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Comments: Good day,

I'm taking a moment out of my day to reflect concern regarding the National Forest System and their management of rock climbing on public lands.

I recognize that in recent years there has been a large influx of individuals participating in rock climbing on public lands. I see this as a net positive for the local communities and national parks where this activity occurs. I understand that with an increase participation in climbing, there has likely been an increase in cost with regards to responding to accidents and management of the area as a result of increased traffic.

As I understand it, this new management plan seeks to address the issue with the possible end result being a reduction of access to climbing routes, due to the reduction of permanent anchors and a reduction in the approval of additional permanent anchors.

I think that this could have multiple non-foreseen consequences. First the most obvious would be a reduction in money to the communities in close proximity to the climbing areas. However, I believe more importantly I think there would be an increase in accidents because, the climbing population has grown over the last few years, however some of the technical skills, that are learned through experience, are not to an adequate level where removal of permanent equipment would result in increased accidents.

If the efforts to inspect and update current equipment along with have an increased vetting of petitions for new installation of permanent equipment is the objective, I believe that would be the appropriate path forward. But if the intent is to simply remove current equipment and end all acceptance to new petitions for permanent equipment, then I think this new management plan will result in turmoil as reflected above.

As an aside, I appreciate the concern for keeping wilderness areas primitive and undisturbed. I have always approached climbing whether it be rock, ice or alpine from a perspective of being a fly on the wall and have tailored my climbing style towards the traditional style. But I will not deny that coming across the occasional permanent anchor/ belay station is generally a welcomed situation. If not at a minimum it presents the ability to bail from an objective without leaving even more equipment hanging from the wall. I think if there are increased efforts to get information out to the climbing community to differentiate wilderness areas from preferred recreational areas then this could help to mitigate and guide individuals to the appropriate locations, as well as tailor expectations on what to expect. I know it would be no small task but perhaps some sort of nationwide reference guide of federally approved climbing areas and a description of their different land use classification. This would not be a description of individual routes but a reflection of the area being used in general. I imagine there are groups like the AAC and Access Fund that could facilitate this and then submit for vetting from the NFS. I appreciate the opportunity to voice my opinion and concern and look forward to hearing the eventual decision regarding this issue.