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## Hold steady the course!

Posted by moss - 11/04/2005 08:17am

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Don't worry about anyone deriving from our efforts. It's so uncooked right now. Think of this as similar to open source software. It's being built in public by volunteer contributors. We'll come to agreement as to when it is ready for wide distribution. And even when we reach that point it will continue to be an evolving document. It will not be set in stone once it's published. It will be version 1.1.

There should be no rush to publish. We want to move it a long but we shouldn't create artificial pressure. Quality work takes time. If some person or group takes material and claims the mantle of authority, their credibility will be zero. And their derived standard will be outdated quickly when version 1.2 etc. guidelines are released.

I'd like to propose that individuals volunteer to take on a first draft of a particular section (ACP Carabiners for example). This will move us towards our goal.

We're all very busy with work and other responsibilities, let's just keep it moving.  
-moss

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Posted by Jim W - 11/04/2005 11:15am

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Thanks, Moss. I like your analogy of this effort being similar to open-source code.

I do have to wonder, though, about this concept of "mantle of authority" (or similar term) that has been used a few times. With all due respect, I don't think anyone, including TCI, can claim any "authority."

Please don't misunderstand--I am implying absolutely nothing negative about TCI. It's just that it seems quite presumptuous for \*any\* RTC group to assume that they have authority.

I can only presume that when Moss says, "If some person or group takes material and claims the mantle of authority, their credibility will be zero," he also refers to TCI. Authority cannot be assumed; it must be earned.

Now I know that some will think I am fighting for those despicable rogue climbers who are so very negative and always trying to sabotage things. Nonsense: When a devil's advocate (yours truly) causes us to carefully examine what we are doing, we all benefit from the resulting improved outcome.

My reason for asserting that (about the mantle bearer) is that we are so young that we have a fairly long climb to make, proving ourselves as we go, before anyone is presented with that mantle. (I very much am willing to enter into a discussion on this--I'm willing to be convinced otherwise.)

For example, what if TCI published standards, and then, a few days later, Dancing With Trees published standards that are unquestionably better by anyone's measure? Would you say that Genevieve had zero credibility just because she published second? Would TCI jingoes then shout, "We were there first! We must be better!"

Comments?

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Posted by moss - 11/04/2005 12:37pm

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Good and useful comments Jim. I'll continue with the open source analogy. Credibility comes from the quality of what is created by the contributors, not by the reputation of any one person. So if Genevieve or Abe or Harvey or Joe or Tim or any of the well respected teachers and innovators of rec climbing publishes their own document that covers what this TCI hosted working group is trying to accomplish... well, we'd have to tip our collective hats and say "Nice job!".

The point being that the purpose of this work is to create a solid rec climbing guidelines document. If someone else goes out and does a better job because they're spurred on by this effort, all the better for the tree climbing community. Though

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I doubt that would happen. By trying our best to encourage contributions from all corners of the community we have a better chance of coming up with an excellent guidelines document.

My theory is that the "mantle of authority" only comes the strength of the published document, not the web site where it is hosted. This is not to devalue Peter's (and Patty's) role as midwife to the project but to point out that credibility comes from the quality of the result.

Ever the idealist and optimist,  
-moss

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## Totally Confused

Posted by Oldtimer - 11/04/2005 03:36pm

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Isn't the point of this exercise to eventually "write down" the information presented by the many parties during the brainstorming time period in a "draft form" and then send it out for review by the interested parties? Hopefully have a final publication at a later date after all the modifications and corrections are incorporated.

If no one writes down something and is afraid of doing it or is told not to do it because he may be accused of taking over or "Authoring" the document then no final product will ever be generated and we will continue to talk in generalities about how great it will be to have some "Ethics" and " Best Climbing Principals" for the RTC organizations.

My point is: someone needs to write something down from all the ideas offered so far and present it for initial review. No everyone will agree to every single point in the proposal and they should offer constructive changes or modifications but that is the only way "rules" are made. So, Moss or Icabod or anybody with time or interest on doing it just go ahead and put out the "First Draft" and see what comes up after the fine tuning is done.

Like any other "rule" if you not agree with it, you can always ignore it.

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Posted by Jim W - 11/04/2005 04:55pm

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Thanks for the clarification, Moss. It sounds as if we are in agreement. I apparently misunderstood what you meant when you wrote, "If some person or group takes material and claims the mantle of authority, their credibility will be zero."

Oldtimer, I agree with you, too. Something must be published so it can be reviewed, or else we'll just have another ongoing discussion about having an ongoing discussion.

May I suggest, having had experience with such things, that a very effective and efficient method of creating such a document when the parties are unable to meet face-to-face and work things out, is to use the Delphi technique? It's quite powerful and synergistic.

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Posted by Tom Dunlap - 11/04/2005 06:29pm

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Delphi technique from Google:

<http://www.eagleforum.org/educate/1998/nov98/focus.html>

<http://www.carolla.com/wp-delph.htm>

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## Books and standards

Posted by Treeman - 11/05/2005 07:42pm

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I know of two other tree climbing books being written now. I'm actually in friendly competition with one writer. Sharon Lilly just came out with her revised "Climbers Guide" featuring Bryan Kotwica's illustrations.

Standards are useful for reference. They will be used and revised on a regular basis, by who ever publishes them. Standards are short, concise, and do not take long to read. They do serve an important purpose.

By "definitive" I mean very detailed. Much more content about specific climbing technique than what is now published and available.

Publishing is a speculative venture. It's a lot like building houses. Profitable? I don't know yet personally. I can hope and observe the upward trend with recreational tree climbing. I'll find out soon. I certainly wish the best to the other two authors. It can only help tree climbing, the publishing of more books on the subject.

