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First name: Mike

Last name: Krumberger

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Response to USFS draft Directive

Without modifications the proposed FSM 2355 Climbing Opportunities #ORMS-3524 draft Directive will negatively impact the recreational opportunities for anyone who requires fixed anchors for safety, and exploration in and out of wilderness. Climbing as a sport has very low impact on wilderness, most would say negligible effect. Climbers as a group respect the land and the environment in general. Restrictions on fixed anchors not only impact the development of new routes but maintenance of existing routes which may have been constructed 30 to 50 years ago. The technology of fixed anchors and tools for installing have evolved over time resulting in anchors that are stronger, do not degrade the rock, are camouflaged, and last for many more years. Ideas about climbing route development have also changed, where considerations are made about the environment in general. There is a claim by the federal government in their directive that they wish to provide "climbing opportunities". It is clear to everyone that by restricting or eliminating fixed anchors and protection the end result will only reduce or eliminate opportunities. The federal government should state clearly what their real objective is in FSM 2355 Climbing Opportunities #ORMS-3524 draft Directive. Specific corrections to the draft should include the following:

1. Maintenance of existing routes should not have any restrictions. In other words, if there exists a safety issue, then climbers should be allowed to correct it. To not do this seems irresponsible.
2. Guidance from USFS or others on route development in many cases would be appreciated. The directive, however, is recommending a Minimum Requirement Analysis (MRA). We don't think resources exist to support this on any sort of practical timeline. Once again, what is the agenda of the federal government? The MRA appears to be a mechanism to restrict or eliminate climbing.
3. In many cases as you take steps to eliminate fixed anchors climbing will still occur with "temporary" anchors and protection. Now you will have multicolored webbing appearing in the rock. In some cases, safety will be compromised, and accidents will occur.
4. Climbing management plans currently exist at many places around the country and are working reasonably well. Local control is the correct methodology.