great benefit for our mental, emotional and physical health. SCC submitted official letters to state representatives to vote "yes" on the Great American Outdoors Act. GAOA was passed in July, securing funding for the deferred maintenance of National Parks and the Land Water Conservation Fund. We also solicited feedback from climbers to comment on the Georgia State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), calling for increased and permanent access to climbing throughout the state of Georgia.



# Equitable Access

## Justice, Equity, Inclusion & Diversity

In the summer, a series of events led to an outcry against systemic racism within America. The murders of Auhmad Aurbery, George Floyd, and Breonna Taylor brought global attention to issues of racial discrimination in all facets of our daily lives. The outdoor industry, a community that has been predominately white, male, cisgender, and able-bodied, were called to listen to the experiences of underrepresented populations in the outdoors, understand barriers to access, and find ways to increase diversity and inclusion.

SCC investigated and amplified the voices of Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) in the climbing community to better understand persistent barriers to entry in the climbing world. The SCC board participated in a Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) training with the Access Fund then drafted and approved an Equitable Access Statement to take a stance on how JEDI efforts fit within our organizational mission. We also created an Equitable Access Committee to identify and systematically address barriers to access on our properties and within our community.

One concern became very clear: the issue of discriminatory route names. SCC staff and Equitable Access committee members spoke with climbers, first ascentionists, route developers, and guidebook publishers to facilitate a better understanding of the issue, bringing a voice to underrepresented climbers – and the impact these problematic route names have on their experience climbing.





# EQUITABLE ACCESS STATEMENT

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## WE BELIEVE CLIMBING IS FOR EVERYONE.

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SCC preserves climbing areas for current and future generations in the Southeast. We do this through acquisition, stewardship, and community, so that all climbers can enjoy equitable access to the outdoors. We believe all people should have the opportunity to explore the vast natural landscapes in our region. We do not discriminate based on race, color, gender, ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation, or any other identity and we will not tolerate prejudice on our properties or within our organization. We believe the outdoors is for all people to enjoy without fear of discrimination and we will continue to work to ensure public protected climbing areas exist in perpetuity.



# Woodcock Cove

## Establishing A Foothold in the Sequatchie Valley

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A local climber brought to the attention of SCC and Access Fund that two properties were for sale on Fredonia Mountain outside of the small rural town of Dunlap, TN. These parcels contained a significant portion of cliff line known to local developers as Woodcock Cove. SCC and Access Fund investigated the property and saw significant potential: over 1 mile of sandstone containing dihedrals, faces, and free standing blocks with the potential for upwards of 100-150 sport or trad routes in a remote forested location overlooking the Sequatchie Valley. After a majority of the board visited, SCC decided to make an offer on one of the two properties.

SCC received a grant from the Riverview Foundation for the upfront due diligence costs of the acquisition: providing necessary funds for an appraisal, survey, title insurance, and site visits. In subsequent months, SCC staff worked with the neighboring land owners to negotiate a land swap to secure the entire mile of cliff line on the property. We also investigated the worth of the property - analyzing the potential of climbs and their grade range, connecting with partner organizations, and understanding the conservation value of the property.

It quickly became apparent that we couldn't turn away from the opportunity to protect Woodcock. The purchase would establish a necessary foothold in the Sequatchie Valley: a landscape packed with climbing that is all held in private hands. It also protected a climate resilient forest that can provide refuge for species migration in light of a changing climate and provide the public with access to outdoor recreation in close proximity to economically depressed rural communities. Plus, we were about to pay off Denny Cove, eliminating our debt. We were ready for the next big thing.

As of April, 2021, SCC received a loan to close on the property and subsequent land swap.



# 2020 EVENTS

**FLOAT THE BOAT\*** | BOAT ROCK, GA  
**THE SICKNESS\*** | HOSPITAL BOULDERS, AL  
**SUMMER SIKE\*** | VIRTUAL  
**QUARANPINT NIGHTS** | VIRTUAL  
**BUY YOUR OWN BOULDERFIELD\*** | VIRTUAL

\*DENOTES FLAGSHIP EVENT

## EVENTS | \$73,330

Bringing our community together-but-seperate was critical to get us through a rather difficult year. 2020 kicked off with our two extremely successful annual climbing competitions, Float the Boat and The Sickness, with record breaking attendance and fundraising. After COVID-19 broke out, all SCC in-person events were cancelled or switched to a virtual platform.

