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Comments: To whom it may concern-

I'd like to thank the UFS staff members for their hard work and care drafting directive FSM 2355. After reading it, it is clear a lot of work and effort has gone into considering the many intricacies of modern recreational climbing, and I am impressed with the document's efforts to balance the importance of preserving wilderness ethic while also protecting the opportunity for future Wilderness area exploration in the context of climbing. The intent of this document does not seem to be to inhibit climbing in Wilderness areas, but rather lay a framework to manage its healthy development - a practical need as the popularity of recreational climbing grows. For this reason, I believe the document is reasonable in its scope. Climbers, outdoorsmen & women, USFS staff and other users share a common goal of preserving the natural-quality of Wilderness areas that we enjoy.

However, without a direct commitment from Congress to fund the substantial work laid out in this document, or a proposed funding mechanism within the document itself, I cannot support its passing. To be blunt, the plans laid out in directive FSM 2355 look nice on paper, but I am extremely concerned about how well the policies will be implemented by the Forest Service. As someone who lives in proximity to a National Forest (White Mountain National Forest) and who interacts with USFS staff members regularly, it is no secret that the USFS runs on an extremely lean budget and staff. With the directives listed in FSM 2355, there would be an additional expectation of Forest Service Rangers and Supervisors to make a "climbing management plan", as well as to complete follow-up work involved with assessing submitted permits. Climbers and those that rely on fixed anchors are collectively concerned about "redtape" and "wait-times" resulting from under-resourcing the program and policies laid out in FSM 2355. This under-resourcing will have the potential to ultimately result in a future "prohibition" of using/maintaining/installing fixed anchors - which are necessary for the safety of recreational climbers and the tradition of Wilderness area exploration through climbing. Meanwhile, climbers will still visit and climb where they are allowed to, and there will be situations where fixed anchors & installations will require life-critical maintenance and/or necessary additions.

The guidance provided in the document in question represents an enormous undertaking - one that will create bottle-necking and could effectively result in lost access to public land, which is fundamentally at odds with the mission of the National Park Service. I know of no other situational precedence to lean on to assuage these concerns. For this reason, I am opposed to FSM 2355, and request budget and potential funding mechanisms to be addressed in subsequent iterations.

Thank you for your work, and for your consideration of my comments.

Sincerely,

Carter