

## VOLUNTARY JUNE CLIMBING CLOSURE

The National Park Service asks that climbers choose not to climb the Tower during the month of June. The June voluntary climbing closure was selected as part of the Devils Tower Climbing Management Plan by a working group that included two climber organizations, two American Indian organizations, and other agency and local government representatives.

Observance of the voluntary June closure balances American Indian cultural and ceremonial values associated with the Tower and the month of June, with the status of the Tower as a world class destination and experience for rock climbers.

Climbers are strongly encouraged to consider enjoying the many other climbing options available in northeast Wyoming and the Black Hills area of South Dakota, during the month of June.

- **WHY JUNE?** *The summer solstice, which occurs late in June, makes June an extremely culturally significant period for American Indians. The Tower is a sacred site to affiliated tribal cultures. June was selected as the voluntary closure month by the Climbing Management Plan working group due to the many traditional ceremonies taking place throughout June, culminating at the end of June and the solstice.*
- **I DON'T SEE ANY CEREMONIES, WHY SHOULD I CHOOSE NOT TO CLIMB IN JUNE?** *The voluntary June closure is not tied to the visible presence of American Indian ceremonies at the Tower because these ceremonies occur any day throughout the year. Some ceremonies occur at night. These ceremonies are often private and may not be visible to visitors. Maximizing compliance with the voluntary closure is necessary to achieve balance between American Indian cultural values and climber access.*
- **WHY ARE CLIMBERS RESTRICTED WHEN OTHER USER GROUPS ARE NOT?** *Climbing is perceived by some American Indians as in direct conflict with the Tower as a sacred site. One of the key elements of the Climbing Management Plan is balancing the validity of perspectives and uses by American Indians and climbers. The voluntary closure includes all Monument visitors above the Tower loop trail, not just rock climbers.*

**The Access Fund, a climber advocacy and access organization, supports compliance with the voluntary June climbing closure as a means to:**

- *Promote understanding and encourage respect for the culture of the numerous American Indian tribes who are closely affiliated with the Tower as a sacred site.*
- *Promote and advance self-regulation by climbers rather than more restrictive options.*