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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I have been rock climbing in Southern Arizona for over fifteen years, and am concerned that the proposed Climbing Management Plan will erode existing climber access and jeopardize the safety of climbers within the National Forest and National Parks system.

I was first introduced to climbing in Tucson, when friends from the local climbing gym offered to teach me how to climb safely outdoors. Since then I have enjoyed climbing with my friends in a variety of National Parks and/or National Forest locations in Arizona, California, New Mexico, Colorado and Texas. I have volunteered through our local climbers association (Climbing Associate of Southern Arizona) and in affiliation with the National Forest Service to clean up trash on Mount Lemmon and build/restore hiking trails in Cochise Stronghold. I greatly appreciate the opportunity I have had to experience the enjoyment of my favorite activity (climbing) while also contributing to the conservation and protection of our public lands.

Rock climbing is a well established activity in our parks and forests. Fixed anchors have been allowed for decades and along with ropes, QuickDraws, and belay devices are an essential part of a climber's safety system. Prohibiting fixed anchors will greatly restrict the amount of climbable rock in our forests and parks, essentially banning an existing user group for our national lands.

The National Forest and National Park Service should consider all existing anchors both in and outside of wilderness areas to be approved and appropriate until an analysis has been done to determine if a specific anchor is inappropriate. During that time, local climber groups should be allowed to replace existing anchors that are deemed dangerous and in need of replacement.

-David Scott