

# **The Narrows: Access Information**

# Nockamixon Cliffs

- The cliffs are located in a “Natural Area”. This area contains, among other things, rare northeastern U.S. *Roseroot*, an arctic-alpine herb, grows on shelves and in crevices. Nockamixon Cliffs is the plant's southernmost reach.
- Natural areas have no dedication to recreational activity; they usually have a restriction.
- We have been allowed to ice climb there because the ice covers that which is being protected. Furthermore, when the ice melts, there is no evidence of any recreational activity.

# **Nesting at the Cliffs**

- Nockamixon cliffs has a long history of nesting by raptors pre-DDT and were essentially wiped out by the 1960s. Pre-DDT there were 44 confirmed cliff nesting pairs throughout the state.
- This is currently 1 of 8 cliff nesting pair in the state.
- There are currently more non-cliff nesting pairs in PA. However, cliff nesting is preferred because they are 4 times more likely to succeed.
- This pair has produced offspring the last three years. Last year the pair laid & hatched 3 eggs and all 3 of the young successfully fledged the nest.

# Raptor Status and Protection

- Raptors were delisted from federal endangered species list in 1999, mostly due to the population resurgence in the West.
- Many Eastern states, including PA, still have them listed on a state level as they have not returned to historic levels.
- Closures are put in place to protect pairs during their most vulnerable times. Closures for the raptors are generally Feb-July. The most critical times are when the pairs courting and establishing a nest site (Feb-March) and once again when the offspring are fledging (April-May).
- [The Migratory Bird Treaty Act](#) makes it illegal for anyone to take, possess, import, export, transport, sell, purchase, barter, or offer for sale, purchase, or barter, any migratory bird, or the parts, nests, or eggs of such a bird except under the terms of a valid permit issued pursuant to Federal regulations.

# **Who controls the closure?**

- Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) controls the land.
- Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) manages the wildlife.
- DCNR and PGC work jointly on the closure.

# **What makes this closure tricky?**

- The nest is located in a Natural Area so there is little to no “right” for recreation.
- The nesting timeline is in line with ice season.
- PGC’s primary goal is to protect endangered wildlife vs. promoting recreation.

