



Sustaining the Future of Climbing in the Wasatch

Strategic Plan

December, 2022



PHOTO: JONATHAN VICKERS



We believe in the power of climbing to enrich lives.

We ensure the community can continue to go climbing.



Since its inception in 2002, the Salt Lake Climbers Alliance has served the greater Wasatch climbing community as a leader, advocating for land access to climbing sites as well as stewarding trails and climbing routes.

As a nonprofit organization working on behalf of the climbing community, it is always important for us to look ahead and to plan strategically for our future. The past few years have brought immense change to our world from a pandemic to human rights issues to our economy. As a strong organization, we must prepare ourselves for the future to continue acting on our mission of advocacy and stewardship and ensure

we are serving the entire climbing community.

The SLCA 2028 Strategic Plan is designed to give our board, committees, staff and the climbing community a guide for the future. The broad strategies and detailed tactics in this plan should serve as a roadmap to help us better serve the climbing community.

As board members, we should review SLCA 2028 in detail each year as we develop our annual plans. For members of our important committees, this document should provide guideposts to help you maximize your contributions to the organization. And it should serve as an operational tool to help guide our staff in best serving the future needs of our constituents.

Amidst all of this, we should be more conscious than ever about who we serve. A key genesis for updating our SLCA strategic plan was the work we have done over the past two years relative to justice, equity, diversity and inclusion. Our JEDI initiatives have opened our eyes to the broad needs we have as a sport in ensuring that SLCA is an integral part of helping our sport provide a welcoming environment for all at the crag.

We look forward to utilizing the components of this plan moving forward to help protect access for all to the sport we all love.

Jess Powell, Chair
Salt Lake Climbers Alliance





A long term strategic plan is a living document designed to guide an organization’s board of directors and executive leadership on a pathway to the future. Its suppositions are based on a single point in time, highlighting anticipated strategic areas and initiatives to move the organization forward over time.

A successful strategic plan is one that is constantly reviewed and measured, adapting successive annual plans to best match both the original direction of the long term plan along with new scenarios that may evolve.

The top line element of the plan is a set of broad strategies. Underneath each strategy are initiatives that may be undertaken to fulfill the strategy. The board and management should look closely at each strategy and adopt initiatives best suited to the strategy at that point in time moving forward.

Background SLCA 2025 to SLCA 2028

The SLCA 2025 strategic plan provided a planning base for the organization in 2020. Since then, various factors have created a scenario where a revised strategic plan was in order – evolving to SLCA 2028.

Dynamic Factors since 2020

Pandemic

The global pandemic has changed life structure and priorities for all.

George Floyd/BLM

The 2020 uprisings have resulted in a dramatic shift in how organizations focus on JEDI.

Surge in outdoor recreation

The pandemic accentuated a surge in outdoor recreation.

Economic downturn

The 2022 economic downturn, inflation and pending recession has resulted in financial challenges for organizations.



Vision

The vision of the Salt Lake Climbers Alliance is that Wasatch climbers will have ongoing access to well-managed and sustainable climbing areas.

Mission

The Mission of the Salt Lake Climbers Alliance is to engage as an advocate to protect outdoor climbing access and as a steward to maintain sustainable climbing resources in the Wasatch and surrounding regions.

Collaboration

We gain our strength by bringing together everyone in the climbing community inclusively to work effectively with landowners, government and affinity groups.

Community

We represent a diverse range of interests across climbing, uplifting everyone's voices to bring us together collaboratively as one unified voice.

Grit

We have grown as an organization by being tenacious in our mission, ensuring access to climbing sites and stewardship of climbing landscapes.

Legacy

Our success in protecting climbing sites is based on our proven longevity in establishing SLCA as a trusted expert in resource management, which we will carry into the future on behalf of all climbers.

Passion

Regardless of our personal background, gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, religion or class, while each of us have unique lived experiences, we all share a common internal motivation that brings us together as climbers and unites us in a common cause.