Despite hosting events virtually, SCC was still able to fundraise successfully and bring together our community. By the end of 2020, we were able to cut the final \$20,000 check to the Access Fund for the Denny Cove loan.





# QUARANPINT NIGHT SERIES

## SCC QuaranPint Night Series:

Connect with climbers...remotely!  
Sit back, pop a cold one and  
virtually hang as our community  
speaks on a range of topics:

4/7 Self Care at Home

4/9 Critters & Climbing

4/14 Business As Unusual  
Small Businesses & Climbing Gyms

4/22 Earth Day  
Environmental/Outdoor Non-Profits



SCC QUARANPINT NIGHT PRESENTS:

## ACTIVISM, ADVOCACY, AND STEWARDSHIP

Hear from folks who are making big  
changes in their community and learn  
about ways to get involved!

MAY 21ST  
6-8PM EST  
FROM THE COMFORT OF YOUR COUCH

SCC ZOOM ID:  
575 866 7695



Get ready for another month of...

## SCC QUARANPINT NIGHT SERIES



4/30 Climbing and COVID-19

5/7 Business as Unusual Pt. 2

5/14 Womxn Climbers + Film Fest

5/21 Activism and Stewardship

Zoom Meeting ID: 575-866-7695

Tune in from 6PM-8PM



## SCC QUARANPINT NIGHT SERIES: CLIMBING AND COVID-19

Join us virtually as we talk all  
things climbing-related with  
SCC members and other  
climbing organizations in  
the South.

APRIL 30TH

6-8PM EST

Zoom Meeting ID:  
575 866 7695







# GRANTS | \$38,058.61

The pandemic shuttered business as we know it – and as grants began to dry up, we slowed down operations to safeguard the organization during the downturn.

Funds remained for the Cherokee Rock Village Climbing Stewardship Initiative and Walden's Ridge Nature Park, allowing us to continue work in those two climbing areas. We received a grant from the Access Fund for a Wag Bag Campaign to install stations to mitigate human waste impacts at popular crags.

The Riverview Foundation provided a \$23,000 grant for due diligence costs for the Woodcock Cove Acquisition. These funds were crucial for SCC to collect necessary information and make an informed decision on purchasing and permanently protecting the property.

In addition to grants for projects, SCC received a Small Business Association Paycheck Protection Loan for \$10,958 to cover staff time for 3 months due to impacts from the Coronavirus. We also kick started a youth stewardship program, called the Rising Climbing Stewards, hosting education and Trail Days with youth climbing teams and clubs throughout the region..

## 2020 GRANT FUNDED STEWARDSHIP PROJECTS

Cherokee Rock Village | Sand Rock, AL

Resource Inventory | Multiple Locations

Walden's Ridge | Chattanooga, TN

Wag Bag Campaign | Multiple Locations

Woodcock Cove | Dunlap, TN



# STEWARDSHIP INITIATIVES



BEFORE AFTER

## Fixed Hardware Replacement at Sand Rock

In 2019, Southeastern Climbers Coalition (SCC) volunteers began to replace aging climbing hardware. New stainless steel wave glue-in bolts (pictured above) are known for their superior strength, design, and longevity.



**FOR MORE INFO, CONTACT [INFO@SECLIMBERS.ORG](mailto:INFO@SECLIMBERS.ORG)**  
Fixed hardware replacement is only allowed with permission from park staff.



## Replacing Aging Bolts

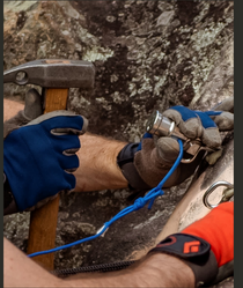
**FIXED ANCHORS LOSE INTEGRITY AND STRENGTH OVER TIME DUE TO EXPOSURE AND USE.**

Bolts installed at Sand Rock over the past few decades are reaching the end of their life cycle. SCC Volunteers donate their time to identify aging hardware then remove old bolts and install new bolts for climbing. **Park Policy requires that all new bolts must be stainless steel, preferably wave glue-ins.**

Cherokee Rock Village invested in this effort by purchasing all replacement hardware. **Cherokee Rock Village now requires park approval to remove, replace, or install hardware.**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT: [CCPARKBOARD.COM/RULES-FEES/](http://CCPARKBOARD.COM/RULES-FEES/)**

