

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/13/2024 10:00:04 PM

First name: Karen

Last name: Velligan

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I oppose the proposed directives related to climbing management on National Forest System (NFS) lands. The majority of the climbing community has always been keenly in tune with conservation efforts to preserve unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the environment for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations, just as the mission statement for our National Parks outlines. This community has always been self-regulating and quick to adapt to new technology that reduces its impact on the environment such as the switch from pitons to nuts or chocks in the 1970s and then to cams in the 1980s. Regulation by the government is not as nimble or responsive, and subject to bureaucratic delays and limitations on funding. The proposed regulations won't fix the problems it is intending to solve. It will reduce access for climbers while other tourists who may not be as knowledgeable or invested in preserving the natural surroundings will not be affected. Further, climbers now monitor existing bolts and installations and share information on their safety. Prohibiting new installations means all the existing routes will become more dangerous over time and prevent any new routes. The concerns are important to the climbing community, but the issues need to be looked at with a wider lens to assure equitable and proactive solutions instead of putting in place restrictions negatively impacting one class of recreational users.