



AAC Publications

Annual Summary

New York, Shawangunks (Mohonk Preserve)

At the Mohonk Preserve there were 27 climbing-related incidents in 2015, including both bouldering and soloing. Two required high-angle rescues, and 12 required steep-angle extrications. In many cases, common safety measures might have lessened the severity or prevented the incident altogether.

There were seven reported bouldering injuries, all in the Trapps area. Injuries were caused from falls as low as four feet (Boxcar Traverse) and as high as 13 feet (Boulder of the Gods). Witness reports commonly stated there were either no spotters present or spotters were using incorrect technique at the time the injuries occurred. These included lower leg fractures and spinal and head injuries.

A 27-year-old climber sustained fractures to the lumbar spine while rappelling off Horseman, a 5.5 in the Trapps. The climber fell approximately 15 feet. It is thought the rappel was done with uneven rope ends.

Several accidents occurred when soloing climbers fell or hikers scrambled into terrain harder than fourth class and fell. A soloing fatality occurred when an experienced 46-year-old climber fell 50 feet or more feet while soloing Cascading Crystal Kaleidoscope (5.7) in the Trapps. The climber was wearing a harness with a dynamic rope tied to a loop on its back. The cause of the fall is unknown, but it is thought the climber had reached the Grand Traverse Ledge when he fell.

A serious injury took place when a 28-year-old climber fell leading the start of CCK Direct, which starts off the GT ledge. The climber fell approximately 10 feet and sustained an open lower leg fracture. In several other accidents, lower leg fractures were sustained when climbers impacted a ledge, despite being belayed.

Probably 999 times out of 1,000 you won't need stopper knots, a good spot, extra gear right off the deck, and the many other steps we take to keep us safer while climbing. Not every situation demands every measure—situational awareness in a vertical environment of any height is key. But every time a safety measure is not considered, there is an increase in the likelihood of an accident. Unlike us, gravity never takes a rest day. (Source: Andrew Bajardi, Chief Ranger, Mohonk Preserve.)

Images

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