

For Immediate Release

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The American Alpine Club Honors Yvon Chouinard with the David R. Brower Conservation Award

Leading Climbing Organization Recognizes Chouinard for Decades of Conservation Work

Golden, Colorado – March 15, 2007 – The American Alpine Club, the Nation’s leading mountaineering and climbing organization, today announced that it will present Yvon Chouinard with the Club’s prestigious David R. Brower Award for conservation. Chouinard, founder of Patagonia, Inc., is an accomplished climber who has had a profound impact upon the conservation of our mountain regions through personal actions, corporate environmental responsibility, and leadership that has inspired countless others to take action.

The Brower Award, created in 1991, recognizes leadership and commitment to preserving mountain regions worldwide. The awardee, whose active personal role deserves public recognition, has made an important difference as a pathfinder, innovator and on the ground contributor who has motivated others to take action. The presentation of this year’s Brower award will be made at the American Alpine Club’s annual meeting and awards dinner on March 31 in Bend, Oregon. See more information about the annual meeting at <http://www.americanalpineclub.org/pages/am.php>.

Yvon Chouinard is a long-time member of the American Alpine Club (AAC), with a passion for climbing and conservation that has inspired his friends and peers for more than 50 years. He was a leading climber in Yosemite’s Golden Age – making the second ever ascent of The Nose on El Capitan in 1960. With Royal Robbins and Chuck Pratt, he advanced climbing styles by eschewing fixed ropes on an ascent of the North American Wall (1964). His first ascents range from the big walls of Yosemite, to the Canadian Rockies, Tetons, Wind Rivers and the big walls of Patagonia – where he made the third ascent of Fitzroy by a new route.

Beginning in 1957, Chouinard sold pitons out of the back of his car. This grew to become Chouinard Equipment, a company that re-invented tools for ice climbing and – combined with his book *Climbing Ice* (1978) – revolutionized the sport.

On the conservation front, Chouinard broke ground in the 1970’s by acknowledging that pitons, his best-selling product, damaged the rock. To reduce the harm caused by his pitons, he invented and introduced aluminum chocks, removable protection that started the “clean climbing” revolution. In 1989 Chouinard sold the hard assets of the equipment company to his employees, who formed Black Diamond Equipment. He has since focused his entrepreneurial energy on Patagonia, Inc., a truly successful, socially and environmentally responsible clothing manufacturer.

His recent book, *Let My People Go Surfing*, describes Patagonia as an extraordinary place to work, and a role model for sustainable business. The practice of tithing one percent of sales to support the environment has grown into the One Percent for the Planet organization, which Yvon co-founded. Today, more than 350 companies are active participants of One Percent for the Planet.

Chouinard, an AAC member since 1963, has long pushed the organization to deepen its commitment to conservation. He calls the recent Alpine Conservation Partnership, announced in January with a \$150,000 lead gift from the Argosy Foundation, “the biggest thing the AAC has ever done in the conservation arena.”

About the David R. Brower Award

David Brower, an active alpinist and member of the famed 10th Mountain Division with over seventy first ascents from Shiprock to the Sierra Nevada, was a pioneer in the environmental movement across the U.S. and abroad. He was twice nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for his work in conservation. Brower was the first Executive Director of the Sierra Club, founder of Friends of the Earth, and served as Chairman of Earth Island Institute. His commitment to conservation contributed substantially to the establishment of sound global environmental practices. Brower was a lifetime member of the AAC and served as the organization’s vice president from 1956-58. For more see <http://www.americanalpineclub.org/pages/page/83#brower>.

About the American Alpine Club

The American Alpine Club is the premier national organization in the U.S. devoted to the multitude of issues facing rock climbers and mountaineers. For more than 100 years, the AAC has led mountaineering adventure, scientific research and education in the U.S. The Club’s active membership ranges from beginning climbers to a “who’s who” of the world’s most experienced mountaineers. The organization’s dedication to education and conservation drives dissemination of knowledge, continued study and scientific exploration of the high mountains of the world, from the Arctic Circle to the peaks of Antarctica. For more information on the AAC, and to learn how to become active in the organization and the sport of climbing, visit the AAC Web site at www.AmericanAlpineClub.org.