April 9, 2013

**OPPOSE the NEW Lake Mead NRA BOLT CHOPPING PLAN**

**Submit Your OBJECTIONS Online At:** <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/commentForm.cfm?parkID=317&projectID=16820&documentID=51955>

**\*\*The Comment Period has been informally extended for at least 7 days until April 19, 2013.**

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**SAMPLE LETTER**

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To Whom It May Concern:

SUBJECT: Objections to: Lake Mead NRA: Preliminary Alternatives for the Draft Wilderness

 Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement - March 2013

The RAM IT DOWN THE PUBLIC'S THROAT – NPS/LMNRA "Preliminary Alternatives for the Draft Wilderness Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement - March 2013" contains a rock climbing management plan that prohibits rock climbing.

The purpose of this plan as written is to constructively ban rock climbing in the Bridge Canyon Wilderness, aka: Christmas Tree Pass, NV and places like it.

This rock climbing management plan is virtually identical to the previous NPS/Lake Mead NRA bolt chopping plan that was withdrawn back in 2010.

The new NPS Lake Mead NRA Climbing Prohibition on page 6 of the Prelim Alts for Draft WMP & EIS (3/2013) which is entitled: Rock Climbing Management Options – reads in part:

**Climbing is a legitimate wilderness activity. HOWEVER, THE PLACEMENT OF FIXED ANCHORS IS GENERALLY PROHIBITED IN ORDER TO PROTECT THE UNDEVELOPED QUALITY OF WILDERNESS AREAS.**

Climbing in the Bridge Canyon Wilderness, aka: Christmas Tree Pass NV and throughout the Lake Mead NRA is functionally impossible without fixed bolts. The overwhelming majority of the existing and potential climbs are bolt protected slab climbs. So, prohibiting "intensively bolted routes" effectively prohibits rock climbing.

The term **"bolt intensive routes"** is a RED HERRING the use of which would enable land managers who hate rock climbing and know absolutely nothing about it to capriciously and arbitrarily determine how much leader protection is necessary to assure the safety of rock climbers.

95% of the anchors in the Bridge Canyon Wilderness are fixed bolts because there are virtually zero natural cracks or vegetation available to facilitate the use of removable rock climbing anchors.

Further, the majority of the established rock climbs in the Bridge Canyon Wilderness are so sparsely protected that the only way that the overwhelming majority of the existing rock climbs in the Bridge Canyon Wilderness could be less “intensively bolted” would be to prohibit bolts and force rock climbers to climb without leader protection risking death on every ascent.

The existing leader protection bolts in the Bridge Canyon Wilderness are from 25 feet to as much as 70 feet apart. Falling while leading some these climbs can result in leader falls over 100 feet on nearly vertical shear terrain.

There is one allegedly over-bolted cliff on the edge of the Spirit Mountain Wilderness called the Aviator Wall that could be protected by top rope. Rock climbing with top ropes on the Aviator Wall should be an approved activity. However, even IF there is a way to remove any allegedly unnecessary bolts from the Aviator Wall without damaging the rock, that should only be done by very experienced climbers so that permanent rock scarring can be prevented.

The Bridge Canyon Wilderness should be developed as a dry camping area with adequate off highway parking for approximately 15 vehicles in each of four distinct locations along Christmas Tree Pass Road with designated camp sites in at least two of those locations.

The original dirt roads from Christmas Tree Pass road to Willow Spring should be re-opened as improved walking paths so that human impact on the surrounding land can be minimized. Hiding those 100 + year old dirt roads has caused many climbers and hikers to bushwack cross country in order to reach the area around Willow Spring. As a result, instead of restricting the impact of human foot traffic to the existing dirt roads, erosion damage and scarring from pedestrian travel is now spread over a much wider area.

The so called Rock Climbing Management "Options" were obviously written by someone who hates rock climbing and rock climbers. The authors of this latest climbing prohibition and bolt chopping plan have ZERO interest in or understanding of what rock climbing is, or how to manage rock climbing as a legitimate activity, an avocation that millions of tax paying Americans enjoy on a regular and continuing basis.

If the Lake Mead NRA wants to effectively manage rock climbing as a safe legitimate activity in places like Christmas Tree Pass, NV, the agency must retain the services of a land manager who has experience managing rock climbing areas and who can work cooperatively with rock climbers. **Constructively banning rock climbing is simply wrong.**