

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/30/2024 4:36:31 PM

First name: Jayson

Last name: Deese

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed USDA Forest Service proposed directive FSM 2355 Climbing Opportunities #ORMS-3524.

I have enjoyed climbing in the Red River Gorge for 12 years. This includes having climbed in the Clifty Wilderness Area, specifically at Eagle Point Buttness. I am a member of the Red River Gorge Climbers' Coalition, the Access Fund, and the American Alpine Club.

I support the position of the Red River Gorge Climbers' Coalition (RRGCC) in their comments requesting for the proposed directive FSM 2355 to be withdrawn and revised to address the RRGCC's concerns that:

1. The FSM 2335 climbing management policy will result in a prohibition on climbing development, fixed anchor maintenance, and new fixed anchor placement that if adopted, will most likely result in climber injuries or even deaths.
2. The FSM 2335 reliance on the development of Climbing Management Plans before actions can be taken by climbers is unworkable.
3. Climbing Management Plan development should be consistent with recreational goals, standards, and desired future conditions provided in a Land Management Plan.
4. Climbing Management Plan guidance should include Forest Service procedures for securing funding and resources in support of climbing management objectives through agency budgeting and congressional appropriations.
5. As established by the Daniel Boone National Forest Land Management Plan, FSM 2335 revisions should also reflect a policy direction of allowing maintenance of fixed anchors to be performed by climbers.
6. Language for conducting law enforcement patrols at climbing opportunities be removed from FSM 2355 and would be a waste of precious Forest Service resources.
7. The policy direction for Wilderness Areas in FSM 2355 be revised to generally allow for historically present fixed anchors to remain and to be maintained.

Rock climbing is the only reason I've traveled to Eastern Kentucky, and it continues to drive me to return about two weekends a month. The Clifty Wilderness area is one of those places I've been able to visit. Not only have I started to love the area, but I've also found ways to give back and make the place better than my before visit. I regularly take out any trash that I find. I help maintain the trails, and I strive to maintain LNT principles. It is because of climbing that I visited and it is climbing that keeps me returning.