

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/17/2024 3:41:38 PM

First name: Eric

Last name: Neyer

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I have been rock climbing outdoors for over 30 years, in Washington, Colorado, Utah, and several other states. Most of this climbing has taken place on federally-managed land administered by the USFS or BLM. And most of the climbing routes are classified as "sport climbing" routes, meaning they have semi-permanent bolts and other hardware installed in the rock to increase safety and reduce the risk of injury in a fall.

Sport climbing is the most popular style of climbing in the United States, and there are thousands and thousands of bolted routes extant on federal lands throughout the country. I am referring to non-Wilderness designated lands only here. I will not comment on Wilderness climbing regulations because rarely climb in those areas and I am happy to leave them as is.

All I want to say is that instituting a requirement to request permission for any bolt or hardware on non-Wilderness lands will create an untenable situation. That will turn hundreds of active route developers into criminals overnight, because they won't be able to comply with a bureaucratic requirement that is impossible in practice. Do you know how long it takes to deal with a Forest Service employee if you want anything? And Forest managers don't have time to individually assess every single project that might be proposed, so they're likely to impose overly general regulations that will stir up even more conflict.

I don't really agree with the current "don't ask, don't tell" unwritten policy that seems to exist between land managers and climbing route developers. I think we should have some guidance on where bolting is okay, but there needs to be a huge amount of flexibility or you're simply creating an enforcement nightmare for local land managers and their staff.

Every national forest property in the state of Colorado should be managed for climbing as an encouraged activity, because that is what is happening already in reality. If you want to make people fill out an application and complete a process to add fixed hardware in Wilderness areas, go for it, but don't try to do anything similar in non-Wilderness because you will fail.

Best regards,

Eric Neyer

<https://climbinghouse.com/author/ericneyer/>