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Comments: With the rapid growth in recreational climbing, I see the need for coordinated planning and policies to avoid degrading public wilderness and park lands. However, I have two significant concerns with the draft proposal.

My first concern is whether the existing federal management authorities are adequately staffed or funded to meet the need. My second concern is whether policy makers appreciate that most outdoor roped climbers are top-roping or sport (lead) climbing, relying on preexisting, installed anchors and bolts. Only a minority of roped climbers are experienced in safely placing temporary anchors.

The Forest Service no doubt will encourage local climber input, but I encourage the NFS to not relegate an invaluable group of people to a tangential place in climbing management. I strongly encourage the NFS to consider as a template the Appalachian Trail Conservancy and its network of volunteer-based Trail Clubs.

Rather than an ancillary resource only, I suggest moving local climber networks to a central role in future climbing site management. A network of local, volunteer-based Climbing Stewards, in coordination with an alliance of national climbing organizations, would have the much-needed experience and knowledge bases for safe, non-intrusive, and adequate anchor monitoring, installation, and maintenance.