

BOULDER PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT  
FEBRUARY 21, 1995

MEMORANDUM

TO: Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

FROM: Chris Dropinski, Director of Parks and Recreation  
Ann Wichmann, Manager of Mountain Parks

RE: Bolt Replacement in the Mountain Parks and Open Space

The Mountain Parks and Open Space staff has been meeting with representatives of the climbing community for approximately one year to discuss the possibility of developing a bolt replacement policy in both systems. As you know, the placement of bolts and other fixed hardware was prohibited by ordinance in May of 1991. The climbing community has expressed concern about fixed anchors and bolts aging and becoming unsafe for climbing. The City Attorney's office does not believe that the City is responsible for either the original placement or the replacement of any fixed hardware in the Mountain Parks and Open Space. The City does not consider the bolts or fixed anchors to be a "facility" for which the City is responsible in regards to safety, upkeep or maintenance.

Nonetheless, as the City has not taken steps to prohibit climbing in the system and the system does contain numerous bolts and other fixed hardware upon which climbers depend, complaints have been received from the community in regards to unsafe hardware. In the past, various volunteer groups have replaced unsafe hardware as a community service, but these groups no longer wish to expose themselves legally in this manner. Staff has been working to develop a system by which the climbing community itself might legally replace hardware which they deem to be unsafe. The City would not be involved in the determination nor the replacement of suspect hardware, but must be notified of such replacement in order to satisfy the requirements of both the city ordinance and natural resource management concerns.

The mechanism of such notification is currently in the form of an informational brochure which explains various aspects of climbing management in the Mountain Parks and Open Space and also serves the purpose of a voluntary notice of intent to replace specific fixed hardware in the system. This notice must be stamped by the receiving department and management information will be computer logged. The volunteer must retain the stamped form which expires seven days from the stamped date and must be able to present the form to park rangers in the field. In this way, a volunteer could replace unsafe hardware at specific known locations with prior notice to the department. If following the parameters of the notification process, the volunteer would not be subject to prosecution under current ordinance and the City would continue to refuse any responsibility for maintenance and upkeep of non-city property.

Staff intends to internally review the draft notification process and reconvene the climbing community committee prior to presentation to either the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board or the Open Space Board of Trustees. Presentation to the Boards should occur in March or April of 1995.