

WICHITA MOUNTAINS CLIMBERS COALITION

CLIMBING AND FIXED ANCHOR POSITION STATEMENT FOR THE WICHITA MOUNTAINS WILDLIFE REFUGE AND BALDY POINT AT QUARTZ MOUNTAIN NATURE PARK

The Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) and Baldy Point (Quartz) are the most valuable granite climbing areas in Oklahoma and this region of the country in terms of the quality, quantity and historical significance of the climbing routes, as well as the traditional ethics and style by which many of those routes were originally established. Those traditions included ground-up first ascents, minimum use of fixed anchors, and fixed anchors placed on-lead. Over the years, the local climbing community has chosen to maintain those traditional values to a great degree, as they serve to provide important lessons and experiences for developing the skills necessary to undertake greater climbing adventures. While the technical difficulty of many of the traditional routes at the Refuge and Quartz is only of a moderate level by today's standards, the majority of those climbs are considered to be leads for advanced climbers who possess not only the needed technical skills, but also the necessary mental abilities to handle difficult traditional leading challenges.

The WMCC, as representative for the local climbing community, hereby confirms the need and desire to maintain and protect the Refuge's and Quartz's historical routes and traditional climbing values for future generations of climbers to experience. The WMCC believes the cornerstone to that protection is an effective fixed anchor management policy that (a) allows bolt-for-bolt replacement of existing fixed anchors, (b) prohibits the placement of additional bolts on existing routes, except under very limited and special circumstances, (c) restricts new routes requiring fixed anchors to those that significantly enhance climbing values and opportunities without infringing on established climbs and (d) provides for strict enforcement of fixed anchor management rules and regulations.

Further, the WMCC recognizes that the Refuge and Quartz are mature climbing areas, and that the opportunity for establishing valuable new routes requiring fixed anchors is very limited, at best. As such, the WMCC strongly supports fixed anchor management policies and regulations established by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and Quartz Mountain Nature Park that serve to protect both the natural resources and established climbs at the Refuge and Quartz through policies that focus on and support ongoing maintenance of existing fixed anchor routes.

Finally, the WMCC believes that without the full support of the local climbing community, climbing and fixed anchor management efforts at the Refuge and Quartz would be ineffective. Critical to maintaining that support over the long-term is the opportunity for newer and younger climbers to become familiar with the history and style of climbing at the Refuge and Quartz, and to learn the important climbing values and experiences that those areas provide. In that regard, the WMCC strongly supports ongoing educational efforts to expose climbers to the history and values of climbing at the Refuge and Quartz. By passing on that knowledge, we help to insure the future of climbing in the Wichitas.