

tion, and one was the result of rushing because of darkness. The average age of the victims was 34, and 15 of the routes were 5.8 or less. (Source: Mohonk Preserve)

(Editor's Note: The average age and route difficulty might suggest that the climbers here are "regulars." Not entered into the statistics was a 41 year old man who was sitting at the base after climbing with his son when he keeled over in cardiac arrest. He was DOA at the hospital.

The oldest victim was 136, if dog years are converted into human ones. Preserve rangers were called upon to rappel down to pick a stranded dog off the cliff face at Hudson Highlands. The victim is alive and doing well.)

FALL ON ROCK, INADEQUATE PROTECTION

North Carolina, Crowders Mountain State Park

On May 23, 1993, Dan Plaisted (31) was standing on the cliff, preparing to return to the bottom and begin his climb, when he suddenly fell, said park supervisor Joe Sox.

Plaisted broke several bones. He was airlifted to Carolnas Medical Center in Charlotte, where he was in critical condition Sunday night, a hospital spokeswoman said.

The accident occurred at 1115 in the eastern part of the park, in a designated climbing area known as the Red Wall.

Plaisted was atop the 50-foot cliff, securing some ropes he planned to use during the climb. Suddenly, Plaisted lost his balance and plunged to the ground. He landed on his feet, which probably saved him from head injuries or death. (Source: *The Charlotte Observer*, May 24, 1993)

FALL ON ROCK, INADEQUATE PROTECTION

North Carolina, Crowders Mountain State Park

On August 30, 1993, Jeff Rosenkrans (17) fell 80 feet when the anchor system he and his three friends installed for their rappel came out. He sustained massive head injury and several broken bones. (Source: *The Charlotte Observer*, August 30, 1993)

Analysis

Crowders Mountain is a popular climbing area, both because it is good climbing and easy to reach. Currently, about 160,000 people visit the park annually, of which 7,000 are rock climbers. Of the four state parks that have cliffs good for climbing, Crowders is the easiest to get to, and is near the population centers of Charlotte and Gastonia. An average of four a year are injured in falls in the 2500-acre park, and these include hikers. Three of the four fatalities in the past nine years were hikers who wandered off the trails.

Many of the climbing accidents, like this one, happen to young and/or inexperienced climbers. As one climber was quoted regarding Crowders Mountain, "It's Crowded up there." (Source: Jed Williamson)

IMPROPER DECISION—FAILING TO TURN BACK, WEATHER, INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT, FAILURE TO FOLLOW ROUTE

Oregon, Mount Hood

On May 1, 1993, Robert McQueen (38), Lisa Padilla (42), and Lance Piatt (32) were descending Mount Hood in an intensifying storm. In their own words: