Working Paper

The Civic Local Climbing Organization

A Second-Generation Framework for Local Climbing Organizations

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Abstract. Local climbing organizations (LCOs) are constituency organizations, formed by climbers to serve climbers through access protection, fixed hardware, stewardship, and representation before land managers. This paper argues that the chronic under-resourcing of LCOs is not a consequence of poor performance but of audience. Legitimacy, and therefore resources, are conferred by the public before which an organization has established itself, and the LCO has established itself before climbers alone. Work performed within the first-generation model deepens standing with an audience that is already bounded and constitutes no relationship with any other, so the ceiling is not raised by effort. The paper proposes a second-generation model, the civic LCO, in which an organization repositions itself as a community organization serving its community through climbing. The repositioning obliges the organization to produce a community outcome, and the means of producing one is change in participants, which the research literature documents across two domains, the physical and the psychological. The psychosocial gains are conditional on features of program design that the literature specifies; climbing is found to engage every mechanism it identifies, while satisfying one of those conditions depends on something climbing does not supply on its own: facilitation that makes the developmental objective explicit rather than leaving it to be absorbed. Supplying it is the work of the organization delivering the program, and it is the least automatic of the conditions such a program must meet. The model that implements the repositioning is stated as four commitments — of purpose, practice, partnership, and proof — which specify what an organization must adopt in order for the repositioning to become operative, and which are adoptable at any scale.

1 The Claim

An LCO is constituted for climbers and known to climbers. It is funded by that population, staffed by volunteers drawn from it, and received by government as the representative of its interest. Its resource ceiling is set by the size of the audience before which it has established itself, and not by the quality of its work.

The civic LCO makes a single change. It repositions itself from a climbing organization serving climbers to a community organization serving its community through climbing. The community becomes the beneficiary. Climbing becomes the instrument. The activity is relocated within the mission, from its object to its means.

The argument proceeds in four steps. Sections 2 and 3 establish that an organization's resources are bounded by the audience that confers legitimacy on it, and that the LCO holds every qualification for a far broader audience except the audience itself. Section 4 establishes climbing's benefits, physical and psychological, and the grounds on which the LCO is positioned to deliver

them. Sections 5 through 7 set out the model, its commitments, and its adoption path, and Section 8 concludes.

2 The Ceiling

The first-generation model has protected substantial climbing access. It has also imposed a ceiling that no amount of additional effort within the model can raise.

Organizations depend for their survival on resources they do not themselves control, held by actors in their environment (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). Those actors supply resources to organizations they judge legitimate, and legitimacy is not a property an organization possesses in isolation. It is a perception held by an audience, conferred within a particular social system by a particular set of observers (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Suchman, 1995). An organization's access to resources is therefore bounded by the audience before which it has established itself.

The LCO has established itself before one audience. Climbers know what it is and value what it does. That audience is finite: approximately 10.3 million Americans climbed in 2021 (Outdoor Industry Association, 2022), of whom any individual LCO reaches a local fraction. No comparable relationship exists with any other public. Most residents of a community that has a climbing organization have had no occasion to encounter it, and would be unlikely, if asked, to say what it does or why it should concern them. The organization is not misjudged by its community. It is unencountered by it.

This defines the ceiling and explains its rigidity. Work performed within the first-generation model raises the organization's standing with the audience it already holds. Hardware replacement, trail construction, and access advocacy make an LCO more valuable to climbers. They do not constitute a relationship with anyone else. The audience is fixed, and the resource base bounded by it does not move.

The ceiling is a claim about arithmetic. Supporters are the product of two terms, the size of an audience and the rate at which it converts, and within the first-generation model the audience is fixed: the base on which conversion operates is the local climbing population and no larger. Fundraising competence raises conversion, but conversion has an upper bound, and once approached it yields diminishing returns against a fixed base. An LCO that fundraises exceptionally well has captured a larger share of a population that remains the same size. Its ceiling is not raised so much as more fully occupied, and the room above it is limited by the size of the audience beneath.

The conversion term is also moving against the sector. The share of American households giving to charity fell from roughly two-thirds in 2000 to 46.9 percent in 2020, and the decline extends to affluent households, whose participation fell from 91 percent in 2015 to 81 percent in 2024 (Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, 2024; Bank of America Private Bank, 2025). Formal volunteering is steadier but is not fixed, standing at 28.3 percent of Americans age 16 and over in 2023 (AmeriCorps & U.S. Census Bureau, 2024). Aggregate giving has nonetheless risen, because the donors who remain give more, which means that sector totals conceal a contracting base. For an organization drawing on a single constituency the ceiling is therefore not merely fixed but falling, and enlarging the audience is not the best available lever but the only defense.

