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Comments: My first visit to Ten Sleep was in 2019. It was the sunset, not the climbing, that convinced me to move here. The pinks, oranges and purples painted across the sky and canyon walls as I exited from the Valhalla trail was unlike any sky I'd ever seen. It was later that evening I saw headlights on climbing walls after dark, and red padlocks accompanying routes shortly thereafter. I live in Ten Sleep because I love this place, both in its natural beauty and because of its people.

I grew up in the climbing industry, first through working in climbing gyms and then in non-profits. In my 13 years working in the climbing industry, I done everything from coaching youth climbing teams to collectivizing advocacy efforts with the San Carlos Apache Tribe to save Oak Flat. My comments here are to share my experiences.

When we look at the Ten Sleep Management Plan, we need to look at the current state of the government bodies responsible for upholding it, while equally considering every potential of the future state of those same government bodies. The US Forest Service is an arm of the Dept of Agriculture that is deeply underfunded. I don't know how much our local climbing ranger makes, but my guess is that his salary is akin to that of a teacher. His job here in the Bighorns is a labor of love.

The CMP proposes permit processes to develop in Ten Sleep Canyon, but the reality, especially if we look at trends in the current administration, will make a permit process infeasible. Permit processes require manpower. They require time spent reviewing, systems to log applications, lengthy appeals processes, and more. They require time. Time allocated by a current team of dedicated, wonderful people keeping the CMP afloat.

But - those people will not be here forever, and we must view this CMP through the worst of potential scenarios and the best.

When we reflect on the 2019 fiasco that resulted in the bolting moratorium through an unbiased set of eyes, we find a passionate, yet misguided, group of local developers that ultimately could not navigate personal disagreements with effective conflict/resolution techniques. They were passionate about their local areas, but let personal grudges between them -- both related and not related to climbing -- turn irritation into full blown violence. We must remember that these were individuals who physically threatened one another. Today, we are simply still dealing with the consequences of irrational actors. Most of these individuals left Ten Sleep after 2019. They moved to other climbing areas in other parts of the United States, abandoned the consequences they themselves created, and continued climbing in areas with development practices they abhorred here, but now accept in their new life.

Across America thousands of climbing areas exist - many equal or larger in size to Ten Sleep Canyon. Most of these areas are not subject to climbing management plans, bolting moratoriums, and climbing closures unless rooted in an ecological need such as raptor nesting. Why? Because the people are rational actors.

It is deeply unfortunate that developers in 2019 could not put aside their differences and instead required the federal government to oversee their actions. It is a scar in climbing history. It is a precedent for other climbing communities to study in how they can avoid the same mistakes made here.

I give this context because this canyon has evolved beyond "whether to develop or not to develop." This canyon sees increased traffic every year. Climbing is getting bigger, and with it, so do the opportunities that stem from within. The biggest challenge to Ten Sleep Canyon is overcrowding and every obstacle that comes with it: human waste, pet waste, parking requirements, maintained trail systems and more.

But - with this increased traffic comes more opportunity. Children can now obtain full scholarships to college through competitive climbing. More families might find interest in moving to Ten Sleep for a growing local economy and its climbing - a growing concern within the town. The greater climbers talk about this beautiful place, the greater chance we have at securing volunteer work to protect our favorite crags.

I wish to see a finalized CMP that takes the following into account:

1.) Pre-identification of approved areas for development that meet the needs of a growing industry. This includes areas in which easy to moderate routes may be established to address the exponential rate of beginner climbers entering the sport, as well as areas to assist in overcrowding across the canyon as a whole.

2.) A clearly defined permitting process that removes the administrative burden on the US Forest Service as much as possible, or removal of the permitting process entirely.

3.) Deletion in the requirement to remove bolts in the NRA, as this is a drain on existing resources.

4.) Immediate re-opening for development outside of the Ten Sleep Project area, even as the current CMP processes. Immediate reopening to development in the project plan upon approval of the CMP.

5.) Considerations that these initiatives are already occurring at the federal level, and much of the work done within the CMP is duplicative of superseding efforts.

The people responsible for work on this plan are incredible people. Without Ryan Sorensen, the CMP might still be indefinitely stuck in administrative purgatory. We must take a moment to express deep gratitude towards these individuals. It will be because of their effort this canyon sees official trail systems, toilets, and safer access for recreationists across the board, not just climbers.

I live in this beautiful town of 250 people. Do you know what I see? I see a future youth climbing program here. I see guided climbing opportunities and retreats through locally owned businesses. I see the establishment of climbing routes specifically catered to families with children, and new climbers alike. I want every single person who steps foot in this canyon to fall in love with this place, just like I did.

Every penny associated with this recreation management plan should be invested into the needs this canyon actually faces today. Toilets. Conservation. Education.