



Photo of the Dungeon Via Mountain Project Taken by Monty in 2013

Staunton State Park The Dungeon Climbing Area 2022

Overview

The Boulder Climbing Community's (BCC) Trail Program has completed a three-week trail work project on the Dungeon Climbing area in Staunton State Park. The primary objective for this project was to shift the existing trail away from the base of the climbs and stabilize the talus field which the trail resides in.

Project Synopsis

The Dungeon climbing area in Staunton State Park is one of the more popular sport climbing areas on the front range during the summer season. With grades ranging from 5.10a up to 5.13.d the Dungeon receives heavy traffic from the climbing community. This traffic has and will only increase with the new construction of the Lazy V Trail head parking lot in 2022 which cuts 30 minutes off of the original approach. With access becoming easier and climbing becoming ever more popular in the area, this gave the BCC a rare opportunity to help mitigate the impact on the land before it got any worse.

The previous trail in and around the Dungeon climbing area was virtually non-existent. Paths/ social trails

created by climbers went all over the unstable talus field, which the wall of the Dungeon sits, and even through areas that are used to belay climbers. This caused unsafe conditions for climbers due to rough terrain and potential rock fall from the talus.

The BCC’s trail crew constructed a new path diverting the main approach trail away from the base of the wall and on to more stable surfaces. Belay pads constructed from stone were also installed under a majority of the climbs to help stabilize the area and protect climbers. Due to the nature of the talus field in which the crew was working, a combination of building techniques were used. Along with the typical stone staircase, stones were also laid down in a “paving” style to gain height and create a stable surface to walk on (**Figure 9**). Stable rock formations in the talus field were incorporated into retaining structures creating complex and unique challenges (**Figure 12** and **Figure 13**). Due to the thick trees in the area and the need to keep access up to the Dungeon, the BCC wasn’t able to use a highline system to transport stone materials to worksites which means that rocks and stone materials were all carried by hand.



Figure 1: Volunteer shaping a rock with a chisel

Project Outcomes

At the end of the project, 250 linear ft of durable trail was built, including 130 steps and 70 sq ft of retaining wall. Please see the Total Project Outcomes in **Table 1** and **Table 2**

Table 1

Labor Type	Hours
BCC Trail Program	585.5
BCC Administrative Planning	NA
Volunteer Labor	136

Table 2

Project Outcomes	Amount	Unit
New/Improved Trail	250	Linear Ft
Stone Steps Installed	130	#
Retaining Structure	70	Ft ²
Rubble Structure	430	Ft ²
Rock Quarried	NA	Ft ³
Rocks Moved via Rigging	2	#
Trail Restored	NA	Linear Ft

Before and After's



Figure 2: Entrance way to the Dungeon. Before



Figure 3: Entrance way to the Dungeon. After



Figure 4: Low section of the Dungeon. Before



Figure 5: Lower section of the Dungeon with added belay pads under the wall and trail to the left. After



Figure 6: Rough trail to the left of the Dungeon. Before



Figure 7: Stone steps replacing the rough terrain. After



*Figure 8: Large fallen tree blocking a path forcing hikers to walk under the climbing wall.
Before*



Figure 9: Fallen log removed and replaced with a hardened stone path with a mixture of stone steps and pavers allowing hikers a path that is not under the wall and climbs. After



Figure 10: Belay area under a popular route Unshackled 5.10+. Before



Figure 11: Belay pad constructed with retaining structure. After



Figure 12: Another view of the unstable belay area under Unshackled 5.10+. Before



Figure 13: Retaining structure for the belay pad incorporating existing solid stone. After