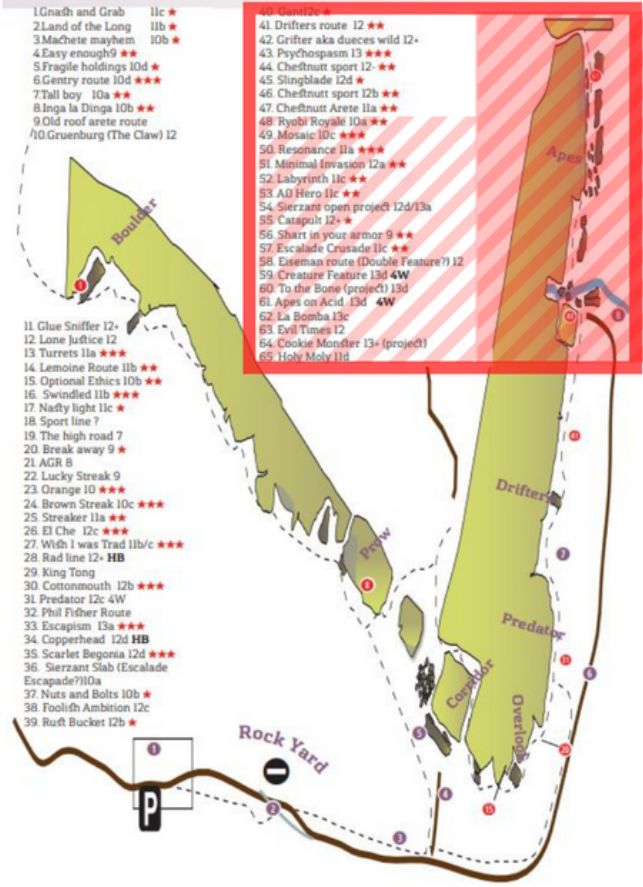
**Top:** SCC Volunteer removes a rusty bolt.  
**Middle:** Volunteers install new glue-ins.  
**Bottom:** Anchor set up for top roping.  
Permanent "mussy hook" anchors are only for cleaning, not top roping.



## Stewardship Update:

## Resource Inventory Project

### CASTLE ROCK CLIMBING AREA: RAPTOR CLOSURE



## IN CASE YOU MISSED IT:

## FIXED HARDWARE VIRTUAL GROUND SCHOOL



*What goes in, must come out.*

## PACKING OUT THE DIRTY SOUTH

Southeastern Climbers Coalition Big Boy Cleanup Initiative





# TRAIL DAYS

## Sand Rock Trail Dates

All trail dates are on Saturdays, from 9am-12pm CST. We will meet at the trailhead parking lot. Coffee in the morning will be provided thanks to Hatchet Coffee.

Project scope: We will be building a second retaining wall, a tier above the one that was built in September 2019, thanks to the help of the Access Fund's Conservation Teams National & East. This second retaining wall will continue to improve the restoration of the staging area at the Boy Scout Wall.

March 14th

March 21st

March 28th

April 4th

April 11th

Find out more information on our events calendar.

## JAMESTOWN TRAIL DAY!

SEPTEMBER 26TH

9AM- 12PM

LET'S CLEAN UP THE PLACE WE LOVE

## BOAT ROCK TRAIL DAY!

SEPTEMBER 27TH

9AM- 12PM

LET'S CLEAN UP THE PLACE WE LOVE

SOUTHEASTERN CLIMBERS COALITION PRESENTS:

# NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS DAY

## VOLUNTEER CLIMB CAMP

FOSTER FALLS

SOUTH CUMBERLAND STATE PARK

MORE INFO AT [SECLIMBERS.ORG/EVENTS](https://seclimbers.org/events)

9 AM - 12 PM CST

SEPTEMBER 26 & 27 , 2020

Preserving climbing areas for future generations.



MOUNTAIN MART



JACKALOPE BREWING COMPANY  
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE



TENNESSEE State Parks  
SOUTH CUMBERLAND  
SCC  
SOUTHEASTERN CLIMBERS COALITION  
[www.seclimbers.org](https://www.seclimbers.org)

SOUTHEASTERN CLIMBERS COALITION INVITES YOU TO:

# NATIONAL TRAILS DAY

JUNE 6TH, 2020

Join together, and physically distant, with fellow climbers to clean up parks and climbing areas we love close to home.

