

For Immediate Release
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27 Rappel Teams Selected For 2019 Bridge Day

Twenty-seven teams have been selected for this year's 2019 Bridge Day Rappel: This will be the most rappel teams ever to participate on a Bridge Day. There are three new teams this year. Fayette County native Debra Parker will be leading a 1st ever all female team. Long time safety team member Talia Sepiol will have her own team this year, the Berserkers. And David Obi has the UDK team. Over three hundred rappellers will be participating in this year's Bridge Day Rappel.

2019 Bridge Day Rappel Teams

Anchor	Team	Leader
1	Chics With Nice Racks!	Debra Parker
2	Extreme Rappels 1	Michael Phelps
3	Canadian Fire	Tony Macdonald
4	Berserkers	Talia Sepiol
5	Spread 'Em and Drop	Matthew S Vickey
6	Northern Y-knots	Scott R Young
7	Born Rescue Riggers	Russ Born
8	Monongahela Grotto	Brian Masney
9	Chattanooga Grotto	Patrick Wilson
10	Safety Team	Glen Kuehner
11	The TAG Team	Darien Dopp
12	Extreme Rappels 2	John Cadle
13	VBATS 2	Harold Calvert
14	Highline	Larry Smith
15	S B Rescue Group	Jon Tobin
16	Black Swamp Brigade	Ken Adams
17	OHKY	Greg Matulionis
18	High-Hangin' Hoosiers	Dean Wiseman
19	Ohio SRT	Carl Swanigan
20	Team Poseidon	Victoria Airey
21	UDK	David Obi
22	A Frayed Knot	Don Straw
23	Derby City Descenders	Davod Sjoeds
24	Extreme Rappels 3	Andrew Rentzel
25	Vertically Inclined	Neil Gregory
26	VBATS 1	Mike TinY Manke
27	US Rope Access	John Haustein

Bridge Day is held annually on the third Saturday in October to commemorate the October 1977 completion of the New River Gorge Bridge. The New River Gorge Bridge is the 3rd longest single arch bridge in the world. The Bridge is the 3rd highest bridge in the United States and the 13th highest bridge in the world. The New River Gorge Bridge is 876' above the New River, the 2nd oldest river in the world. Bridge Day is one of the top 100 festivals in North America, and West Virginia's largest one day festival. Saturday, October 19, 2019, will be the 40th Bridge Day. It has been estimated that Bridge Day brings more than \$3,000,000+ into the southern West Virginia economy each year.

The rappel teams will rappel distances between seven hundred and eight hundred and fifty feet depending on their respective anchor on the catwalk of the New River Gorge Bridge. Anchors 1 and 2 have the farthest rappel.

This year there will be four ascending ropes giving more rappellers the opportunity to ascend or climb the rope. Dr. Peter Hertl of Raleigh, North Carolina supervises the ascending ropes.

Glen Kuehner, from Florida, will return as the Bridge Day Rappel Safety Officer. This will be his eighth year as the leader of the Safety Team.

Benjy Simpson and his son, Benjy III, and their adventure company, Passages To Adventure, have been coordinating the Bridge Day rappel since 1992; 29 years.

The Bridge Day High Line was first done in 1994. It started again in 2001 and has been done every Bridge Day since; 19 total years. The High Line gives the general public the opportunity to be a Bridge Day participant. Both rappelling and BASE jumping require equipment, training, and experience. No experience is required for the high line. The age range for the high line has been from 8 to 76. There are limited spaces available for the High Line. The high line is \$155 per person plus tax, \$164.30. The price includes a shuttle back to the top of the Bridge. Register on line at www.bridgedayrappel.com.

Larry Smith and his team will be rigging the High Line. Smith has been helping with the High Line for fifteen years; twelve years as the team leader.

Bridge Walk will be offering shortened catwalk tours during Bridge Day. The Bridge Walk guests meet on the north end of the Bridge. After safety instructions, putting on a harness, and attaching to the safety system, the guests walk to the center of the Bridge and watch BASE jumpers glide and/or fall beneath them. Many guests bring cameras and take panoramic photos of the beautiful fall vista of the New River Gorge as well as the BASE jumpers. Reservations can be made by calling Bridge Walk 304 574-1300. The cost is \$84 plus tax.

As it has been done every year since 9/11, Bridge Day will begin and end with the raising and lowering of the American and West Virginia flags. Each year two rappellers have ascended a rope with the American flag between the two climbers and the West Virginia flag below the second climber. At 3 pm, after the last BASE jumper has left the New River Gorge Bridge, two rappellers rappel with the two flags. Extreme Rappels, Michael Phelps, from Ohio, and Todd Handley, of Parkersburg, West Virginia, have been coordinating the flags since 2001; seventeen years. The best location to see both the raising and lowering of our flags is from below the Bridge.

For information about the New River Gorge Bridge Day Rappel, the high line, Bridge Walk, and Bridge Day:

www.bridgedayrappel.com (rappel and high line) 304 574-1037

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