Trust

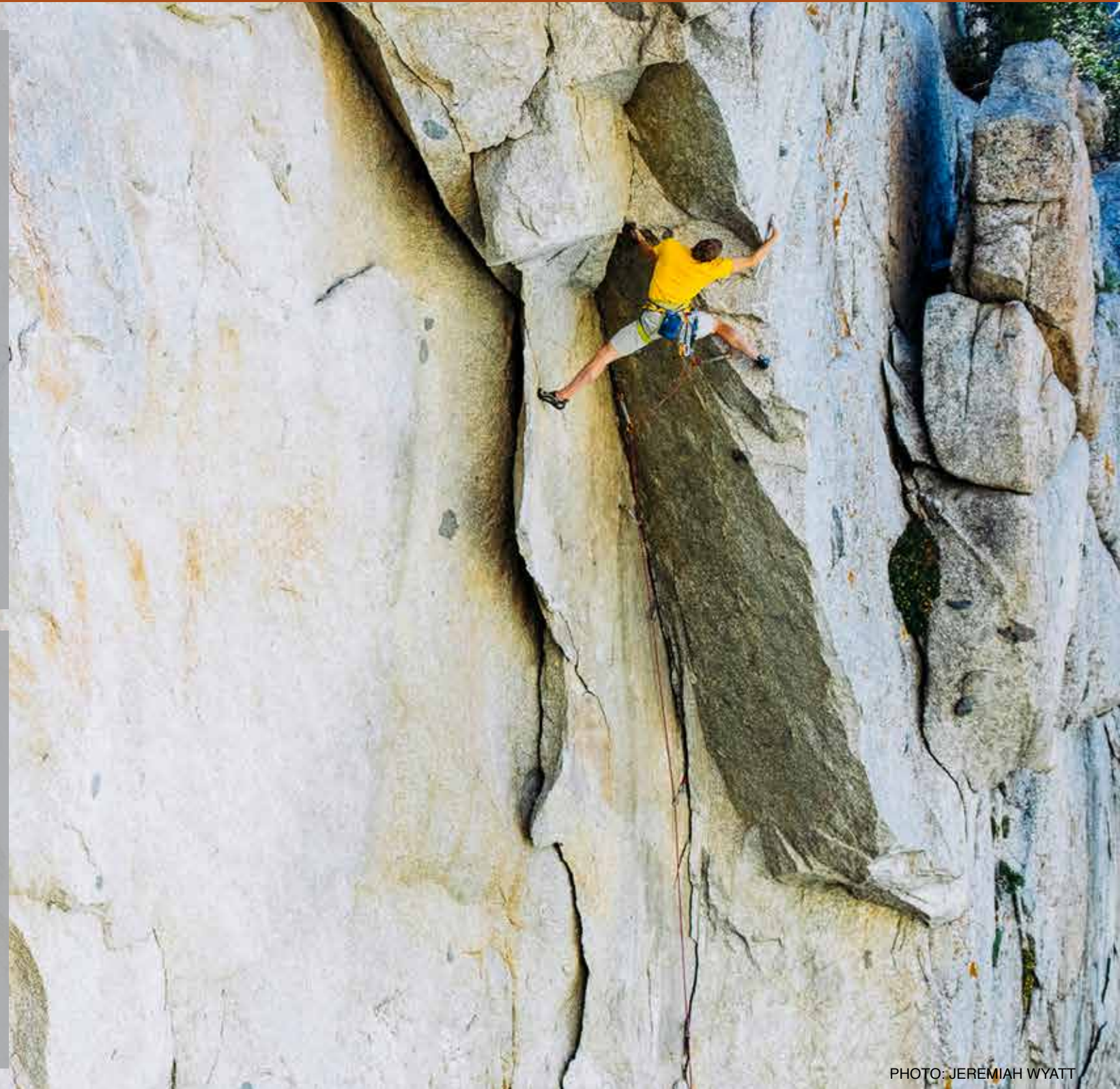
Our success is based on earning the faith of the entire climbing community that we represent their interests as climbers.

