

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 12/19/2023 10:55:09 PM

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Comments: This proposal would be better titled "Climbing Restrictions" rather than "Climbing Opportunities". Outdoor climbing is entering a boom, with American Alpine Club membership more than doubling over the last 12 years. As climbing continues to grow in popularity, the number of climbers looking to make the move from indoor climbing to outdoor climbing will also continue to rise. Every climber who learns to climb indoors is kept safe through fixed anchors at their climbing gym, and this is the type of equipment that they will learn on exclusively. The natural progression of climbers in the modern era seems to be from indoor top rope, to indoor lead climbing, to outdoor sport climbing, and then if a climber can surmount the high cost barriers of "trad" gear they might move to trad climbing, ice climbing, or other forms of climbing that require placing removable gear.

Sport climbing implies the use of fixed gear such as bolts and anchors, which the climber can secure their rope to while ascending a route. The notion of making fixed gear restricted means that the period of relatively safe outdoor sport climbing will be threatened in the progression of climbers. The placement of trad gear requires significant amounts of experience and knowledge of the way rock and equipment behave. A poorly placed piece of equipment can result in serious injuries or death should a climber fall and their gear fail. As part of the years long process that many climbers go through to reach a point where they can safely lead trad climbs, sport climbing is essential. Without access to fixed gear such as bolts and anchors, climbers looking to make the leap into outdoor gear are going to be left with three options: 1) Don't climb outside, 2) Climb outside without protective equipment, 3) Purchase extremely expensive equipment to trad climb with. I fear that without the ability to obtain hands on knowledge of rock climbing through fixed gear routes, the number of people making the leap to trad climbing will result in an increase in climbing accidents and fatalities as a result of inexperienced climbers taking the only one of the three aforementioned routes that allows them to

In the current era, we should all be aware that equitable access to the outdoors is paramount. If a person can not afford the thousands of dollars of up front costs to acquire trad gear, then they simply can not climb outside. If they do not take the time to educate themselves on how to use that equipment, then the risk of them suffering an injury will remain unnecessarily high. Sport climbing has a much lower cost entry point of just a couple hundred dollars in equipment. The ability to utilize fixed gear that these climbers(my wife included) rely on will mean an end to their ability to recreate in this way. Climbing will continue to grow, and one need only to look at examples like Smith Rock State Park in Oregon to see that access to an abundance of fixed gear climbing translates into significant economic benefits for the communities nearby.

Please reconsider the restrictions that this proposal seeks to implement on fixed gear in order to ensure safe and equitable access to our public lands.