Trail Day projects will be encouraged at the following areas:

Hospital Boulders, AL  
Yellow Bluff, AL  
Steele, AL  
Sand Rock, AL  
Boat Rock, GA  
Rocktown, GA  
King's Bluff, TN  
Dogwood, TN  
Foster Falls, TN  
Wahatchie Boulders, TN  
& more!

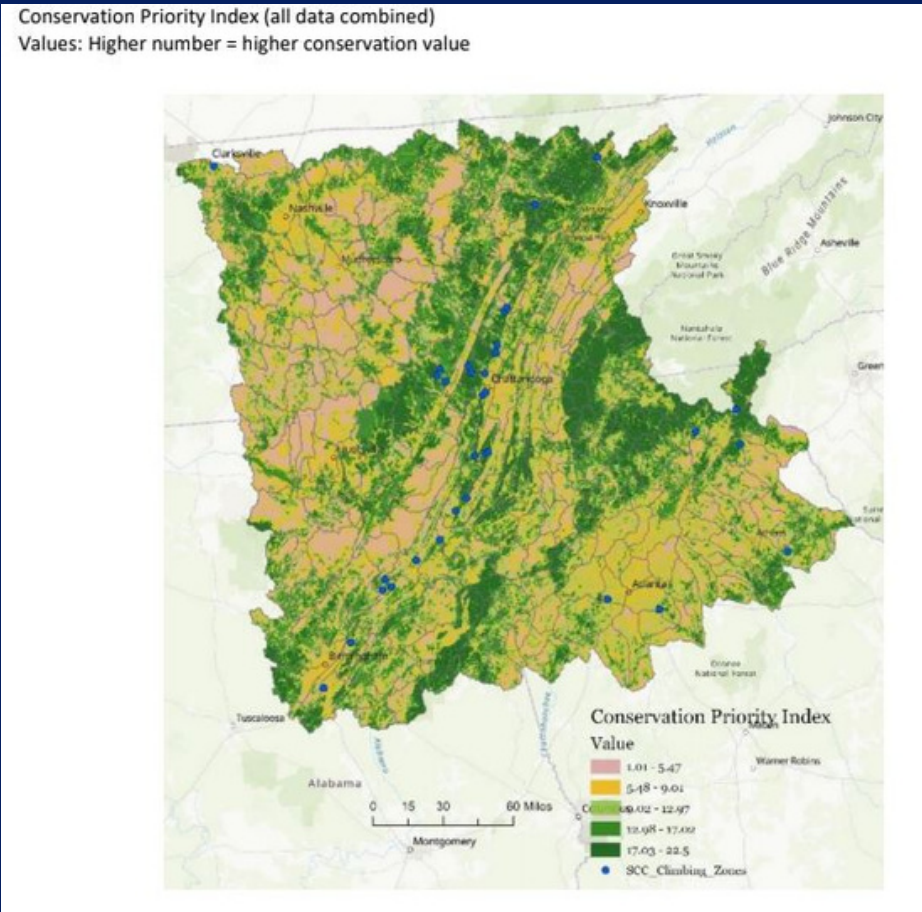
Please stay local and visit a park closest to you, even if it is not on our list. Share pictures of your project and tag **#sociallydistantstewardship** for a chance to win SCC swag!



# STEWARDSHIP RESOURCE INVENTORY

SCC worked with the University of Tennessee Chattanooga IGT Lab to develop a resource inventory of climbing areas throughout the region. The research project was two fold: one part of the project looked at several conservation values to determine where these intersect with existing climbing areas or potential acquisitions. Shannon Tattich, UTC GIS intern, utilized information from ESRI, Nature Conservancy and USGS to highlight areas for habitat corridors, connection to protected forest areas and climate resiliency.

Part two included a resource inventory, in which volunteers went into the field to identify on the ground impacts in climbing areas. Surveyors assessed existing parking lots, social and designated access trails, staging areas and landing zones. Each parameter was evaluated and given a score based on severity of impacts as well as notes on the type and description of impacts or issues. These surveys are to be repeated annually, allowing the organization to determine if there are significant changes or deteriorating crags to prioritize future efforts.