Strengths

- Strong reputation and deep connectivity within the national climbing advocacy and stewardship community, including Access Fund.
- Well recognized and respected by other local climbing organizations for its best practices and success in advocating for access and in stewardship of climbing routes.
- Passionate and skilled volunteers and staff who share the SLCA vision.
- Strong endemic sponsors which share SLCA vision.
- Deeply rooted in the culture and history of the Utah climbing community.
- Advantageous regional location with extensive outdoor resources, well-established industry companies, community resources and land managers who share vision.
- Proven staff strength for bringing in sponsors and obtaining grants.
- Proven track record of successful and impactful large climbing area infrastructure projects including The Alpenbock Loop, Gate Buttress, and Jacob's Ladder projects.

Weaknesses

- Growing, successful nonprofit that is stretched thin to meet increasing mission scope demands.
- Membership structure that does not generate notable revenue or have strong affinity for belonging to the organization.
- Few non-endemic sponsors.
- No historical culture across the climbing community of donating to climbing causes.
- Little engagement by youthful generations of climbers.
- Organization facing impacts from historical lack of inclusion in climbing.
- Lack of a strategic brand plan spanning all SLCA activities and events.





Opportunities

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Threats

- Growth of sport nationally (especially in region) and ability to connect with non-core climbers.
- Ability to connect with health and wellness movement offers growth and potential financial opportunity.
- Increasing number of climbing gyms and gym climbers.
- Expansion of funding reach with new local or regional governmental agencies.
- Public land planning processes offer opportunities for partnership around mission.

About SLCA

The Salt Lake Climbers Alliance (SLCA) is an advocacy and stewardship organization serving the Wasatch region of Utah. It was formed in 2002 to address a climbing access issue in Big Cottonwood Canyon. Today, the SLCA is one of the nation's most highly-regarded local climbing organizations. It works as an advocate with public and private landowners to protect climbing access across the region. It also serves as a steward of climbing sites, managing re-bolting of established routes, upgrading or developing sustainable trail access and educating climbers on responsible use of outdoor climbing areas. The SLCA is a nonprofit organization supported by the climbing community, working closely with local and national governmental public land agencies, private landowners, as well as local and national climbing advocate organizations.

