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First name: Matt

Last name: Sammons

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am an avid climber and user of NFS lands in many different aspects. Near my hometown of Tucson, AZ I am able to bike, run, hike, take photographs, ski, walk my dogs, and climb amongst the mountains in the Santa Catalina National Forest area. While out of town I also utilize and recreate in many different forms, on NFS land elsewhere.

Climbing is a potentially unique use (and it is a legitimate use of the land/mountains) as that it does require protection from falling as an essential and inherent part of the sport. There is no way to safely recreate without the use of protection from climbing.

I am also a route-developer, meaning that I personally (with my own time and monies), choose to establish new rock climbs and make them safe for others to enjoy in the future. Most of this is in non-wilderness areas.

However, some of the climbing I have developed is in a wilderness area. When in the wilderness area I strictly adhered to the existing rules and ethics regarding no power tools, and placing only the strictest minimum of bolt placements to make the climb safe for myself and others.

The ideal that blanket banning of all bolts/anchors in all wilderness areas is an unsafe and inaccurate re-classification of bolts/anchors as installations.

In general climbers are among the most active and low-impact users of outdoor space, and taking away our ability to safely recreate in wide areas of our public land is quite absurd. For example: while climbing I routinely pack out many trash items left by other land users.

Climbers also share the overall ethic that is the 'spirit' of the wilderness designation of an area - we don't want unlimited placement of bolts/anchors by any person with power tools. We also desire a low-impact way of recreating safely without 1) noise pollution 2) excessive visual impacts 3) retaining a mostly impact free area.

Some suggestions/thoughts on a potential middle ground or consensus on this issue.

- 1) continuing the prohibition of power tools and requirement for minimal quantity
- 2) requiring bolts/anchors to be of sufficiently quality materials that they do not require frequent replacement and they do not leave ugly/impactful rust staining on rocks/lichen
- 3) requiring color appropriate camouflage to make the bolts/hardware have a lower visual impact
- 4) Wilderness is an artificial concept made up without regard for the actual historical facts of our lands - all of which were altered and impacted in many ways by indigenous peoples - there is no 'pristine unaltered' land anyway, so why try and artificially create something that never existed while restricting people's use
- 5) work closely with Local Climbing Organizations and groups like ASCA