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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear USFS,

I am writing to express my concern about the proposed prohibition of climbing anchors on USFS land. I have been a rock climber for over 6 years, and I have witnessed first-hand the positive impact that climbing has on our forests.

Climbing is a sustainable outdoor recreation activity that does not damage the environment. In fact, climbers often help to clean up the areas where they climb. For example, I have personally removed trash and other things left behind by non-climbing recreationalists as well as done my part in fixing trails and whatever else I can do to leave the forest in a better state that I found it.

Climbing also helps to promote stewardship of our forests. Climbers are often the first to notice when there is a problem, such as a damaged trail or a downed tree. They are also more likely to report these problems to the authorities.

The proposed prohibition of climbing anchors would be a huge step backward for our forests. It would discourage people from visiting our forests, and it would make it more difficult for us to protect our natural resources.

Fixed anchors are critical for climbing safety. This is similar to a hand rail or a step put into a trail for a hiker. Allowing the use of fixed protection continues to allow safe recreation. A ban on fixed protection will lead to more rescues being necessary if it is illegal to leave gear. In addition the maintenance burden on the USFS will be unsustainable. Climbers are the primary maintainers of fixed protection, I cannot begin to imagine how this policy will be enforced. Wilderness climbing management policy should maintain opportunities for new anchors unless and until analyses determine climbing should be restricted to protect cultural and natural resources.

I urge you to reconsider this proposal. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Cory Noonan