

July 1, 2014

To: The Governor's Taskforce on Outdoor Recreation

From: Group of Washington organizations, companies and individuals involved in climbing in Washington State (AMGA/IFMGA guides, Access Fund, American Alpine Club, American Alpine Institute, Leavenworth Mountain Guides, The Mountaineers, Washington Climbers Coalition, and a number of active Washington State climbers)

The following are top issues from the climbing community that we would like to see the Governor's Task Force consider:

1) The importance of access to public lands in Washington State

Problem Statement

Access for getting outdoors is good for our health and it helps our economy. Actions of land managers that hinder access are working against our citizens and our economy.

Recommendation

It is important for the Governor to make a statement regarding the importance of access to both state and federal public lands here in Washington State.

2) State Leadership role in communication and partnerships on public lands

Problem Statement

With so much federal land in Washington, communication and partnerships between land managers and the public is very important and not very successful in many areas.

Recommendation

We would like to see more communication between land managers on outdoor recreation in general and climbing specifically. Ideas include a state-hosted Forest Service and land manager conference that can help improve public-private partnerships. An award concept could be built into this as a way to recognize land managers who have focused on partnerships and outdoor recreation, institutionalize the collaboration as a best practice, and would encourage other land managers to consider similar relationships.

3) Permitting on state lands

Problem Statement

Permits, and the permit processes, for organizations and companies to introduce people to our public lands is different for each state agency (Department of Natural Resources, State Parks and the Department of Fish and Wildlife)-and makes for a very cumbersome process.

Recommendation

It would greatly help organizations and companies that take people outdoors to have one permit process for obtaining permits for state lands. It would significantly help relieve the administrative burden on these groups if the State Park permitting system was common for all state public land.

4) Technical advisory committees for climbing in State Parks

Problem Statement

State law requires any State Park with climbing to have a technical advisory committee, which has not been implemented.

Recommendation

We recognize that this policy may be cumbersome to local land managers. We encourage the Governor to create a statewide climbing advisory committee, made up of volunteer members from the climbing community, to satisfy this policy that is currently unenforced at the local level.

5) Long-term advisory on outdoor recreation in Washington State

Problem Statement

We are concerned that this focus on outdoor recreation will end when the Task Force is dissolved in September.

Recommendation

We recommend that a long-term advisory committee on outdoor recreation be created so that this effort doesn't end with the conclusion of the task force. This group should be made up of volunteer members to ensure fiscal longevity and sustainability.