

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/26/2024 4:58:51 PM

First name: Caroline

Last name: Reed

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear USFS,

I am reaching out to ask for your consideration regarding the draft policies that would completely change current and future climbing practices in non-Wilderness areas as well as change the course of recreational climbing for decades to come. Climbing has been an incredibly important part of my life. I have found community, learned much about myself, and been able to connect to the nature and wild spaces that have been the grounds for important growth, learning, and connection. Climbing respectfully and safely in Wilderness spaces is something I hope to do for a long time and share with generations to come.

Imagine you are 300 feet off the purple sunset-painted desert floor and have just reached the top of a beautifully challenging climb that pushed your perceived limits physically and mentally. You are exhausted in the best way, filled up with an experience you will remember and share with your climbing partner for the rest of your life-and are only at the halfway point of your adventure. The rappelle down to the hot chocolate in your packs awaits you, an adventure in and of itself that will rely on the existence of fixed anchors. Anchors that if the draft policies were to come into effect would not exist and with them the deeply meaningful experiences created in these nature spaces through climbing would vanish. Non-Wilderness climbing management policy should maintain opportunities for new anchors given that there is no protection needed of cultural and natural resources.

Creating more avenues of communication between the climbing community and Land Management agencies could be a solution to concerns about responsible recreating and education on best practices for reducing impact while enjoying these places that are such a vibrant part of climbing history-a history that looking back 50 years from now I hope will continue to thrive, grow and create new generations of responsible climbers who care deeply about the environment. Keeping non-Wilderness areas open and safe for climbing now and in the future creates the potential for people to form a connection to the land and care about our environment which our world desperately needs.

With gratitude for your time and consideration,

Caroline