

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 12/10/2023 5:34:58 AM

First name: Michael

Last name: Olwyler

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Please consider my comments & recommendations when making rules for USDA Forest Service lands.

Within designated Wilderness the following will apply:

These comments refer to any fixed anchors and any other fixed human-made equipment used for climbing rock or vegetation. Removable anchors, such as Friends or chocks, are not considered fixed anchors unless intentionally permanently secured for the purpose of safety for climbing.

Climbing and mountaineering in wilderness areas should be permitted and allowed to continue, where it does not adversely impact wildlife or endangered plant life (e.g., where a peregrine falcon is nesting or an endangered species of plant is growing), or in areas where Native American people/tribes believe it is an imposition on their religious beliefs.

Identification and assessment of climbing routes in wilderness will be made and the routes published. An existing climbing route is one that has been recognized, climbed by more than one group of climbers, and which has been published for public use by the Forest Service Responsible Officer after having completed an evaluation of the conditions of the route.

The Forest Service unit will complete and retain a record of all routes identified and evaluated within a wilderness area, and which will be the record of recognized and legitimate routes. By necessity, the public, both climber and non-climber, will need to partner with the Forest Service unit to identify all known routes in a unit.

No new fixed anchors or permanent climbing devices will be installed on any climbing routes within wilderness areas, existing or unidentified (new routes).

Replacement of fixed anchors that already exist may not occur. The climbing route may continue to be used but will then be considered as a further challenge to climbers for the fact that they will have no fixed anchors or human made devices on the route.

Where fixed anchors exist and are legitimate, no additional devices, soft or hard, may be left with the anchor. These include webbing, carabiners, wire, etc.

No battery powered drill or other mechanical method of installing anchors or climbing devices will be used within wilderness areas or on any climbing routes. Those devices fall within the Wilderness Act's definition of mechanical devices, which are prohibited.

Where the Forest Service Responsible Officer deems it necessary, having had a completed evaluation of the conditions, he/she may restrict climbing routes from being used for any number of reasons, from overuse causing undue impacts to the environment, to people, to individual wildlife or vegetation species being affected by climbers on routes.

On General Forest lands (outside Wilderness) the following will apply:

Climbing/mountaineering on General Forest lands should be permitted and allowed to continue, where it does not adversely impact wildlife or endangered plant life (e.g., where a peregrine falcon is nesting or an endangered

species of plant is growing), or in areas where Native American people/tribes believe it is an imposition on their religious beliefs.

The Forest Service unit will complete and retain a record of all routes identified and evaluated on General Forest lands, and which will be the record of recognized and legitimate routes. By necessity, the public, both climber and non-climber, will need to partner with the Forest Service unit to identify all known routes.

Existing anchors for climbing may be replaced, and new anchors on existing routes may be installed on routes that are evaluated by the Deciding Officer and published in the record of authorized climbing routes.

The Deciding Officer for a unit of Forest lands may, upon the completion of a proper evaluation of the conditions, limit or eliminate the use of climbing routes or restrict new fixed anchors or permanent climbing devices on any climbing routes, existing or unidentified (new routes).

No new fixed anchors or permanent climbing devices should be installed on any new climbing routes that are not registered and published without the Deciding Officer's proper evaluation of the route and its impacts to the environment.

Where fixed anchors exist and are legitimate, additional devices, soft or hard, can be left with the anchor. These include webbing, carabiners, wire, etc. However, it is a general practice for climbers to place their own carabiners, webbing, etc., on fixed anchors, and also to take it with them.

Thank you.

Michael Olwyler