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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Tonto National Forest Plan Rock Climbing

To Whom It May Concern,

I am an avid rock climber and I love climbing in the Tonto National Forest. I have forever been perplexed by the limitations enforced on route setting with fixed anchors as to me, the impact of naturally colored bolts in a rock face are minimal and in fact most other recreation users are typically unaware that routes exist at all. When you contrast this to the great impact of other users (say horse travel) the concerns over limiting climbing seem out of proportion to the actual affect on these natural areas.

That said,I am aware that a new draft management plan is being considered. I wish to offer some suggestions to the draft plan that would better represent the concerns of our climbing community.

It appears that the plan on numbered pages 28 and 29 limits rock climbing to prior authorization. I have two comments with regard to those statements.

1. There is no mention of grandfathering in existing rock climbing areas, most of which have rock climbing anchors in place. Could you please add a statement that grandfathers rock climbing routes and anchors that exist prior to the date of the adoption of the new management plan?
2. The draft plan appears to recognize fixed anchors only as a means of descent. That is incorrect. Fixed anchors (bolts) are very frequently used as a safety measure in ascending a route where removable anchors (pro) are not feasible. Could you please add language recognizing that fixed anchors and bolts are also required for ascending a route?

Also, the draft plan does not deal with rock climbing (fixed anchors) in the Wilderness areas, but much rock climbing does exist within the Superstition Wilderness area for example. Language should be added that deals with such climbing and anchors. It may be feasible for the Tonto to allow for the safe replacement of aging bolts and anchors but not new bolts in new locations.

The draft plan also does not address the process for seeking and obtaining written authorization for rock climbing areas. Language should be added that spells out that process.

Thank you,

Linsey Branam

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