The consequences the argument predicts are observable throughout the sector. The donor

base is bounded by the climbing population, as is the volunteer base. Government receives the organization's requests as the accommodation of an interest rather than the provision of a public good. Foundations are liable to classify it as a recreational cause and to fund it at the scale appropriate to one.

Scarcity then compounds. Under-resourced nonprofits underinvest in organizational infrastructure, and expectations of minimal overhead entrench the underinvestment (Gregory & Howard, 2009; Lecy & Searing, 2015). The consequence is not confined to administrative inconvenience. Below an optimal threshold, reductions in overhead spending are associated with worse program outcomes, a relationship demonstrated across a decade of data on the arts and cultural subsector (Altamimi & Liu, 2022). An organization starved of infrastructure delivers less, which confirms the small estimate of its value that produced the starvation.

The conclusion is the load-bearing claim of this paper. LCOs are not under-resourced because they perform poorly. They are under-resourced because the audience that recognizes them is small, and the work available within the first-generation model does not appreciably enlarge it. A ceiling of this kind is not raised. It is exited, by constituting a relationship with a public for whom the organization does not presently exist.

It follows that a successful first-generation LCO is not a counterexample to this argument but the organization with the most to gain from it. Competence at access work, hardware, and stewardship is precisely what the civic model requires of its instrument. The model does not correct that competence; it supplies it with a larger audience. The second-generation model is a superset of the first, and the organizations best equipped to adopt it are those the first model has already made strong.

3 The Missing Condition

An LCO already holds every material qualification for a category of institution that communities fund, defend, and regard as their own. It lacks one condition. Supplying that condition is a single act, and it is within the reach of any organization in the sector.

Klinenberg (2018) uses the term social infrastructure for the physical places and organizations that shape the way people interact, and defines it to include libraries, schools, playgrounds, parks, athletic fields, and swimming pools. Community organizations are included in the definition when they have an established physical space where people can assemble. Klinenberg's argument is that social infrastructure of this kind bears on community resilience. Places of this kind are also, as a practical matter, familiar objects of public and philanthropic investment.

The qualifying condition is stewardship, not title. A friends-of-the-library organization does not own the library. A parks conservancy does not own the park. Such organizations maintain a public space, program it, advocate for it, and represent it before the public body that holds the deed. They are received and funded as civic institutions, by municipalities, foundations, and residents, and that reception does not depend on ownership.

An LCO stands in nearly this relationship to its crag. It maintains the fixed hardware on which public safety at the site depends. It builds and maintains the access trails. It manages impact, waste, and erosion. It represents the site before the land manager, and it is frequently the only

organized body that does any of these things. Nearly 60 percent of climbing areas in the United States are located on federally managed public land (Access Fund, n.d.-b), and most LCOs hold no property at all. Neither fact weakens the claim. Both describe an organization performing sustained stewardship of a public asset on behalf of a public.

The legal form points the same way, and it makes the step a short one. The Access Fund network alone comprises more than 150 local climbing organizations (Access Fund, n.d.-a), and they are almost without exception incorporated as 501(c)(3) charities. A charity exists to serve a public. Most have no membership, no dues, and no constituency with a formal claim on them, so nothing in their structure restricts whom they may serve.

What is absent is a single condition, and it is the condition Section 2 identified. The friends-of-the-library organization stewards a space to which the public comes. The LCO stewards a space to which climbers come. Klinenberg's category requires a public that assembles, and the LCO has assembled only its own constituency. The material qualifications are otherwise complete: stewardship of a physical space, technical capability and terrain access that no other institution in the community possesses, and a charitable form that places no restriction on whom the organization may serve. The public is the missing term.

This locates the deficiency precisely and establishes that the remedy is programmatic rather than declarative. An LCO does not enter the category of social infrastructure by describing itself as social infrastructure. It enters by bringing a public to the space it stewards. The distance between what an LCO is and what it could be received as is one step, and the step is programming.

4 Climbing as Instrument

Section 3 established that a single step separates what an LCO is from what it could be received as, and that the step is programming. This section asks whether climbing is a credible instrument for taking it, and proceeds in three parts: what the evidence establishes about climbing's effects, what mechanisms produce them, and what a program must supply for those mechanisms to operate.

