

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/5/2024 6:41:14 PM

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Comments: I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed climbing management directives by the USDA Forest Service, specifically regarding the removal of fixed anchors and equipment in wilderness areas. While I appreciate the need for balanced management of climbing activities on National Forest System (NFS) lands, I am concerned that this particular aspect of the proposal may create dangerous conditions for climbers without providing significant benefits to the public.

Fixed anchors play a crucial role in ensuring the safety of climbers, and their removal may expose individuals to unnecessary risks. Climbing in wilderness areas is already challenging, and the removal of essential safety measures could lead to accidents and injuries, compromising the well-being of climbers.

I believe that a more nuanced approach is necessary, one that considers the safety of climbers alongside the preservation goals outlined in the Wilderness Act. Instead of outright removal, a comprehensive strategy should be developed to assess the impact of fixed anchors and equipment on wilderness character and primitive recreation.

Furthermore, I question the practicality of the proposed Minimum Requirements Analysis, which allows the retention of existing fixed anchors and equipment pending completion. The uncertainty surrounding funding and resources for such analyses may lead to prolonged periods of potential danger for climbers.

In summary, I urge the USDA Forest Service to reconsider the proposed directive related to fixed anchors and equipment in wilderness areas. A more cautious approach is needed to ensure the safety of climbers while preserving the unique qualities of NFS lands.

Sincerely,

Chris Kaplan