

Rock Climbing Club visits Kentucky for Spring Break

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This Spring Break the IIT Rock Climbing Club ventured south to Kentucky to climb in warmer weather. The group of twelve carpooled down on Friday after midterm exams were all done, and drove the eight hours to Miguel's Pizza; the last cars arriving at 3 a.m.

Every semester, when the club goes to Red River Gorge, they camp at Miguel's Pizza, a small restaurant catered especially to climbers that charges \$2 per night to camp in the fields behind the restaurant. They provide picnic tables, bathrooms, and of course delicious pizza for a few dollars. Probably about 100 climbers camp at Miguel's over each weekend, more if the weather is nicer, in everything from tents, to hammocks, to campers.

Red River Gorge offers approximately one hundred different walls throughout the region and each contains unique climbing routes and experiences, all on beautiful sandstone. Some of the walls only offer traditional climbing routes, which require climbers to take and place their own protection as they climb, whereas our group and most climbers in general look for sport routes, where fixed bolts are installed on the rock so climbers can easily use carabineers to climb.

Saturday morning we were up by 8:30 a.m. to prepare some oatmeal and head out to the rocks. Even though rain was forecast we were lucky enough to have sun throughout the entire day. We chose to climb at a location that none of us had been to before known as Global Village, where there was an 85 foot, 5.6 scale cliff that we were all eager to climb. We also had Rob Fleming trad climb and set a 5.7 dihedral crack, and climbers set a 5.10a and 5.10b for everyone to try. Later that day we tried to go to another nearby area called "The Zoo" but were unable to find the right path to the wall before it got too late. Instead we hiked up a one mile trail in a Natural Bridges Park to a large natural bridge; from the top we enjoyed gorgeous views

of most of the Red River Gorge landscape.

On day two the forecast for rain was even higher, so we decided to go to an area that offered routes that stayed dry during rain. The group drove 15 minutes from Miguel's to Muir Valley where we hiked 20 minutes to Tectonic and Johnny's Walls. We quickly set and climbed a 5.8 and 5.9 and then worked on setting three 5.10s that most people worked on throughout the day. We were lucky enough to have no rain until the end of the day as we were setting one last 5.9. With the rain starting we quickly set and cleaned the route so that we could head out. Half of the group decided to do a little more exploring in Muir Valley since we couldn't climb, and wandered along the cliffs passing caves and huge rock faces until we reached an enormous cavern and waterfall. From there we wandered downstream until we reconnected with the paths that took us out of the valley to the cars.

Monday we were forecasted to have thunderstorms and a lot of rain, and sure enough we had both. We tried to go to Military Wall to do a 5.11b, but only Rob could climb it, so we left right after lunch.

Tuesday we went to Left Flank for a long 5.8, slabby mixed 5.8+, complex 5.9, and two 5.10s, one slab and one long tricky route. The weather was really nice and the routes actually made it easy for us to do hands on lessons on cleaning routes. After lunch we tried to go to Pistol Ridge, but were turned away by an enormous downed tree in the road. Instead we went to Phantasia Wall and climbed a 90' 5.9+, then two shorter routes, a 5.8 and 5.10b.

The trip then was officially over, and the majority of the group departed; the remaining six climbers chose to spend the rest of the break in Foster Falls Tennessee, where the weather was expected to be a little nicer; however, we got some snow and rain there too.

If you are curious about the rock climbing adventures or the club in general, find out more on Facebook or by emailing iitclimbing@gmail.com.