The evidence is of two kinds. The first concerns structured challenge generally. A meta-analysis of 82 school-based social and emotional learning interventions involving more than 97,000 students found participants still outperforming controls at follow-up on social-emotional skills, attitudes, and indicators of well-being (Taylor, Oberle, Durlak, & Weissberg, 2017). In adventure education, a meta-analysis spanning 1,728 effect sizes reported gains in self-concept, locus of control, and leadership that continued to increase after the program ended, a pattern uncommon among educational interventions (Hattie, Marsh, Neill, & Richards, 1997). The effects are durable and are not confined to childhood.

The second concerns climbing specifically, and it extends beyond the youth-development literature. A multicentre program of randomized trials has established that bouldering-based psychotherapy reduces depressive symptoms more than physical exercise alone, and no less than group cognitive behavioural therapy, which isolates a climbing-specific effect from the general benefits of exertion (Karg, Dorscht, Kornhuber, & Luttenberger, 2020; Luttenberger et al., 2022). A multicenter trial of 233 adults found that a manualized bouldering therapy produced clinically relevant gains in perceived self-efficacy exceeding those of a physical exercise program; because the effect exceeded

exercise alone it cannot be attributed to exertion, and because the intervention was manualized, the instruction was specified rather than incidental (Kratzer et al., 2021). Controlled trials also report reductions in the motor symptoms of Parkinson's disease (Langer et al., 2021) and favorable results in chronic low back pain (Engbert & Weber, 2011), and a meta-analysis of studies of college students reports a consistent effect on measures of physical fitness (Li et al., 2018). Outside the depression work this evidence rests largely on small samples and few active comparators (Büchter & Fechtelpeter, 2011), and evidence in adolescents remains early and largely observational (Gürer et al., 2024).

The argument that follows does not rest on this literature. It establishes only that climbing is a documented instrument of change across two domains, the physical and the psychological, the latter demonstrated in randomized trials in clinical populations, rather than a recreational activity to which benefit has been optimistically attached.

The physical benefits of climbing arrive through the activity itself; a person who climbs grows stronger whether or not anyone attends to it. The psychological benefits are different, and it is on them that the remainder of this section concentrates, because they are the ones a program must be built to produce. What the evidence does not supply is the mechanism by which it does so, and an organization that cannot say what its instrument does to a person cannot design programming around it, train staff to deliver it, or recognize when it has stopped working. Adventure education has had a theory of change for fifty years. Walsh and Golins (1976) specified that a learner placed in an unfamiliar physical and social environment, and given problem-solving tasks that are incremental, concrete, manageable, and consequential, enters a state of adaptive dissonance, which resolves through mastery into a revised understanding of what they are capable of. The task specification describes a climbing route, and it was written about wilderness expeditions.

Distinct mechanisms operate within that setting, spanning the formation of capability beliefs, the regulation of fear and arousal, the calibration of judgment, and the sustaining of motivation. Climbing engages each. Three are set out here because each names a capacity the instrument produces and because each bears on the argument of this paper.

The first is capability belief. Bandura (1997) identifies four sources from which self-efficacy is built: enactive mastery, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and the interpretation a person places on their own physiological arousal. Climbing can supply all four within a single session. The fourth is particularly salient in climbing, which generates fear and bodily activation reliably, and in a setting where objective danger is substantially controlled and the participant can be told accurately that the fear is not tracking the danger.

The second is executive function. Diamond and Lee (2011) reviewed the interventions shown to improve executive function in children and found that all successful programs share two properties: repeated practice, and progressively increasing challenge. Route reading is planning. Declining to grab at the nearest hold is inhibitory control. Holding a sequence in mind while executing it under fatigue is working memory. Abandoning a failed sequence mid-route and generating another is cognitive flexibility. The grade scale supplies the progression. Diamond further reports that children with the weakest executive function benefit most, which she frames as a means of averting the widening of achievement gaps.

The third is judgment. Martin and Priest (1986) model the adventure experience as the inter-

action of perceived risk with perceived competence, and locate its developmental product not in confidence but in accuracy: the participant is moved toward becoming an astute perceiver of their own competence and of the risk actually present in a situation. The distinction is load-bearing, since efficacy without calibration is overconfidence, and a program producing confidence alone has produced a hazard. Climbing corrects miscalibration immediately, at low cost, and without the intervention of an adult whose judgment can be disputed. It is therefore an instrument for teaching judgment under uncertainty, which is transferable to every domain a young person will enter and which few other youth programs are positioned to claim.

