

# Access Commission



Problems of access can be observed all over the World in all mountain and climbing regions. These issues are caused by poor communication, bad practice and a lack of understanding between the parties involved. The Access Commission represents the interests of climbers and mountaineers worldwide by assisting the UIAA and its member federations to secure the freedom to practice mountaineering and climbing in ways which are sensitive to environmental, social and legal considerations. The commission:

- **Promotes the freedom to practice mountaineering and climbing in a responsible manner.**
- **Provides advice, with supporting documentation, on the relationship between mountaineering and climbing and environmental, social and legal considerations.**
- **Encourages best practice in harmonising access with these considerations, and support member federations in challenging inappropriate restrictions.**
- **Liaises with international organisations on access and conservation issues and provide assistance, when requested, to member federations on such issues within their own countries.**
- **Fosters research in support of the commissions aims.**

In 2008, the commission visited the Jammu and Kashmir region of India, under the invitation of the Indian Mountaineering Federation (IMF) and the new Governor of the region N.N. Vohra. The trip highlighted the problems of continuing conflict in the region on mountain access, with impacts for mountaineering infrastructure and the local economy. The Commission was able to promote the UIAA publication 'Argeos Charter' on sustainable tourism in developing mountain regions through discussions on the infrastructure required for renewed access. Argeos Charter is available as a download on the UIAA website.

2008 also saw Bob Pettigrew commission president for the previous 8 years step down at the end of his second term. In early 2009 a new President and Secretary were elected, as well as new commission members from Italy and Bulgaria. The change in personnel and a stronger focus on Access, with the renaming of the commission at the UIAA Management Committee meeting in May, provides an opportunity to reinvigorate the commission's activities and refine its work. In the next year the UIAA Access Commission plans to:

## 2009-2010

- Maximise the use of the UIAA website to create a portal for information on access and conservation best practice.
- Establish relationships with conservation and environmental conservation organisations, with a view to developing protocols for responsible access to climbing and mountaineering areas.
- To keep and develop an accessible database of access issues worldwide and to support national federations in associated access negotiations.



Examples of UIAA Access Commission information pamphlets



Former UIAA Access and Conservation Commission President, Bob Pettigrew in India

The UIAA Access Commission will also be taking on the access related work, after a review, of the UIAA Expeditions Commission.

## Pan American Access Forum

In August 2009 the Secretary of the UIAA Access Commission and Mike Mortimer (UIAA President) represented the UIAA at the first ever Pan-America climbing access event taking place in Squamish, British Columbia as part of the Squamish Mountain Festival. The event organised by volunteers brought together activists from all the Americas with the idea of creating an organization dedicated exclusively to protecting climber access in the Western Hemisphere.

A group to be known as Access PanAm was established, to support local activists on the ground in their home countries. Juan Ibanez Martin, commission secretary was invited to be the official representative of the UIAA to Access PanAm, for more information go to [www.accesspanam.com](http://www.accesspanam.com)

## Future Projects

In preparing for the General Assembly in Porto the Commission President has been putting together plans for future Access Commission projects. These take into account discussions at the UIAA Management Committee meeting at Plas y Brenin in Spring 2009 and also Access Commission discussions.

- Worldwide Access online resource
- Information Library online resource
- World Congress on Access
- State of the Nations - high level access overview
- Right to Nature
- Pilot Access projects in Kashmir, India; Tatra Slovakia; Svaneti, Georgia; and the Cordillera Blanca, Peru.

