

Cave Rock Management Plan Implementation April 2009

The Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (LTBMU) is continuing to implement the Cave Rock Management Plan (Plan). The Plan provides for:

- Non-motorized, day-use public access of Cave Rock.
- Immediate protection of historic resources.
- Management for historic, cultural, archeological and scientific values.
- Prohibition of climbing activity in or on Cave Rock, which was determined to be inconsistent with the need to protect historic, archeological and scientific values.

Following a lengthy EIS analysis, the Plan decision was signed by Forest Supervision Maribeth Gustafson in August of 2003. The Plan was legally challenged in U.S. District Court by a climbing advocacy group, The Access Fund. In that case, the District Court upheld the Cave Rock Management Plan. The Access Fund filed an appeal. In August of 2007, the 9th U.S. District Court of Appeals decided in favor of the Forest Service and again upheld the Cave Rock Management Plan.

Restoration

Beginning in the 1980s, climbing bolts and other alterations to the cave and cave faces were installed without authorization of the Forest Service. As part of this implementation, restoration will include removal of 46 bolted climbing routes consisting of approximately 350 bolts from the cave and facing aspects of Cave Rock. Sixty percent of the bolts are located within the cave. Further cave restoration will remove an artificial concrete floor and other non-historic elements within the cave.

Site Description and Factors of Significance:

- Cave Rock, an approximately 3 million year-old volcanic core, is located on Lake Tahoe's southeast shore. The site is named for the cave on the southwest face, caused by ancient wind and wave erosion.
- The cave interior has sensitive archeological resources dating back to the early human occupation of the Lake Tahoe Basin.
- The cave contains paleo-environmental resources, including scientifically rich pack-rat midden deposits. The deposits contain data providing insights into thousands of years of local environmental and climate change.
- The location has complex Washoe Tribal cultural associations dating back to very early Washoe occupation of the basin, as well as associations with important historic individuals.
- Cave Rock is an important historic transportation corridor with physical resources and conditions that show continuous use from the mid-1800s emigration, freighting, communications and commerce routes, through the historic Lincoln Highway and today's Interstate Highway System.
- Cave Rock is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places for its cultural, historic and scientific values.

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