Perceived risk is among these mechanisms and is not the largest, though it is the one most often invoked in defense of adventure programming and most often misdescribed. What a participant obtains is better characterized as graded and voluntary exposure than as risk: real fear within engineered safety. A growing literature has raised concern about the declining availability of manageable risk in contemporary childhood rather than about its presence (Brussoni et al., 2015).

None of these mechanisms operates automatically. Climbing is, by its nature, a well-formed developmental setting: it is inherently sequenced, since its grades impose a progression; it demands active participation; and it does not admit divided attention. What it cannot supply is an account of what a participant has done. The task objective is unambiguous, and the participant reaches the hold or does not and knows which; the developmental objective is not. The wall does not tell an adolescent that what they have just done is tolerate fear, or persist after failure, or revise a mistaken estimate of their own capability. It presents the experience and says nothing about it. A meta-analysis of after-school programs seeking to promote personal and social skills found stronger outcomes among programs that were sequenced, active, focused, and explicit, the last of these meaning that the program deliberately targeted specific personal or social skills rather than leaving them to be absorbed (Durlak, Weissberg, & Pachan, 2010). Climbing satisfies the first three conditions structurally and the fourth not at all.

How far the effects extend beyond the activity is the field's central unresolved question, and it should be stated rather than concealed. The mechanisms operate at the crag, and efficacy earned on a route is in the first instance a fact about climbing. What the literature supports is narrower than a solution to that problem but sufficient for the purposes of this paper: a systematic review of twenty-seven studies of outdoor education found that the programmatic elements through which instructors affect participant outcomes are the incorporation of experiential learning, debriefing and feedback, and participant reflection (Povilaitis, Riley, DeLange, Verkouw, Macklin, & Hodge, 2019). Facilitation of this kind is accordingly the last of the things a program must supply, and the one climbing withholds most completely. It operates at two scales: at the point of delivery, a person observes what a participant has done and makes the developmental objective explicit; and at the level of the organization, which builds the program in which that occurs, trains the people who perform it, and holds the conditions the experience requires.

Facilitation is a dial rather than a switch. It raises how much of the experience a program converts into a developmental outcome; it does not determine whether benefit occurs. A participant who is frightened, climbs, and reaches the top has gained something whether or not anyone attends to it, and the unfacilitated climb is a real experience with real effects. The Practice commitment in Section 6 accordingly demands more than anchors and certifications; it demands facilitation, and

not the provision of terrain alone.

Two further properties bear not on whether climbing develops people but on whether an organization can deliver it to a public. The first is engineered consequence: real fear within controlled danger is what allows a school district, a county, and an insurer to participate. The second is the absence of a skill floor: a participant with no prior experience can climb on the first day, and the activity does not require a season of preparation before it can be entered, which is a precondition for delivering it to a general public rather than to a self-selected population.

These properties are the reason the instrument is available to an LCO at all. Schools, municipal recreation departments, youth organizations, and programs serving veterans or older adults rarely hold the technical capability, terrain access, and culture of practice that climbing requires. Within a given community, the LCO is the institution best positioned to place this instrument, and the physical and psychological benefits it produces, before a public that would otherwise never reach it.

5 The Civic Model

The civic LCO defines itself by a community outcome and identifies climbing as its instrument for producing that outcome. The change is one of institutional identity before it is one of activity, and its consequences follow from Section 2. Identity determines the audience before which an organization presents itself; that audience confers legitimacy; legitimacy governs access to resources. Enlarging the audience is the only operation that raises the ceiling, and repositioning is the means of enlarging it.

The consequences set out below are the ones the model predicts. They follow from the argument of Section 2 rather than from an evaluation of organizations that have already adopted it.

The population served changes from the climbing public to the public.

The terms on which local government evaluates the organization change from an interest group seeking accommodation to a civic partner delivering a public benefit. Permitting, public hearings, and institutional partnership are conducted on those terms.

The classification applied by foundations and grant-makers changes from a recreational cause to a youth-development, public-health, or community-development provider, categories funded at materially larger scale. The set of institutions for which the organization is legible expands accordingly, to include school districts, county health and human services agencies, hospital community-benefit programs, veterans' services, and municipal recreation. None of these has a reason to fund a climbing organization. Several hold standing mandates to fund what a civic LCO does.