Property Info: Climbing Area	Ownership	What is the condition of the access road to the parking lot?	Condition of Parking Lot	Are any of these issues present along the access trail?	Other - Are any of these issues present along the access trail?	Overall, what condition is the access trail to the cliff line in?
Denny Cove	South Cumberland State Park	3	5	other	Potential tree downfall hazard, .06 in trail	3
Castle Rock	Tennessee River Gorge Trust/ Land Trust for TN / Ms. Phillips owns easement	4	5			
Sunset Rock		4	5	erosion,tree_root_exposure,trail_widening		3
Laurel Falls		2	4	erosion,tree_root_exposure,no_trail_delineation,braided_trails,steep_slope		4
Buzzard Point		3	4	erosion,no_trail_delineation,steep_slope		2
Roadside Crag		4	3	no_trail_delineation		1
Concentration Camp		4	3	no_trail_delineation,steep_slope,other	No trail once you go up 50 yards of the 4x4 trail	1
Palisades Park	Blount county parks	4	5	tree_root_exposure,trail_widening,no_trail_delineation,steep_slope		
Jamestown	SCC	1	1	erosion,loss_of_vegetation,trail_widening,steep_slope		3
Steele	SCC	2	3	erosion,loss_of_vegetation,steep_slope		3
Lizard Wall	U.S. National Park Service	5	3	trail_widening,no_trail_delineation,steep_slope		2
Brandnewbia (Brand New)	U.S. National Park Service	5	3	no_trail_delineation,steep_slope,other	Steep down climb on fixed rope	3
The Concave	U.S. National Park Service	5	4	tree_root_exposure,trail_widening,steep_slope		4
Lily Bluff (Obed)	TWRA	5	5			
Yellowbluff	SCC	5	4	tree_root_exposure,steep_slope		4
as						
Wahautchie Bouldering	Lookout Mountain Conservancy	4	4	erosion		4
Panola Mountainboulders	Panola Mountain State Park	5	5			5
Laurel Pocket boulders		2	4	erosion,tree_root_exposure,no_trail_delineation,braided_trails,steep_slope		3
Dogwood East	Cumberland Trail State Park	4	4			
Dogwood West	Cumberland Trail State Park	3	3	erosion,loss_of_vegetation,steep_slope		3
Zahnd	WMA	5	5	tree_root_exposure,trail_widening,braided_trails		4
Boat Rock	SCC	5	5	erosion,tree_root_exposure,no_trail_delineation		3
Rocktown	GA DNR	2	4	erosion,tree_root_exposure,loss_of_vegetation,braided_trails		3
Hospital Boulders	SCC	3	3	erosion,tree_root_exposure,loss_of_vegetation,braided_trails		3
Moss Rock Preserve	City of Hoover	5	5	erosion		4
Trussville Boulders	City of Trussville	5	5	no_trail_delineation,other	Basically just walk through the disc golf course	3
Horse Pens 40	Schultz Family	3	3	erosion,tree_root_exposure,loss_of_vegetation,trail_widening,no_trail_delineation,braided_trails		5
Shaking Rock	Oglethorpe County Parks and Recreation	5	5			5



# 2020 CONSERVATION LEGACY DONORS

## \$1,500+

Adam Johnson  
Clay Sykes  
Spencer Victory  
Doug Porter  
Beck Kloss  
Kenton & Amy Brown  
Olivia Pearson

## \$1,000+

Tim Foote  
Julie Reed  
Adam Abraham

## \$500+

Kim Ranallo  
Bennett Brian  
Mike McBride  
Lauren Orr

Mark Huckeba  
Derek Hill

## CONSERVATION LEGACY I \$22,000

The Conservation Legacy Program (CLP) entered its 6th year as the central large donor funding for all SCC operations. In 2020, we had 16 CLP donors that committed anywhere from \$500 - \$5,000 to SCC. Of these donors, we had 9 new CLP members. Donors received several items from Ground Up Sales Group, including a Rab hoodie or jacket Petzl quick draws, and Scarpa shoe gift certificate. Since 2015, this program has raised \$91,000 for the SCC mission and acquisitions.





