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Organization:

Title:

Comments: TL;DR: Suggest modifying proposed rule regarding dogs within 200 feet of cave openings to allow dogs in cars or well controlled on leash anywhere outside a cave entrance.

I just saw the Bend Bulletin story regarding your proposed rule making regarding caves, followed the links to the details, and decided I am highly supportive of most aspects of the proposal.

Coincidentally, last weekend I was hiking in the Horse Butte area, and from there went on to check out Boyd Cave. Except for the Lava Tube -- to which I take almost everyone who visits me in Bend -- it is the only local cave I have been inside. However because it was getting late, and I didn't have adequate lighting and protective equipment, I only went in about 30 feet, then decided to come back another time when I will be properly equipped and with a buddy for safety. As stated, I support almost all the rule making that you propose. However I think the rules regarding dogs are overly restrictive, which makes enforcement impractical. It is not apparent to me that there is any compelling reason to prohibit, even within 200 feet of the entrance, dogs in cars or well-supervised on leash and outside the cave, e.g., by a member of the party who stays behind outside the cave.

I would also suggest that if misuse continues after the rules are in place it would be appropriate to set up entrance controls. For example, you could install a locked gate at the entrance and provide a temporary unlocking code to individuals who arrange in advance to enter -- for example, via a smartphone app. This would also be a safety enhancement, inasmuch as if an individual or a party does not come back out within their anticipated time interval you would know that it might be necessary to send help.

Thanks for your attention ... if any of this is unclear please ask for additional details.