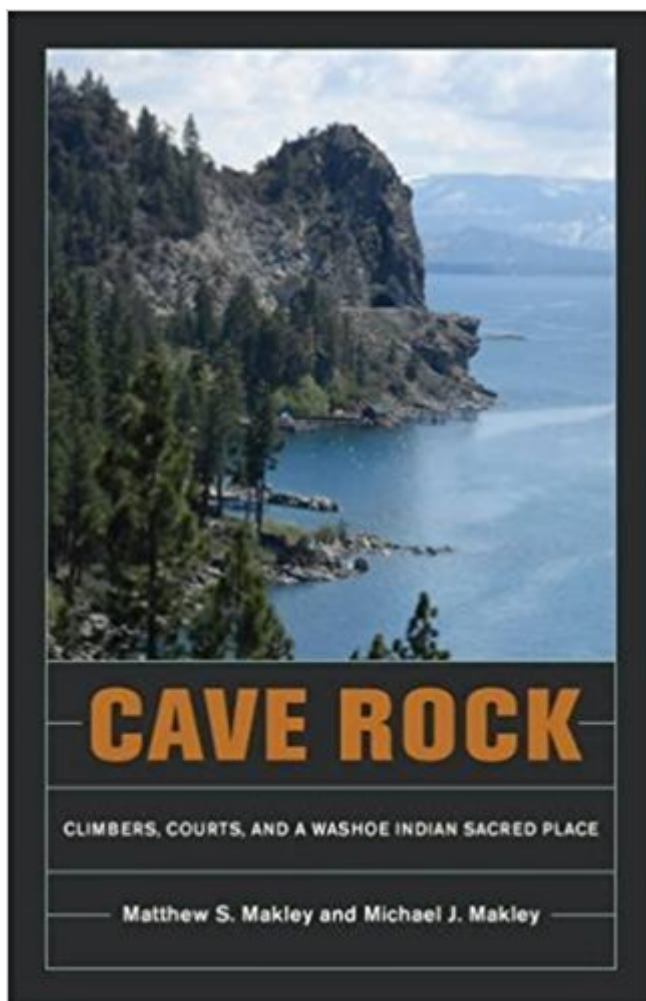


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# Cave Rock: Climbers, Courts, And A Washoe Indian Sacred Place



## Synopsis

On August 27, 2007, the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld an earlier district court ruling that sport climbing on a Washoe Indian sacred site in western Nevada must cease. Cave Rock, a towering monolith jutting over the shore of Lake Tahoe, has been sacred to the Washoe people for over five thousand years. Long abused by road builders and vandals, it earned new fame in the late twentieth century as a world-class sport rock-climbing site. Over twenty years of bitter disputes and confrontation between the Washoe and the climbers ensued. The Washoe are a small community of fewer than 2,000 members; the climbers were backed by a national advocacy and lobbying group and over a hundred powerful corporations. Cave Rock follows the history of the fight between these two groups and examines the legal challenges and administrative actions that ultimately resulted in a climbing ban. After over two centuries of judicial decisions allowing federal control, economic development, or public interests to outweigh Indian claims to their sacred places, the Court's ruling was both unprecedented and highly significant. As the authors conclude, the long-term implications of the ruling for the protection of Native rights are of equal consequence.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Danger, ancient legends, and a legal fight for the sacred. This powerful book . . . is a balanced account of the legal struggle over an important historic site." -- Donald L. Fixico, author of *American Indians in a Modern World* "Cave Rock should be on the reading list of all Lake Tahoe scholars and lovers." - *Nevada in the West* "Though a slim volume, it packs a powerful wallop

in its balanced depiction of this struggle." -- Environmental History

Matthew S. Makley is assistant professor of history at Metropolitan State College in Denver. Michael J. Makley is the author of several studies of Nevada history, including *The Infamous King of the Comstock: William Sharon and the Gilded Age in the West* and *John Mackay: Silver King in the Gilded Age*, and coauthor of *Cave Rock: Climbers, Courts, and a Washoe Indian Sacred Place*, all from the University of Nevada Press. He lives in the eastern Sierra Nevada.

The book "Cave Rock: Climbers, Courts, and a Washoe Indian Sacred Place" takes an in depth look at the complexity of the court case surrounding the area. The authors of the book attempt not only to look just at the court case but why Cave Rock is significant to rock climbers and Washoe people alike. The book made the complexities of the Cave Rock case as easy to understand as possible while keeping the sensitivity of the subject to the Washoe and Climbing culture in mind. Both sides of the argument surrounding Cave Rock were equally and eloquently represented engaging the reader and providing a deeper understanding of the Cave Rock Case as a whole. Over all a great book.

Well written but very technical great text book but not my general choice for reading.

I climbed at Cave Rock from the late 80s to the late 90s. I was there before Dano improved the floor of the trash-littered cave with beautiful stone work. I climbed with Dano, and Sharma as a teen, and Dmitri and the rest of the crew. When the government closed the cave it was a very very sad day. The government took the most extreme position to appease a group that had never shown any interest in this public property over a public highway. Climbers improved this beautiful place. The government and Indians destroyed it.

Matthew S. Makley (Assistant Professor of History, Metropolitan State College in Denver) and Michael J. Makley present *Cave Rock: Climbers, Courts, and a Washoe Indian Sacred Place*, the chronicle of a recent, drawn-out dispute between the small Nevada tribe of the Washoe Indians and athletes backed by influential corporations, over the destiny of Cave Rock. The Washoe consider Cave Rock to be a sacred place; yet athletes and corporations sought to transform it into a world-class rock-climbing site. Their legal battle culminated in an unprecedented 2007 ruling blocking sport climbing on Cave Rock. A handful of black-and-white photographs illustrate this thoughtful, evenhanded accounting of a groundbreaking court case.

The Cave Rock tale is a story of a small user group being singled out because a few sexist old men didn't want to see powerful women in sports bras climbing on their "sacred place" (but not so sacred that a highway wasn't blasted through it). It is a story of a minority group playing the race card and cowardly bureaucrats and courts bowing to their demands. It is a story of the Federal Government establishing a religious site. How would the public and media respond if we replaced the Washoe with the Mormons? Cave Rock is a sacred place to rock climbers as well, and the Washoe could have had a great ally in helping to preserve Cave Rock from further destruction, but they chose instead to pick a fight. When the next assault on Cave Rock comes, who will rally to defend it?

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