



Protect America's Climbing



October 24, 2022

Recreation and Conservation Office
P.O. Box 40917
Olympia, Washington 98504-0917

- RE: 22-2130 EDU, NORTH ZONE CLIMBING RANGERS 2024-2025**
22-2111 EDU, MVRD Wilderness & Backcountry Rangers 2024-2025
22-2129 MNT, MVRD DEVELOPED REC CAMPGROUND MAINTENANCE 2024-25
22-2112 MVRD Trail Maintenance 2024-2025
22-2114 MVRD Mixed Use Deferred Trail Maintenance 2024-2025

To Whom It May Concern:

We write to express our support of the North Zone Climbing Rangers (22-2130) and the Methow Valley Ranger District (MVRD) Wilderness & Backcountry Rangers (22-2111), as well as critical maintenance proposals for trail maintenance and developed recreation sites (22-2129, 22-2112, 22-2114). All five proposals promote education of Washington's climbing community and help protect the climbing environment.

The Wenatchee River Ranger District (WRRD) and the MVRD encompass many rock climbing and mountaineering destinations of local, regional and international significance; a few of which are Mount Stuart, the Washington Pass Spires such as Liberty Bell, the Wine Spires of Silver Star Peak, Goat Wall, and the massifs of Prusik, Dragontail, and Colchuck Peaks. There are also countless other smaller crags and bouldering areas in the districts that have climbing history dating back 70 years. Washington climbers visit the WRRD and MVRD every season of the year, whether to climb rock, ice, boulders, or alpine objectives across the districts.

For nearly ten years, the WRRD and MVRD's climbing ranger education programs have done the important work of educating climbers on environmentally and socially responsible climbing practices, collecting use and resource data, identifying environmental impacts, building relationships within the community, and enforcing regulations. The programs have also participated and co-hosted several volunteer events, taught climbing-specific Leave No Trace seminars, made hundreds of contacts in the

field, and cleaned up countless climbs and staging areas. All of this is done in a collaborative process with Leavenworth Mountain Association, Access Fund, Washington Climbers Coalition, American Alpine Club, Northwest Mountain School, The Mountaineers, and the Forest Service. We hope the North Zone Climbing Rangers program will continue to produce positive results in protecting the environment, creating a safe, positive recreational experience, and protecting NOVA opportunities.

The Enchantments and Stuart Range of the Alpine Lakes Wilderness of the WRRD and the Washington Pass and Mazama areas of the MVRD continue to grow in popularity and use across climbers and all recreational users. As the WRRD and MVRD struggle to meet the growing demands of these cherished places, continued support from RCO for Climbing, Wilderness, and Backcountry Rangers will provide critical education of climbers and other recreational user groups in popular recreational areas.

Critical maintenance of trails, trailheads, dispersed recreation, and Wilderness must accompany education and enforcement programs to effectively address the growing needs and impacts of recreational users. In 2022, the Washington Climbers Coalition and other partners supported the WRRD with critical trail work in the Enchantments. We support the necessary maintenance proposals for WRRD and MVRD trailheads, developed sites, Wilderness trails and frontcountry trails.

The climbing community as a group is conscientious of access and environmental issues in the areas that they recreate. When resources are available to educate them, they can be one of the most thoughtful and proactive user groups in terms of preservation and impact minimization. We are excited about the potential of these programs to preserve the quality of outdoor experiences for all future users of the WRRD and MVRD, including climbers. We believe that the money granted for these programs would be very well spent preserving and improving the nature of our public lands and the experience one can get from it. We look forward to supporting the WRRD and MVRD with volunteer, outreach, and educational support.

Sincerely,

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