**\$213,902.60**

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INCOME

**\$141,306.24**

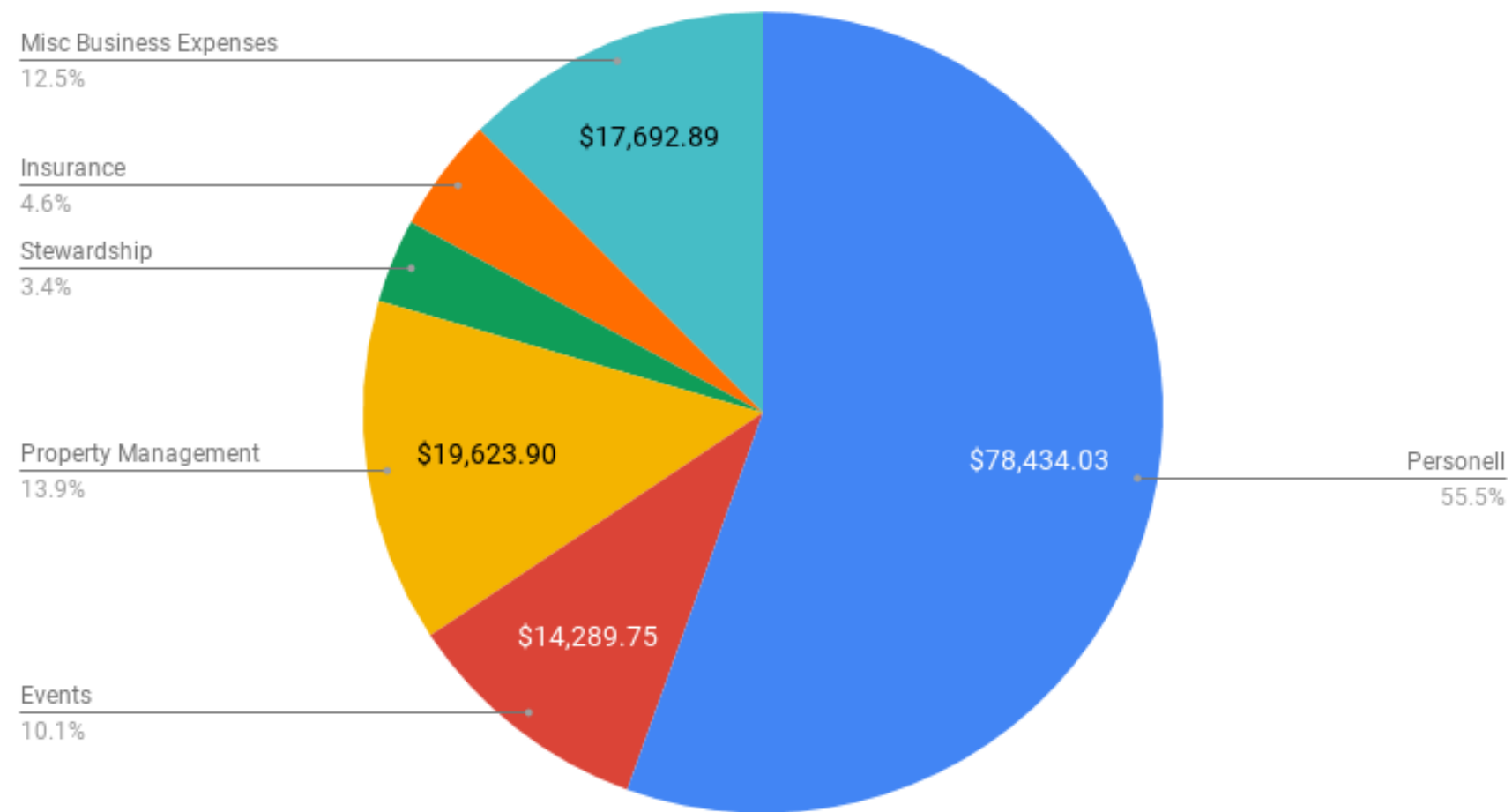
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EXPENSES



