

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/29/2024 6:42:26 PM

First name: Wade

Last name: Rosko

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am writing to express my concerns regarding the specific aspects of the proposed directives under FSM 2355, particularly those that pertain to the placement and replacement of fixed anchors and equipment on National Forest System (NFS) lands.

The proposal's language, suggesting that fixed gear should not be used to make climbs easier but only to enable ascent and descent where climbing is otherwise not possible, raises significant safety concerns. This interpretation could lead to the unnecessary banning of fixed gear, which is crucial for ensuring climbers' safety. Fixed anchors and equipment are not merely for convenience; they are vital safety measures, especially for routes that, while climbable, present considerable risks.

The climbing community has always prioritized safety and environmental stewardship. Fixed gear, such as bolts, are essential in reducing the likelihood of accidents, particularly for gear placed on extremely long or difficult routes or for less experienced climbers. An overly restrictive policy on fixed gear could increase the risk of accidents and rescues, contrary to the proposal's intent of enhancing safety and preserving the wilderness experience.

Such restrictions could deter climbers from exploring these public lands, negatively impacting the local economies that benefit from outdoor recreational activities. The proposal's potential to discourage safe and responsible climbing practices is concerning and should be carefully reconsidered.

I urge the Forest Service to collaborate with the climbing community in developing these regulations. The climbing community's extensive experience and commitment to safety and environmental preservation make it a valuable partner in creating policies that balance safety, access, and conservation.

Thank you for considering my perspective on this matter. I hope that a directive can be made that supports safe, accessible, and environmentally responsible climbing.