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Comments: I am writing to provide my input on the proposed directives related to climbing management on National Forest System (NFS) lands. As an avid rock climber and a passionate advocate for responsible outdoor recreation, I appreciate the opportunity to contribute to the development of guidance that ensures climbing opportunities are preserved while safeguarding the natural and cultural resources of our national forests.

Firstly, I commend the USDA Forest Service for recognizing the importance of public input and actively seeking the perspectives of stakeholders. It is through this inclusive approach that we can strike a balance between access to climbing areas and the need to protect the ecological integrity of our cherished public lands.

I support the proposed addition of Section 2355 to the Forest Service Manual, which acknowledges climbing as an appropriate use of NFS lands, including wilderness areas, when conducted in accordance with applicable laws and Forest Service directives. This recognition affirms the value of climbing as a recreational activity that fosters personal growth, physical fitness, and a deep appreciation for the natural environment.

I also appreciate the emphasis on developing climbing management plans, as resources allow, both within and outside of wilderness areas. Such plans are essential for addressing potential adverse impacts on resources and resolving conflicts that may arise due to increased climbing activities. By carefully considering the unique characteristics of each area and involving local stakeholders, these plans can ensure sustainable climbing opportunities that align with land management objectives.

The proposed directive's provisions regarding fixed anchors and fixed equipment in wilderness areas are also crucial. Recognizing that these installations fall under the purview of the Wilderness Act allows for a case-specific evaluation by Forest Supervisors. This evaluation should focus on determining the minimum necessary fixed anchors and equipment required to administer the area for wilderness preservation purposes, while still accommodating primitive or unconfined recreation.

Furthermore, I am pleased to see the encouragement of special use permits to enhance visitor access to climbing opportunities and promote education on low-impact climbing practices. These permits can facilitate effective management, foster stewardship, and ensure climbers are well-informed about preserving the natural and cultural values of NFS lands.

In conclusion, I express my support for the proposed directives on climbing management in National Forest System lands. I believe that by incorporating the feedback of climbers, conservationists, and local communities, we can develop comprehensive guidance that allows for responsible climbing while safeguarding the integrity of our public lands.

Thank you for considering my input. I trust that the Forest Service will give full attention to all comments received during this public input period and ensure that the final directives reflect the diverse perspectives and needs of those who cherish our national forests.