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Title:

Comments: Dear USFS,

Access to our beloved forests is so honorably protected by your sector of government. The USFS system has provided countless memorable, some may even say life altering, experiences in the people's land you manage. My experience as a visitor in these areas started as with my family on road trips across the country to see landscapes and learn history unique to this land and our country. As I grew older, I kept looking for new views see and yearned to summit mountains and see views that few every would see. This led to climbing, canyoneering, and caving.

To the more horizontally inclined visitors these climbs of plum orientation expose the basic human fear of falling. Often times the forest service installs fixed railings, trails, cairns/indicators (often installed by patrons) or other safety measures to manage that feeling on horizontal surfaces. My simple question is this: at what specific degree do fixed safety enhancements become illegal? I by no means am a expert climber but most climbers can scale 5.9 with far less effort than your average day hiker tackles a 2 mile loop.

Allow fixed anchors to remain. Create stricter rules if you must but give our environmentally conscious community a chance to remain safe while enjoying a different orientation from the average visitor.

A point of concern I have is Search and Rescue. From my experience, if a climber or hiker would get injured or stuck on ledge, SAR often requires the use of anchors to aid their rescue operations. In popular areas for hiking and climbing having permeant anchors installed can insure that anyone in need of rescue can be saved as quickly as possible.

On the Grand Teton (on NPS land, but still applicable to USFS land) , there are permeant anchors installed for descent off of the summit. There is a way to descent the summit by down climbing (more dangerous than rappelling), the Owen Spalding Route. The O-S route is one of the most climbed routes on the Grand Teton, so having teams ascending and descending the same route would be highly problematic and dangerous. Thus having a separate route for descent with permeant anchors makes descent off of the summit safer for any teams summiting the mountain.

Thank You,
Chris