# 2020 INCOME/EXPENSE STATEMENT

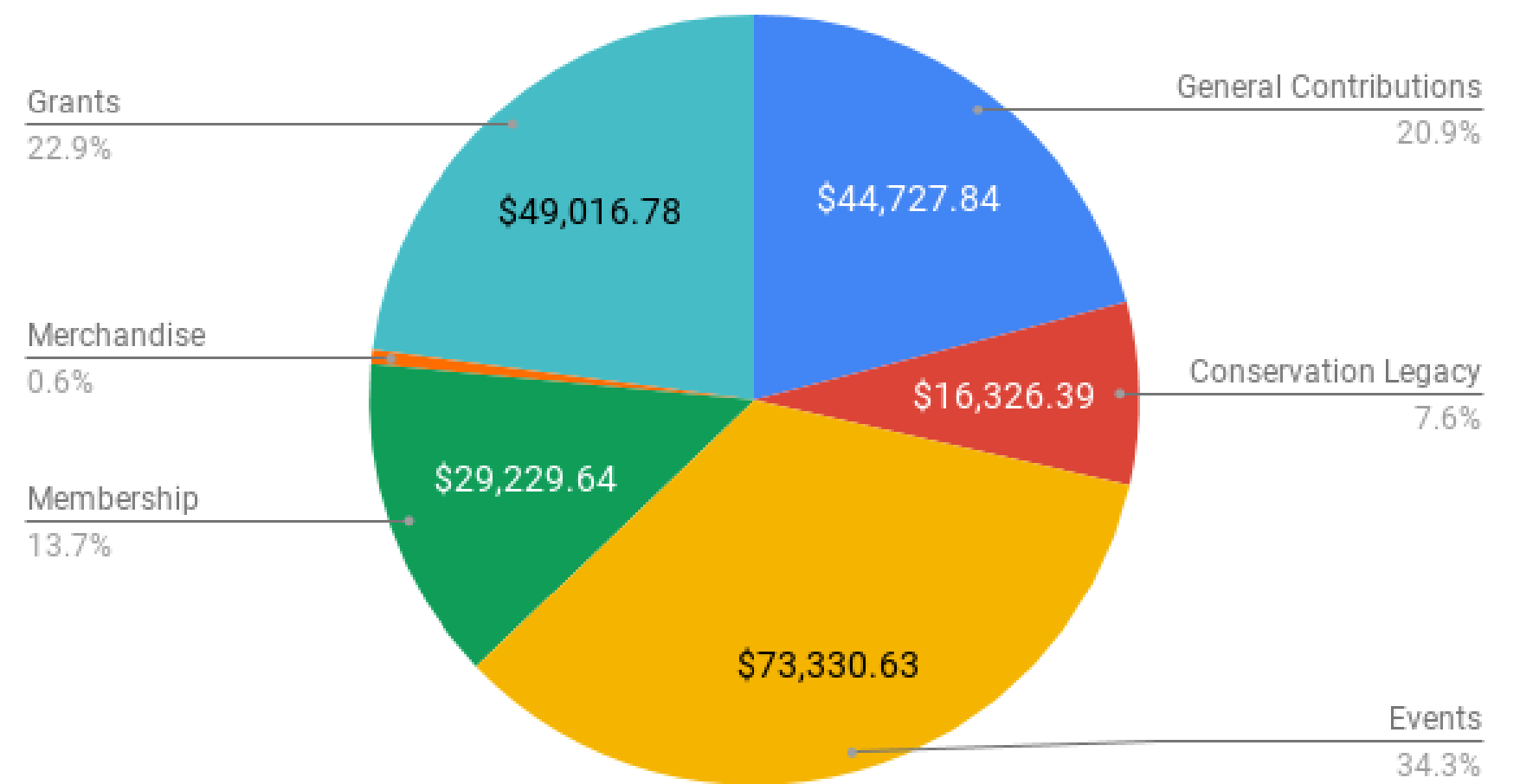
SCC 2020 Expenses



## SCC EXPENSES

Total: \$141,306.24

SCC 2020 Revenue



## SCC REVENUE

Total: \$213,902.60



# DENNY COVE LOAN REPAYMENT

**TOTAL IN 2016: \$150,000**

**TOTAL ON 1/1/2019: \$69,966.33**

**TOTAL ON 1/1/2020: \$31,553.26**

**TOTAL ON 1/1/2021: \$0**



8/26

**Paid: \$11,155**

Principal: \$10,957.79

Interest: \$197.21



1/26

**Paid: \$20,638.37**

Principal: \$20,595.47

Interest: \$42.90





## [Access Fund Webinar | Climbing During the Pandemic](#)

Andrea Hassler, SCC Executive Director, joined the Access Fund Webinar to discuss how climbing has changed since the coronavirus pandemic began and the precautions that our community needs to continue to take.

