Climbing at Bishop Peak

Hard dacite rock, combined with a pleasant year round climate, make Bishop Peak an ideal location for moderate climbing.

History

Rock climbing is a long standing historic use at Bishop Peak, with evidence of early use going back as far as the World War II era. Regular climbing activity appears to have begun in the mid to late 1970’s. Most of the “roped climbing” at Bishop Peak has focused on the north facing cliffs and crags known as P-Wall, Shadow Wall and Cracked Wall as well as the Summit Blocks. In recent years, bouldering has become popular at Pete Boulder, Clarissa Boulder, Hummingbird Boulder, the Boulder in the Woods and the Potato.

Climbing Experience & Impact

Even when considering its limited elevation and the total amount of climbable rock face, the hard dacite rock that is characteristic of the Morros, and Bishop Peak, provides a high quality climbing experience. This, combined with a pleasant year round climate, make Bishop Peak an ideal location for moderate climbing.

Many of the crags are accessed by ‘social trails’ which have been created by frequent travel over previously undisturbed habitat. As more climbers come into the area it is important to consider the impacts of climbing on the Peak. Many of these social trails have become impacted and worn and new trails have begun to appear, particularly between the different walls. Unfortunately, these new unsanctioned trails lead to greater impacts on the land including: soil compaction, erosion, and vegetation loss at the base of climbs, and on approach and descent trails, destruction of cliffside vegetation and lichen, disturbance of cliff-dwelling animals, litter, and the visual blight of chalk marks, pin scars, bolts, and gear that has been left behind.

All climbers, be they visitor or regular, are encouraged to use existing trails and be mindful of the impacts your use has on this natural resource.

Minimum Impact Practices

It is important to remember that climbing should not interfere with the overall management of Bishop Peak, which is designated as a Natural Reserve with natural resource protection its primary goal*. These impacts can be eliminated or greatly reduced by following minimum impact practices and leave no trace ethics.

Though you may consider the individual impacts of your actions as insignificant, when multiplied by all of the people who climb here every year they can have a significant, long lasting effect.

*San Luis Obispo Municipal Code 12.22.050