



## AAC Publications

---

### Shawangunks Annual Summary

New York, Mohonk Preserve

**In 2019 there were 22 reported climbing-related accidents on the Mohonk Preserve.** Injuries sustained during these accidents included: three head injuries, one fractured jaw, one spinal fracture, one pelvis fracture, two long bone fractures, and a number of ankle, wrist, shoulder, and hand injuries. Eleven accidents required technical rescue, including four high-angle rescues. Four uninjured climbers were rescued after becoming stranded, either on rappel or while ascending.

One injured climber was attempting to pinkpoint Higher Stannard (5.9) in the Trapps after preplacing gear while on rappel. Just below the first-pitch crux, the climber fell. The highest preplaced gear pulled, and the climber fell to the ground. The climber suffered multiple traumatic injuries. This was one of several accidents in the Gunks involving gear “failure”—generally gear pulling out of the rock.

On two separate occasions, climbers were rescued when an attempt to rappel in the Near Trapps left them stranded. The Fat City rappel (200 feet) requires two 70-meter ropes to reach the ground. This rappel is notorious for leaving climbers dangling in midair when attempting to descend with a single rope. In one of the incidents, the climber had no stopper knots below the belay device and less than 10 inches of rope to hold onto. Mohonk Preserve rangers performed pick-off rescues for each incident and returned the climbers safely to the ground.

Another stranding incident began with two climbers attempting to climb Loose Goose (5.6) in the Near Trapps. On the second pitch, the leader went off-route and was unable to continue. The leader was approximately 50 feet above and 60 feet left of their second on a small ledge, and struggling with significant rope drag. The leader asked the second to secure themselves to a tree with a sling and untie from the rope system so the leader could descend. However, the leader then realized there were no significant anchor options and became stranded. With darkness arriving, climbers on the ground called 911, and Mohonk rangers rescued the stranded party.

Rockfall was involved in one reported climbing accident, and a belayer being pulled into the wall accounted for another.

There were three bouldering accidents that occurred after poor spotting resulted in uncontrolled falls. Injuries sustained included fractured lower extremities, lacerations, and head injuries. At least one bouldering accident resulted from the climber completing a highball problem (50 feet) and then slipping on the descent.

### ANALYSIS

Several of these incidents could have been avoided if those involved had the ability to self-rescue. In addition, several were caused because climbers did not properly prepare for descents longer than a single-rope rappel. Knowledge of self-rescue and understanding descent options and requirements by carefully consulting route descriptions would have prevented many of the technical rescues during the past year. (Sources: Andrew Bajardi, Chief Ranger, Mohonk Preserve, and the Editors.)

**Images**

Article Details

Author	Andrew Bajardi, Chief Ranger, Mohonk Preserve
Publication	ANAM
Volume	12
Issue	73
Page	85
Copyright Date	2020
Article Type	Accident reports