Shenandoah

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Shenandoah National Park

Climbing Guidelines

People are drawn to Shenandoah National Park for many different reasons; some want to take in the beautiful scenery along Skyline Drive, others want to enjoy nature and the feelings of solitude and renewal that wilderness brings. Rock climbing is a unique experience that creates a special bond between the climber and the cliff. To have a great experience and ensure that those after you do as well, follow the guidelines and recommendations below.

Why Guidelines?

The Shenandoah Climbing Management Guidelines have been developed to protect Shenandoah's natural resources, while also providing visitors opportunities for rock climbing, bouldering, and ice climbing within the park.

These guidelines will allow us to:

- Manage recreational use.
- Protect natural resources.
- Provide climbing opportunities within the park.
- Protect the backcountry and wilderness experiences of other park visitors.

Rules & Regulations

Group Size Limits- Groups may contain a maximum of 12 people.

Prohibited Activities:

- Using motorized equipment to place bolts, anchors or climbing equipment
- Chipping or gluing
- Removing vegetation to "clean" or improve a route, or access to a route
- Leaving fixed ropes or other equipment for longer than 24 hours
- Using non-climbing specific hardware (ie, concrete anchors, home-made equipment)

Fixed Anchors:

Fixed anchors are prohibited in all locations where temporary, removeable protection can be used. The installation of fixed anchors should be rare parkwide, especially in wilderness areas.

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Fixed Belay/Rappel Stations:
Fixed belay and/or rappel stations are prohibited in all locations where temporary, removeable protection can be used for belay and/or rappel. The installation of fixed belay and/or rappel stations should be rare parkwide, especially in wilderness areas.

If forced to install a fixed belay and/or rappel station, follow these rules:

- Do not install within view of an overlook or trail.
- Construct using modern equipment.
- Do not exceed three bolts when placing.
- Keep chains to a minimal length to avoid visual impacts.
- Do not use webbing and accessory cord fixed stations.
- Paint hardware to blend in with the natural rock color.

Trees as Anchors:
Trees are allowed as anchors only if they are not obstructing park trails. Do not extend rope or webbing across a trail, whether elevated or not. Do not cause physical damage to trees or plants, keeping bark, lichen, and branches intact and unharmed.

- Tree anchor use is prohibited directly on or around Little Stony Man.

Climbing Closures

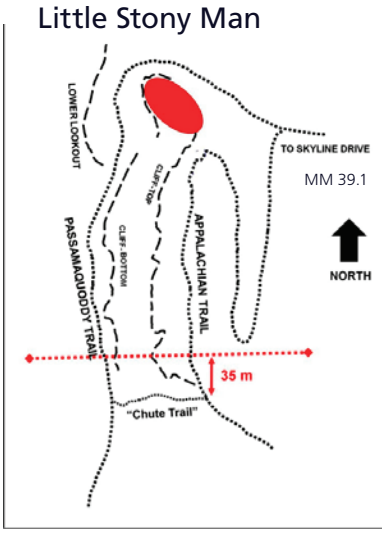

Figure 1. The red portion of the above diagram and all points on Little Stony Man Mountain for 158.6 yards (145 meters) south of the red dashed line are closed to all off-trail uses.

Permanent Closures

- **Little Stony Man Cliffs** -- All off-trail areas on Little Stony Man located south of a line placed 28.3 yards (35 meters) north of the Chute Trail (Figure 1) are closed to visitor use. The large boulders on the northernmost end of Little Stony Man cliffs between the A.T. and Passamaquoddy Trail are also closed. View closure at www.nps.gov/shen/planyourvisit/upload/Little-Stony-Man.pdf
- **Hawksbill Mountain** -- The summit area and cliff faces are closed to all climbing activity. A portion of the northern and northwest face of the mountain is also closed to visitor use.
  View closure at www.nps.gov/shen/planyourvisit/upload/Hawksbill.pdf
- **Old Rag Mountain Western Summit** -- The crown of the western summit is closed at all visitor use. View closure at www.nps.gov/shen/planyourvisit/upload/Old-Rag.pdf

Temporary Closures
Certain areas frequented by peregrines for breeding and nesting are temporarily closed each year. These closures typically run from February-July. For current closure information please call (540)999-3500 x 3397.

Watch Sites
Fragile and ecologically important sites within the park have been showing signs of climbing impact. These sites are being *monitored* and *could* face temporary or permanent climbing closures in the future.

- North Marshall Mountain
- Marys Rock
- Old Rag Western Summit

Photos Courtesy of Andy Nichols
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