

POTENTIAL CLOSURE OF TORRENT FALLS CRAG AT THE RED RIVER GORGE

Following is a summary of a post that was made on www.redriverclimbing.com by Mark Meyer, Owner of the Torrent Falls property and Mark's Mountain BBQ. For years, Mark and his family have taken on a great amount of effort, expense and risk in opening their property to climbers. As climbing has become more popular, problems at Torrent have grown. This winter, the Meyers were fed up and on the brink of simply closing Torrent to climbing. In the past, they had endured enough problems from sport rappellers that they simply banned rappelling there. Torrent Falls isn't just their business, it's the Meyer family's home, and climbers have been giving them every reason to simply ban climbing, too. The problems and their irritation have been growing for months and years now, and it's past due that we climbers show the Meyer family the respect that they deserve. They have been nice enough to permit climbing on their property, and should not have to 'police' climbers and their behavior. Please tell every climber you know about this serious situation, and when you are at Torrent, talk with other climbers to be sure they know the rules and understand how close we are to losing this fantastic crag.

For those of you who do not know me, my name is Mark Meyer. My wife, Kathy, and I own and operate Torrent Falls. This posting is to put a formal notice that Torrent Falls Climbing Crag is up for closure.

I was going to close the crag until I brought the subject up to the Red River Gorge Climbers Coalition board members. Fortunately, they had their board meeting at Torrent this past weekend. Upon their recommendation, I am keeping the crag open until the enclosed rules are met. But if these rules are not strictly adhered to, the crag will close on May 1, 2006.

Prior to my dissertation, I would like to personally thank those who worked at trail day this past weekend. I have walked the trail, and the work completed exceeded my expectations. Thank you, thank you. These efforts, conducted by total volunteers, helped delay my actions.

My family lives by a simple rule, treat people as you want to be treated. So if you owned this beautiful piece of property, put yourself in my shoes. We are a "For Profit" business. This land was not free, the labor put into this land was not free, the parking area was not free,

and tools used to develop this property were not free. I do not understand where climbers get off that "Climbing should be Free". Before anyone says anything, how much donations have you put into the box? Then compare it with my costs. I am talking about what it costs me to allow climbers to climb on my property and the aggravation it continues to cause my family. Think about all these dogs coming onto a property that you owned, disturbing your guests and defecating in your yard. Then think about all these climbers coming onto your property pissing in your and defecating in your yard. Think about all the wear and tear on your trails. Think about people coming onto your property and moving your chairs around without permission or putting them back. Think about people parking in spots that are reserved for your guests. Think about all the foul language disturbing your family and your guests by a bunch of inconsiderate, immature, little babies in an adult body. Yes, I am illustrating my frustration. But this is not the first time these issues have been brought up. It is a privilege to climb here. Remember, this property used to be closed to climbing. This is private land and it has reached a point that enough is enough. I do not make money for the aggravation. It would be cheaper for me to close climbing. I do not need the aggravation and policing. Again, think about Torrent as if you owned it and operated a family run business from it. By letting climber's climb here, I am demonstrating that I am really a nice guy.

With that preface, and a show of my frustration, **these following rules shall be applied, or the crag will be closed by May 1, 2006.** And if that day passes, and climbing is still allowed, if it gets out of hand again, climbing will be closed with no grace period.

1. All pets must be on leashes, at all times that they are on the property. We have had a terrible time with dogs visiting our home, our guest's cottages and vehicles uninjured. Leash them or leave them at home. **Carry a bag with you and clean up after your pet.** Any dog or pet that has been known to fight or bite another pet must be muzzled. **No exceptions.** Any dog or pet that has been known to bite a human being shall not be permitted at Torrent Falls. **If a dog or pet bites and individual, that pet will**

be destroyed immediately. You can consider this a formal notice.

2. Do not release bodily fluids or defecate on Torrent grounds except in public bathrooms.

I have seen on more than one occasion, climbers pissing in my front parking lot. I do not go to your home and piss in your front yard. How would you like it if all my friends and myself came to your back yard and defecated? Over time, it adds up.

Do not ask to use the rest room at the B&B or main house. Think of it as if it were your home. Total strangers coming up to your home, muddy, sweaty, and asking "Can I use your rest room?" On a side note, realize that the public rest rooms are not free. It cost material and labor to build it. There are permit costs. Then there is the expense in maintaining, cleaning, and supplies. All we ask is to donate \$2.00 per climber.

[Note: Mark has added a porta-john near the parking lot, in addition to the old outhouse near the falls and the porta-johns at the BBQ. The porta-john has a monthly rental/service cost that must be covered by donations. Torrent Falls is not 'wilderness' - we have no excuses for not respecting this simple request.]

3. Do not move the chairs from around the fire pit. These are for paying B&B guests.

4. No fires.

5. Do not use ropes or routes designated for Torrent Falls use. These are clearly marked and are for guided climbing and rappelling.

6. Park at the bottom parking lot and do not block parking designated for cabin use only. These parking spots are for paying customers. **Do not park your car here and leave the crag.** You park here, you climb here. The parking lot is too small for a depository. **Also, do not park in the paved parking lot at the Torrent Church.**

7. A donation of \$2.00 per person is strongly recommended. *[Note: The 'myth' that donations were no longer being collected is dead wrong. Think of \$2.00 as a minimum donation. This money is used to pay for trails, the porta-john and other costs related to climbing, and does not go into Mark's pocket. If you are climbing on the other side of the area (Windy Corner/the 5.10 wall) be*

sure to make your donation before heading over to climb. Don't have 'small change'? It's no excuse - kick in that \$5 or \$10 and make up for the jerks who don't donate their fair share.]

8. Do not litter. This has become a real problem with climbers lately and it never used to be.

9. No foul language. My family and guests are sick and tired of the foul language being used on this property. It reminds me of why I closed rappelling. Rappelling has remained permanently closed. This is truly insulting public behavior. Buy your own crag and cuss all you want to. Do not trespass your potty mouth onto my family that lives here. You could consider continuing this behavior (or lack of self control) and disclose to the world how you want people to think of the climbing community.

I will close the crag on this issue alone or the dog issue alone.

[Note: If you think that you may not be able to control your mouth, please just avoid Torrent - don't ruin it for all the other climbers.]

10. Be considerate to the owners of the property and it's guests. Treat people as you want to be treated. Do you want a friendly greeting or do you want to be ignored, abused, pissed on, and trespassed on? **Remember, it is a privilege to climb on someone's private property.**

11. No rappelling with the exception of finishing a climbing route.

12. No night climbing. Climbing ends at dusk. Climbers should be off the crag by dark.

13. Use existing trails. It costs a great deal to put these trails in.

I am sorry that it has come to this. But with the increase in traffic to the area, something needs to be done. There may be additions to this policy as time moves on. I have a Kiosk at Torrent. Changes will be posted there.

Thank you for your cooperation,

Mark Meyer