Data Submitted (UTC 11): 7/25/2021 5:21:22 PM First name: Matthew Last name: Kiroff Organization:

Title:

Comments: I would like to see new climbing areas opened on NFS land that is not in the Northern Geological Region. The tourist traffic of every user group is increasing and it will only put more fatigue on the infrastructure of the Red River Gorge. By utilizing land that isn't in the Northern Gorge for climbing, we can spread out at least one of the user groups that frequent the area. Dispersing climbers will also free up parking areas for more hikers to enjoy the area, which could bring more money into the local economy. NFS land is already being leased to oil drilling and other user groups are allowed to recreate on the parcels outside the Northern Geological Region. I see no reason we cannot allow climbers to utilize these areas as well. Crags already exist in some areas. I understand that Archaeological artifacts and fragile microcosms of flora and fauna exist and need to be protected; however, I've seen hikers sifting off dirt looking for artifacts and UTV riders littering and causing extensive soil erosion with their vehicles, not to mention the impact oil drilling has on the environment. My point is climbers would not be doing likely have a much smaller environmental footprint than what is already happening in these areas. There is precedent in the Northern Region for protection of these microcosms (i.e. Military Wall). Lets figure out how to protect what still exists out there and create an environment for sustainable growth. Growth is happening no matter what. Growth is good. Tourists bringing money into the local economy is good. We need to figure out a lot of issues with the path this growth will take, but it can be done. We can do this together. If it is a money issue, I'm sure we can find a way to raise the funds for studies to be conducted that would identify and make safe areas that need to be protected. Thank you for this forum and the chance to voice my opinion.