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## Delphi technique.

Posted by Treeman - 11/05/2005 07:52pm

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I think everyone should read Tom's links on the Delphi Technique.

Thanks Tom. You are always the wealth of knowlege.

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## Best Wishes on the Book

Posted by JimK - 11/05/2005 08:55pm

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Treeman,

Best wishes on the writing effort. I've always thought that was a missing segment in your business and RTC. Dick Flowers made a good contribution with his book by filling a void. However the topic is more expansive.

I would like to think that someone is documenting the history of RTC. There's the technique and gear evolution. There's the personal adventures. There's the people that made significant contributions.

Regards,  
JimK

Keep FIT - Fun in Trees

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Posted by charlieb - 11/06/2005 12:37am

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I wholeheartedly disagree with and believe that we should not utilize the Delphi technique for the formation of our standards for the following reasons, as stated in the linked articles:

- 1) It is used to achieve or force a predetermined result.
- 2) It is used to keep the inputters on the defensive.
- 3) It is good only for political or subjective(not objective) input or reasoning and is not based on objective data or ideas.
- 3) It assumes the parties in discussion are at odds.
- 4) It forces an aggressive clash between the parties to force an outcome.

I believe that for all of the above listed reasons and others from the articles, that none of this would be beneficial for developing our standards since all of our input is based on objective ideas and experience and that we do not need to be pitted one against the other. Rather, on the contrary, we should work together and provide factual data and/or research and/or experience and/or proof of what is already acceptable in our culture, so as to discuss and debate what will be our standards.

Objectivity, openness and cooperation I believe would go much further in the successful development and writing of

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commonly accepted standards.

No one should be forcing their agenda on another for political or subjective reasons in our culture, I believe, because this would only lead to disheartening many of those who would like to truly contribute to our standards for good and objective reasons, such as safety or concern for the common good.

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## Excellent Observation Charlie

Posted by JimK - 11/06/2005 08:55am

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Charlie,

Nice catch on the negative dynamic where a group is brought together and then hijacked by a hidden agenda. We all need to be mindful of this at play in our lives - especially in the political arena where policy makers change our lives.

I've been thinking about group-think of recent. For myself, I've been asking how to be part of a specialized society yet remain an individual thinker. I'm in the question phase; I don't have an answer.

At the end of the day, trees are free to climb. There are simple techniques, that establish a reliable margin of safety. My personal goal is to become a better climber and open the door to RTC for others. It seems to be theraputic in my life; it may work for others as well. Probably being a supportive participant will be my only role.

Regards,  
JimK

Keep FIT -Fun in Trees

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## . . . talk about "hidden agendas" . . .

Posted by Jim W - 11/06/2005 10:08am

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I knew I should have provided a few links about the Delphi technique when I posted. I was fully aware of that negative one Tom referenced and naively thought no one would notice it.

The Delphi technique has a long history of success (actually first used formally in WWII by the allies to great advantage).

I don't know what axe to grind the writer of the negative review had, but he certainly is a most suspicious and non-trusting person!

I don't deny that some of the things he says can happen--indeed, some trust in the moderator is required.

I can tell you with certainty that the technique is very powerful and effective and can be used to create a result significantly better than what can be produced by people face to face. The main reason for that, by the way, is precisely that the source of ideas is unknown to the participants: That way, there is no, "That must be a good/crappy idea because it came from Clyde." (I hope none of you is named "Clyde"--I don't mean you.)

Use it or not--not my call. I can only say from experience that it is an excellent technique and ideally suited for what is going on here.

Finally, please don't assume that I meant that it would be used to produce the final document. Delphi could be used to efficiently and effectively create a draft by those deemed to be trustworthy (who does that--do we vote--maybe have a Delphi for that? ), after which we could go through the interminable process of attaining consensus.

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## What a Comical Twist

Posted by JimK - 11/06/2005 11:36pm

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Jim W,

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Perhaps I missed it, but your links to the positive side of the Delphi process would be appreciated.

Tangents on postings can be interesting.

Regards,  
JimK

Keep FIT - Fun in Trees

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## STOP!

Posted by Icabod - 11/12/2005 10:44pm

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Since I started this and then disappeared...remember, I SAID I was busy, nobody got my point!

Sorry 'bout the frustration. I don't really care if the "STANDARD" (ITS NOT A STANDARD!) we publish is not the best, or even that it is first. I just really want something on paper soon that is not so close minded that when folks start looking for a standard (and believe me ther is someone out there looking, and they have power that could really screw things up) that they are not required to use the one that I know may very well be proposed that WILL INSIST that we use a specific knot for attachment, a specific hitch for climbing, and a host of other issues that are contrary to the heart of my original post. We are trying to show the world in a unified manner that we know how to do recreational climbing in a safe manner, and that it does not have to limit how folks do things. IT'S AN ACCEPTED PRACTICES, not STANDARDS.

I've repeated myself until I'm just fed up with this stuff, somebody's always got to be negative. Well here's my idea. I've said my fill on it. EVERYBODY knows where I stand. Just climb safe! For that matter, y'all really gotta stop being so contrary, and just climb!

I had someone ask for the document, that we have been planning to prepare for the last 5 years, this afternoon. Instead of saying, "yeah we got our stuff togather" I had to say, "well that's a work in progress". I ended by saying, just lemme climb, I PROMISE I won't kill myself.

Thanks, yall for all the lively conversation, but I really have to quit. All the politics is driving me nuts. I'll post what I think should suffice as accepted practices soon on TCNC's site. I'll let you know when I do. Until then...drop me a line if you want to climb.

Climb Safe! Just Climb!  
Icabod

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