

Allmenningens tragedie - hva har den med våre grotter å gjøre?

The tragedy of the commons is a well-known mechanism for gradual destruction of natural resources. Caves are no exception. Cave environments has low energy flux. The carrying capacity and self-reparation rate is practically nil. Any impact is permanent and cumulative. The original explorers of Norway's caves exercised great ethics and conservation attitude. Most followers did not. Apart from a limited body of dedicated and careful cavers (who also inevitably exercise impact - none of us is «innocent»!), many of the "best" and well-known caves have received tremendous wear over the years. The process has been gradual, and by many individuals. Each person may view his or her contribution as insignificant, but the sum is highly destructive. The users have been commercial adventure travel agencies, schools and other voluntary groups, and single, non-caving individuals. Several adventure-travel TV and action movies productions display lack of cave ethics and acceptable practice. The voluntary regime of good caving practice have failed. Instead, we're in a vicious circle of destruction. The only practical remedy in sight will be to reinforce legal natural protection authorities and exercise a proposed three-fold categorization of cave use: Scientific sites, aesthetic and recreation sites and sporting and challenging sites. The future is open.