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Comments: Dear USDA Forest Service,

I am writing to express deep concerns regarding the proposed directives outlined in the recent request for public input regarding climbing management on National Forest System (NFS) lands, specifically related to the restriction of establishing new routes on non-Wilderness lands.

The proposal to confine the establishment of new routes solely to "existing climbing opportunities" on non-Wilderness lands presents significant challenges and potential confusion for both land managers and climbers alike. This restriction risks creating ambiguity in defining what constitutes an "existing climbing opportunity," leading to uncertainties in enforcement and management.

Non-Wilderness climbing management policies should uphold the principle of maintaining opportunities for establishing new anchors, preserving the dynamic nature of climbing while ensuring the conservation of cultural and natural resources. The approach to restrict new routes until analyses determine the necessity of climbing restrictions for protecting these resources is a more balanced and practical way forward.

Imposing rigid restrictions without clear criteria or guidelines for establishing new climbing routes may inadvertently stifle the growth and evolution of climbing areas on NFS lands. It's vital to recognize the value of responsible development that aligns with conservation goals rather than imposing blanket restrictions that hinder responsible expansion.

I strongly urge the USDA Forest Service to reconsider the directive restricting new route establishment and engage in extensive consultation with climbers and land managers to develop nuanced guidelines that support sustainable climbing practices while safeguarding cultural and natural resources on non-Wilderness lands.

Thank you for considering these concerns and perspectives in the formulation of climbing management directives.

Sincerely,

Aaron Lutzker