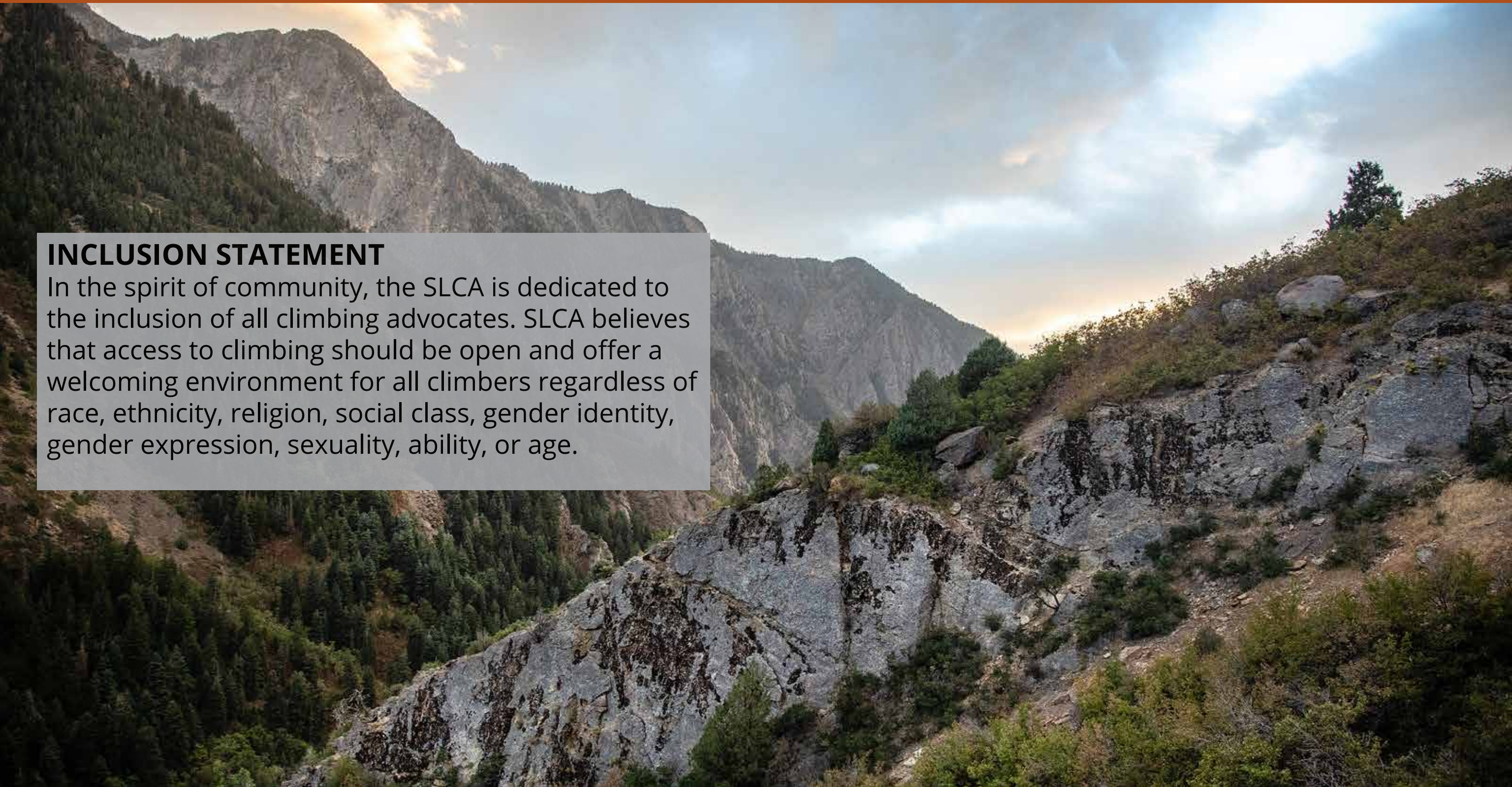
Brand Statement

Rock climbing is a sport that embodies adventure, exhilaration and a healthy outdoor lifestyle. The passionate work of the Salt Lake Climbers Alliance provides a vital link for the climbing community to ensure access to climbing sites on private and public land with routes that are sustainable into the future.



INCLUSION STATEMENT

In the spirit of community, the SLCA is dedicated to the inclusion of all climbing advocates. SLCA believes that access to climbing should be open and offer a welcoming environment for all climbers regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, social class, gender identity, gender expression, sexuality, ability, or age.



Passion for Rock Climbing

The SLCA believes in the power of rock climbing to enrich lives.

Advocacy

The work of the SLCA with both private and public landowners is vital in preserving access to climbing sites.

Stewardship

SLCA is a steward of the land, ensuring that climbing landscapes are maintained in a sustainable way for the safe and continued use of climbers.