The volunteer and donor bases widen to include parents, educators, and residents with no prior connection to the sport. The organization now exists for them, and does something they have reason to value.

The constituency for access protection widens. Where a crag serves as a site of youth development and community recreation, its protection becomes a community interest, defended by a broader and more durable coalition than climbers alone can constitute.

None of these consequences requires the organization to reduce its commitment to climbing or to the climbers it already serves. The technical work of the first-generation model remains necessary

and remains the organization's distinctive competence.

Nor is the effect on climbers merely the absence of a cost. The climbing constituency itself grows. The first-generation model recruits climbers incidentally, as a byproduct of work performed for those who already climb, and it holds no mechanism for enlarging the population on which it depends. A civic LCO recruits deliberately and at scale. Every program it runs introduces climbing to participants who would not otherwise have encountered it, and a proportion of them become climbers, volunteers, donors, and advocates in turn. The organization that repositions therefore does not exchange its climbing constituency for a civic one. It acquires the only instrument by which the climbing constituency can itself be enlarged, and the bounded audience described in Section 2 is enlarged rather than merely supplemented.

The repositioning also changes who can afford the benefit. Climbing's documented effects, physical and psychological alike, are ordinarily reached only through paid access: a gym membership, personal equipment, instruction, or guided days, each priced for those who can meet the cost. The activity is, in this sense, gated — a person cannot grow stronger, or obtain the psychological benefit of the activity, from a wall they cannot afford to reach. A commercial provider does not remove this gate; it collects at it. The civic LCO, funded by a public that endorses its provision rather than by the participant, removes the gate rather than charging at it, and delivers the same benefits to a population the market prices out: the student who cannot pay, the school with no program, the community without a gym. The charitable form is what converts a benefit otherwise sold as a product into one available as a public good.

The repositioning is realized through programming rather than through mission language. Programs may take varied forms according to terrain, capacity, and local need: partnership with a school district, youth climbing initiatives, scouting programs, adaptive climbing, programming for veterans or older adults, and family and public access days.

These forms are not equivalent. What raises any of them from enjoyable to developmentally productive is the facilitation described in Section 4, and a public access day that supplies terrain without it has left much of its return unclaimed. Such days remain the on-ramp by which a community first encounters the organization.

For most civic LCOs, youth programming will serve as the anchor, because young people are the clearest beneficiaries and schools the most natural institutional partners. The beneficiary, however, is the community, and youth are one population within it among many.

6 The Four Commitments

The model is defined by four commitments. Each is adoptable by an organization of any size.

6.1 Purpose

The organization defines its mission by a community outcome, such as youth development, public health, or broad access to structured challenge, rather than by what it secures for climbers.

Two conditions distinguish a purpose from a statement of preference. The mission must identify a beneficiary other than the organization's own members: a mission to protect access for climbers names the organization's own constituency as the party served, which is the definition of a user

group, and a mission to develop young people through climbing does not. And the mission must specify an outcome the organization could fail to achieve, since a mission to promote climbing cannot fail and therefore cannot be evaluated. An outcome that cannot fail also cannot be measured, which makes the first commitment a precondition of the fourth.

Purpose governs the commitments that follow it, because identity determines the audience before which an organization presents itself, and that audience governs its access to resources, as Section 2 establishes. It is also the commitment most readily adopted in language alone. An organization may revise its mission statement and continue to serve climbers exclusively, and such an organization has not adopted the model. The repositioning is effected through programming, as Section 5 states, and not otherwise.

6.2 Practice

The organization identifies climbing as its distinctive instrument for producing that outcome, and maintains the technical and safety standards the instrument requires.

The activity produces its physical benefits unaided, and much of its psychological benefit as well. A climber who has never been instructed grows stronger, and acquires mastery, calibration, and the regulation of fear from the practice itself, and the sense of accomplishment is intrinsic to completing what was in doubt. The activity produces these effects slowly, however, across an exposure measured in years, and it produces them only in those who persist. A program can rely on neither condition. Its participants are not self-selected across decades, and it will observe each of them a fixed and small number of times.

Facilitation is what renders the effects available at the timescale on which a program operates. Section 4 conditions the outcome on four features of program design; climbing supplies three of them structurally and supplies the fourth, explicit attention to the developmental objective, not at all. Facilitated, the capacity a participant has exercised is made available to them; unfacilitated, it is left to be inferred over a period the participant will not spend.