# Closure Timeline

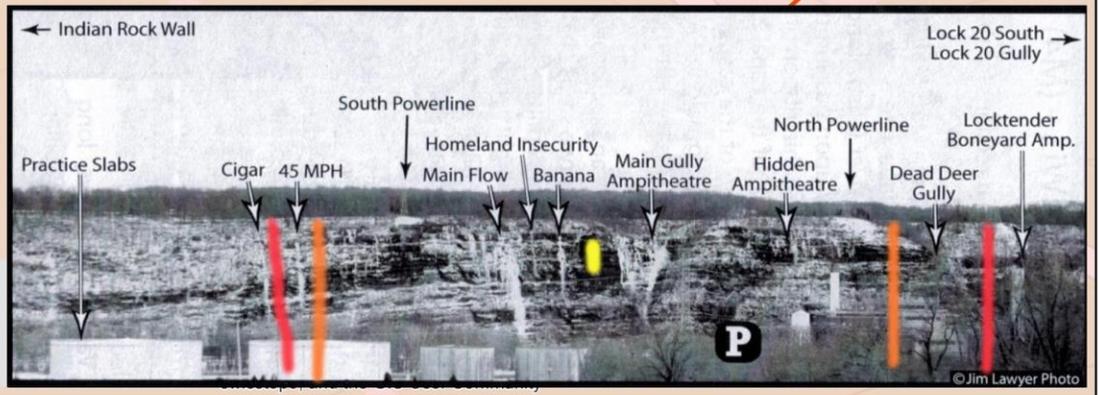
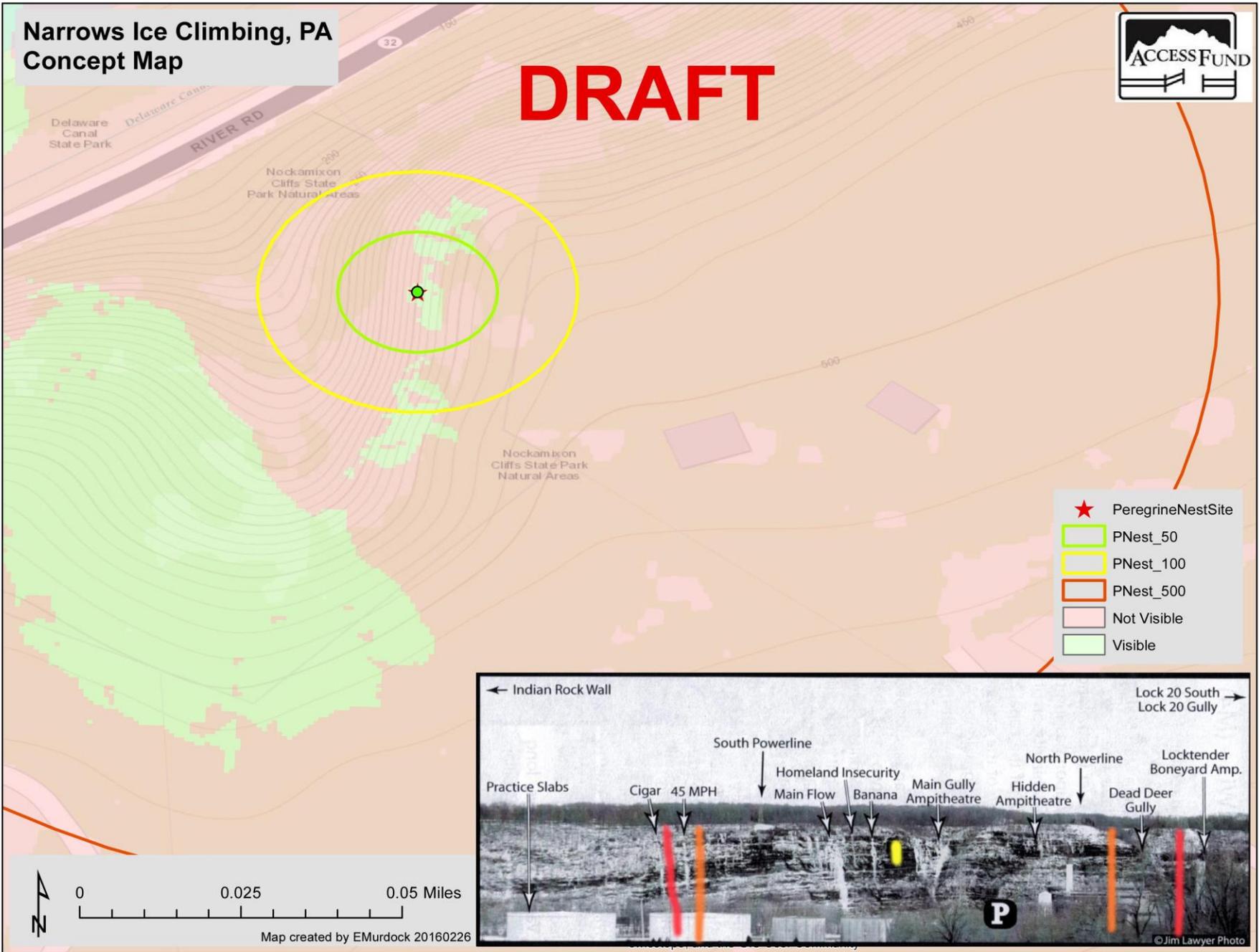
- Jan 13, 2016: Closure was announced and Access Fund was contacted.
- Jan 16, 2016: Access Fund resources forwarded to DCNR
- Jan 27, 2016: Official closure statement released.
- Feb 1, 2016: Closure beings.
- Spring/Summer 2016: Work with Access Fund on closure analysis.
- Fall 2016: Coordinate closure meeting with DCNR, PGC and Access Fund.
- Dec 12<sup>th</sup>, 2016: Closure meeting. In attendance:
  - DRG: Dana & David
  - DCNR: Ian, Beth, Katie
  - PGC: Shawna, Art and Karen
  - Access Fund: Erik Murdoch

# **Our Position**

1. Raptor nesting has been successfully managed in many climbing areas in coordination with the climbers and land managers.
2. A view shed closure is appropriate given the topography of the area and nesting site.

# Narrows Ice Climbing, PA Concept Map

# DRAFT



# **Outcome**

Regardless of the evidence presented citing other managed closures or the view shed analysis of the site, it was determined by the PGC Ornithologist that the stated closure, without alteration, was the best chance of success for the pair.

# **What we do now...**

- Comply with the closure. This will demonstrate our commitment to the process and keep the dialogue open for the future.
- The Access Fund is still actively involved with the closure and providing guidance.

# **Lastly....**

If you are not an Access Fund member then  
please consider joining at  
[AccessFund.org](http://AccessFund.org)



**Protect America's Climbing**