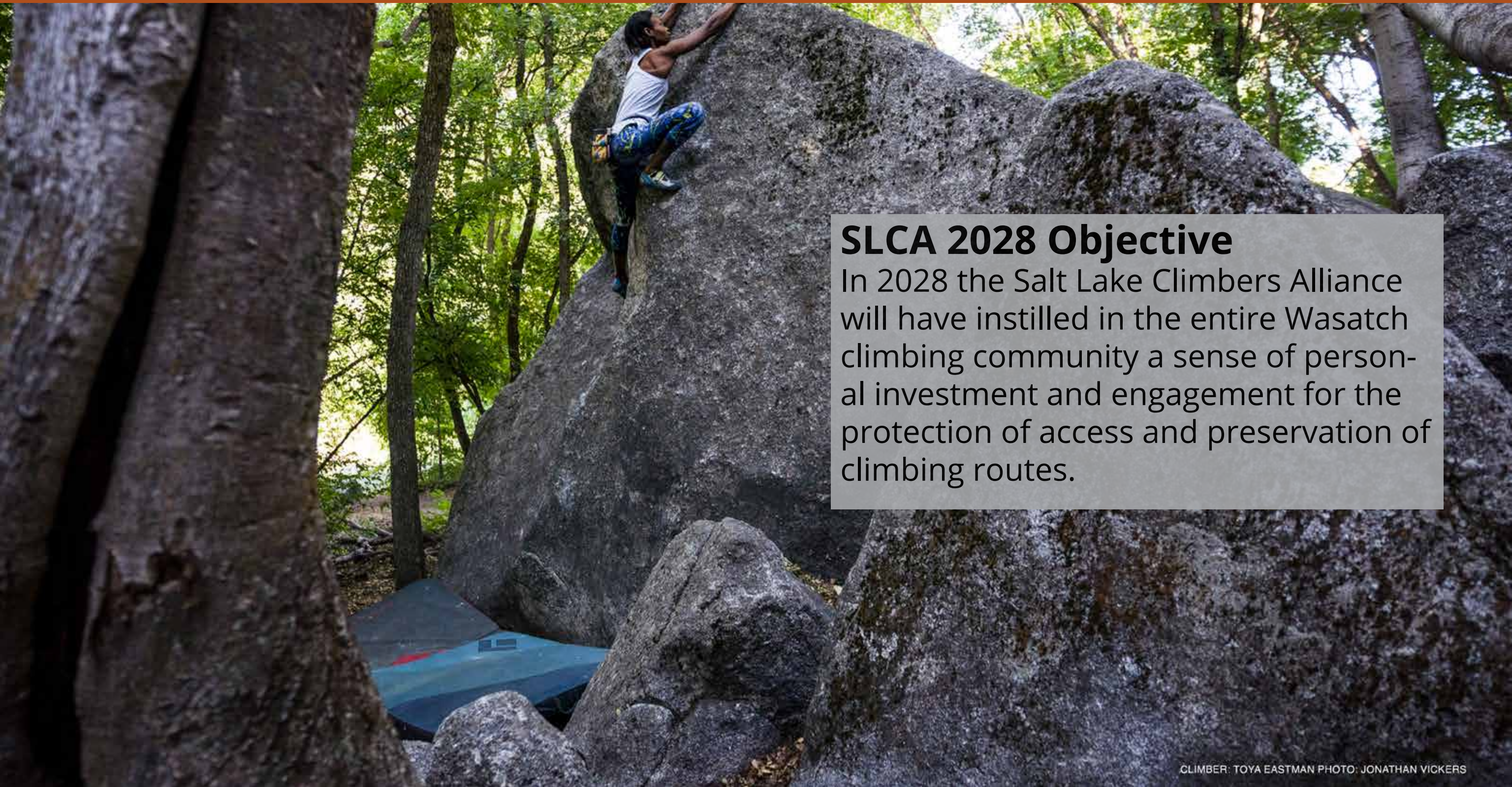
Inclusion

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Origins

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SLCA 2028 Objective
In 2028 the Salt Lake Climbers Alliance will have instilled in the entire Wasatch climbing community a sense of personal investment and engagement for the protection of access and preservation of climbing routes.



Mission Focus

SLCA will maintain a keen focus on its mission points of advocacy and stewardship, always prioritizing those mission points with stakeholders.