At the point of delivery, facilitation is a competence distinct from climbing competence, and proficiency in the latter does not confer the former. It must be trained, observed, and specified within the organization's guide standard alongside its technical certifications. Placing such a person in front of a participant, under the conditions the mechanism requires, is the organization's own work.

An organization that holds terrain and hardware but does not facilitate possesses an activity rather than an instrument, and will produce climbers rather than the outcome its first commitment names.

6.3 Partnership

The organization sustains genuine community engagement: real programming, real institutional partnerships, and a continuing presence in local civic life, reaching participants across the community rather than a single population.

Partnership is also the mechanism by which a small organization acquires capability it does not itself hold, and this is what makes the model available at any scale. A volunteer LCO need not carry commercial liability insurance, employ certified instructors, or build a safety-management

system in order to run a school program. It needs a partner that already has them. Guide services hold professional certification, commercial insurance, and operational systems. School districts hold transportation, supervision, background checks, and access to participants. Land managers hold the site. The LCO holds terrain knowledge, stewardship, technical capability, and the relationships that assemble the others. The program is produced by the combination, and no single party is required to hold everything.

The mechanism is documented in organizations structurally similar to LCOs. Research on nonprofit community sport organizations, which are typically small, volunteer-governed, and under-resourced, finds that interorganizational relationships yield the acquisition of basic resources, social support, standing in the community, and reciprocity among partners, and that they allow the organization to build capacity and improve its programs (Misener & Doherty, 2009, 2013).

A second consequence is internal to the organization. Programming built on partner capacity is additive rather than extractive. It does not consume the hardware budget, and it does not redirect volunteer hours contributed by the climbing constituency for climbing purposes. The transition therefore does not require an organization to take from its existing base in order to serve a new one, which is the condition under which such transitions most often fail.

6.4 Proof

The organization measures and reports, formally or informally, on the community outcomes it exists to produce, rather than reporting to its climbing constituency solely on access defended.

Proof has a floor low enough for any organization to meet and should not be treated as a research obligation. At minimum: participants served, institutional partners engaged, and return or retention where programming recurs. These are counts of activity rather than evidence of effect, and by themselves they cannot fail in the sense the Purpose commitment requires. An organization should therefore add at least one outcome measure that its partner institution already collects, since a school or agency partner is generally gathering attendance, engagement, or referral data as a matter of course; it is this measure, not the activity counts, that exposes the mission to the possibility of failure. Proof constructed on a partner's existing instruments costs an LCO nothing and is expressed in a language its funders already read.

Proof is what renders the other three commitments legible to the audiences whose recognition the model depends on. An organization that performs the work and cannot describe it has performed the work only for itself.

7 Implementation

The commitments define the model. Organizational depth defines the stage of its adoption.

An organization may begin with a single school program at a borrowed crag, delivered with a partner that supplies the capability the organization lacks. As community relationships develop, partnerships become institutional, programming becomes recurring and reaches a wider population, and the organization becomes an established part of local civic life. In its most developed form, a civic LCO may hold land of its own and sustain its programming through its own operations, functioning as a permanent civic institution.

Land ownership and earned revenue are a possible mature expression of the model rather than a condition of it. Permanence is an outcome of the repositioning, not a prerequisite for it. No organization is excluded by size. The model requires a direction rather than a scale.

8 Conclusion

First-generation LCOs served climbers, and served them effectively. Their limit is not the quality of the work but the size of the audience before which it is performed. An organization legitimate to climbers alone is funded, staffed, and received at the scale that audience permits, and further effort within the model deepens standing with that audience rather than raising the ceiling.

The civic model changes the audience by changing what the organization is for, repositioning the LCO from a climbing organization serving climbers to a community organization serving its community through climbing. The repositioning requires no capability the organization lacks. The terrain access, technical competence, stewardship, and civic standing are already held; what the first-generation model does not supply is the purpose that directs them toward a public. The change is one of identity and programming, not of acquisition.

The benefits at issue are documented and durable, physical and psychological, and for most of a community they are otherwise reached only through paid access. The institutions that might deliver them at no cost to the participant, and to a general public rather than a self-selected one, are few, and within a given community the LCO is the only one that holds the terrain, the technical capability, and the standing the task requires. An organization that repositions can expect a broader base of support, stronger standing in the processes that govern access, and more durable protection of the places it stewards. Its community gains an institution capable of delivering a good it has no other means of obtaining. The charitable status is already in place. What the civic model asks is that the organization act on it.

Author's Note. Human conceptual framework; AI-supported writing.

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