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Comments: It is my opinion that the most important piece of this proposed project is not the fight over "fixed" "installations" in wilderness areas; or that allowing more easy access for climbers opens the door to other user groups gaining enhancements to the current policies regarding the Wilderness Act such as bikers, hunters, etc. Not that these potential problems and future hurdles do not trouble me. I have worked for four different conservation agencies at varying levels of government, including the NFS. The most important piece of this project is the apparent lack of funding and staff to inventory and inspect all the routes across all the districts within the system-- from what I have read, managers that are without the resources to complete this project are just required to throw up their hands and disallow these "installations" entirely without any inventory whatsoever.

I know that both the NPS and NFS, never mind the BLM, are vastly understaffed and improperly funded. The way that the scope of this project (and the one under comment with NPS) is stated makes obvious pleas for help in managing these vast tracts of land. Taxpayers are ready and willing to fund open spaces -- look at any county Park or Open Space program -- Congress must stop using antiquated means to fund these massive acreages of conserved lands. NPS, NFS, and BLM must stop acting as though self-funding through AUMs, fee areas, logging, and entrance fees is the only way to work within the system.

Don't inventory a single route. Collectively throw your hands up, go to Congress and ask for a permanent funding mechanism that is commensurate to the acreage that you are charged with managing. The recreational questions that this project implies, with other user groups waiting in their millions to see where the wind is blowing, are too great for just skeletal staffs to handle. The shortcomings in the management of these lands-- whether recreational or land use related-- are not yours to bear alone. Taxpayers must begin to bear some of the weight, too.