Advocacy

A core of SLCA's mission is its advocacy, with the organization working to achieve and maintain open access to climbing sites across the Wasatch. SLCA will manage and evolve a prioritized list of policy initiatives to guide its advocacy efforts into the future.

Stewardship

The preservation of climbing sites and trails is vital to SLCA's mission. The keystone of SLCA's stewardship is its anchor maintenance replacement program.

Strong Governance

Building and maintaining trust of constituents is one of the most vital elements of a successful nonprofit. SLCA will develop a continual focus on strong governance including sound structure, clear identification of roles, continual focus on succession planning and, above all, absolute transparency.

Public Affairs Communications

The success of SLCA's mission is incumbent on its ability to tell its story to stakeholders and influencers. SLCA will transform to a methodology of public affairs communications, linked directly to SLCA's land management policies, to better tell the SLCA story.



PHOTO: JONATHAN VICKERS LOCATION: ????????



PHOTO: LOUIS AREVALO

Membership
SLCA will build a true membership organization, based around the mission, creating affinity and motivating the entire climbing community.

Cause-Based Support
SLCA will become a true nonprofit fundraising organization, pushing key mission points to increase advocacy and financial support from stakeholders because they care.

JEDI Engagement
SLCA will maintain a strong protocol of JEDI best practices in organizational operations, while working closely with affinity groups to support a welcoming environment for all climbers.

Introduction

The lifeblood of SLCA in achieving its advocacy and stewardship is its policy direction. The development of policy direction is a paramount responsibility of the board, based on counsel from the SLCA Policy Committee.

Save Little Cottonwood Canyon Climbing

The UDOT-proposed gondola solution for mitigating traffic in Little Cottonwood Canyon will have a devastating impact on climbing in what is one of the most spectacular canyons in the world. While the post-UDOT-decision comment period has concluded, there is likely to be years of discussion in the legislature. SLCA must engage with the legislature to fight efforts to build the gondola and destroy world-renowned climbing sites.

Historical Designation for Albenbock Loop

Continued work with the U.S. Forest Service to protect the valuable Albenbock Loop in Little Cottonwood Canyon. Its historical designation will provide a vital level of protection from future development, such as the proposed gondola.

S T A T E O



Maple Canyon-Manti La Sal Plan Revision

Working with land agencies to put Box Canyon private land into a conservation/recreation easement.

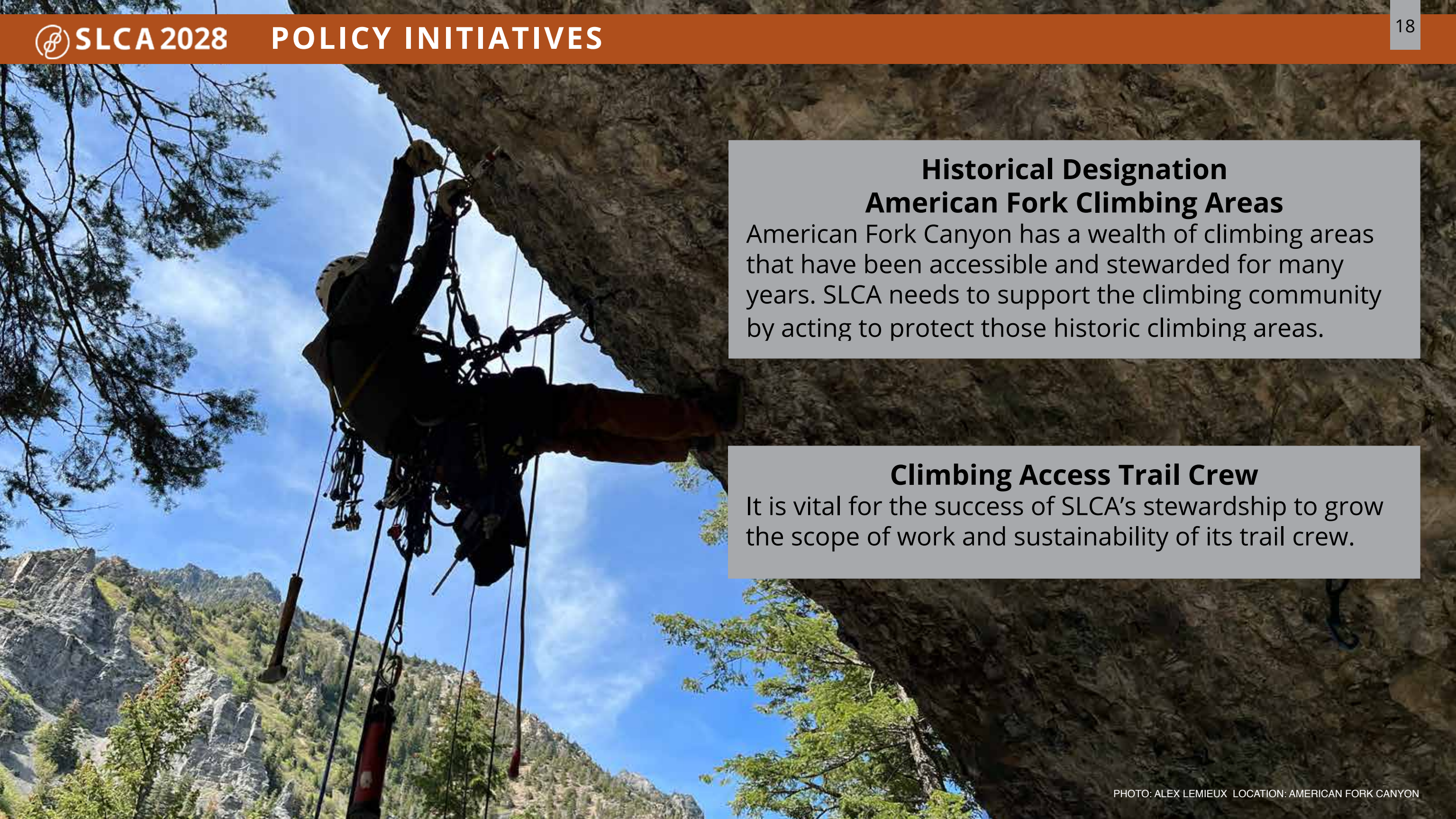
Climbing Management Plan Big Cottonwood Canyon

The Cottonwood Canyons are among the Wasatch's most treasured climbing resources, each with its own unique management challenges. SLCA's Climbing Management Plan needs to foresee and address challenges to protect climbing access in Big Cottonwood Canyon in the future.

Historical Designation

Big Cottonwood Canyon Climbing Areas

Big Cottonwood Canyon has a wealth of climbing areas that have been accessible and stewarded for many years. SLCA needs to support the climbing community by acting to protect those historic climbing areas.



**Historical Designation
American Fork Climbing Areas**

American Fork Canyon has a wealth of climbing areas that have been accessible and stewarded for many years. SLCA needs to support the climbing community by acting to protect those historic climbing areas.

Climbing Access Trail Crew

It is vital for the success of SLCA's stewardship to grow the scope of work and sustainability of its trail crew.



Work at Height Safety Standards

Anchor maintenance is a core stewardship activity of SLCA with work performed by a staff team. SLCA's work at height protocols and education should adhere to the highest standards established by the American Safe Climbing Association (ASCA) to ensure that SLCA's training and workplace protocols are meeting or exceeding industry standards – potentially an important point for landowners.

Wilderness Anchor Maintenance

SLCA serves a vital role in the ongoing discussions with federal land agencies for management of anchors in designated wilderness areas. Implementation of present wilderness rules make it impractical to properly manage anchors, leaving readily accessible climbing sites with oftentimes unsafe anchors. SLCA needs to be a leader in this area to effect change and gain access to wilderness to properly maintain climbing routes.



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