<https://vimeo.com/418690906>

## [Climb The Hill | Pancakes & Policy](#)

SCC Executive Director joined land policy advocates, JEDI experts and outdoor recreationalists from across the country discuss ways to work with public land managers to build relationships and improve access to crags. She also met with Access Fund and Georgia State Representatives to discuss outdoor recreation in the Georgia.

 Chattanooga Times Free Press

### Southeast Climbers Coalition to pay off \$1.3 million rock ...

The 685-acre addition is home to more than 150 rock climbing routes. In a first outdoor win for 2021, the Southeastern Climbers Coalition this ...

Jan 9, 2021



 Chattanooga Times Free Press

### SORBA Chattanooga looks to next generation of cycling with ...

The project is a partnership between SORBA Chattanooga and the Southeastern Climbers Coalition, North Chickamauga Creek Conservancy ...

Sep 1, 2020

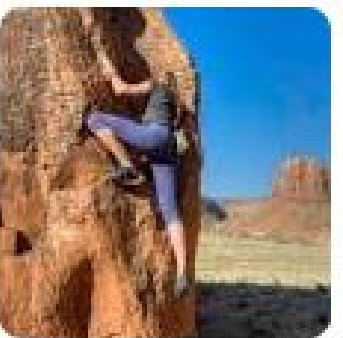


 Moab Sun News

### Is it OK to climb now? | News | moabsunnews.com

... avid mountaineer; Andrea Hassler, executive director of the Southeastern Climbers Coalition, a group that works to secure climbing access in ...

May 29, 2020



MAY 25, 2020


### #10 - Andrea Hassler - Executive Director of the SCC


Andrea Hassler is the Executive Director of the Southeastern Climbers Coalition (SCC.) I sat down with her for a conversation about her work for the SCC. Land access, environmental impact, graffiti removal and the SCC's latest project "Walden's Ridge"...


 **PLAY** 1 hr 16 min



STAY HOME / SAFER AT HOME  
3/26 CLOSURE: All SCC Properties (and others...)


 **NOTICE THIS PROPERTY IS CLOSED**  
VISIT SCC WEBSITE FOR COVID-19 ADVISORY

 **HEALTH IS IMPORTANT! CDC REGULATIONS AND CLIMBING**

 **CONSIDER THIS COVID-19 SPREAD & CLIMBING**

Access Fund Webinar | Climbing During the Pandemic

1 year ago | More

Access Fund  Follow

**Customizable Player.**  
A Vimeo Feature

*brown girls climb.*

PANCAKES AND **POLICY**

Sept. 24<sup>th</sup>, 9am - 11:30am MT  
Climb the Hill Virtual Breakfast Event

Free Attendance with purchase or donation from White Earth Land Recovery Project. Registration Required

Join us as we swap knowledge, build relationships, and improve access to crags over pancakes with land policy advocates, JEDI experts, and outdoor recreationalists.

Closed captioning, sign language interpreter, and additional assistance will be available for the event



# 2020 BOARD & STAFF

## STAFF

Andrea Hassler, Executive Director

Dana Passman, Stewardship Coordinator

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jeff Mekolites, Board President

Jason Plemmons

Kim Ranallo

Sammy Raviv

Dave Wilson

John Wiygul

Bernard Wolfie

Chad Wykle

Joseph Goetz, Treasurer

Dominique Davis

Robert Farley

Laura Miller

Wes Whitaker



SOUTHEASTERN CLIMBERS COALITION

[www.seclimbers.org](http://www.seclimbers.org)



# 2020 COMMITTEES



SOUTHEASTERN CLIMBERS COALITION

[www.seclimbers.org](http://www.seclimbers.org)

## ACQUISITIONS

Chad Wykle  
Cody Roney  
Zach Lesch-Huie  
Michael O'Donnel  
Laura Miller  
Robert Farley

## EQUITABLE ACCESS

Dominique Davis, Chair  
Robert Farley  
Wes Whitaker  
Vicky Sinnot  
Brendon Belchor

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Kelso Cooke, Co-Chair  
Dominique Davis  
Hannah Kemelkar  
Danielle Cicka  
Ron Nance

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Jeff Mekolites  
Andrew Breinig  
Blake Greene  
Parker Weide  
Eric Howard

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Beth Santoro  
Janet Leung  
John Wiygul  
Michael O'Donnell