

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/31/2024 4:20:03 AM

First name: Douglas

Last name: Hunter

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I have been a user of National Park Service and Forrest Service lands my entire life, and have been an avid rock climber for over four decades. In that time it has not been lost on me that both organizations have intentionally chosen winners and loser when it comes to who can use these lands and how the lands can be used. Both services have prioritized high impact projects such as the building of roads, parking lots, and concessions for tourists who know little about our national lands, which at the same time threatening access and use by rock climbers, a group that largely understands, respects and appreciates national parks and forests to a far greater extent than other groups.

For once we insist that you listen to climbers when we tell you that.

Fixed anchors are an essential part of climbing safety and need to continue to be used and maintained in the areas impacted by this policy.

The existing policy has worked for decades, changing the policy now will limit climbing access and directly endanger climbers lives.

Restricting the establishment of new routes to "Existing climbing opportunities" on non-wilderness lands in unenforceable and will create confusion among land managers and climbers. Policy must maintain opportunities for new anchors.

I am completely against the idea that anchor placement needs to be authorized on a case specific determination. Forrest supervisors often do not understand the issue involved in anchor placement and can't be trusted to objectively weigh the issues involved in making such determinations. Due to the risk and complexities of climbing climbers or their representative groups need to be included in this kind of decision making.

Point #5 on page 5 of the Climbing Directives document should be deleted. Language such as "minimum necessary" seems intentionally ambiguous and the reliance upon resource dependent "minimum requirement analysis" is a guarantee that Forest Service employees always have a way of not taking action if they don't want to.

I understand that there are many different concerns and interests at work when it comes to managing NFS lands. But I think what the new policy does is pay lip service to climbing as "Important" and "historically relevant" while at the same time minimizing the voice of climbers in land management and essentially giving forest supervisors tremendous power to prevent climbing without having meaningful accountability to the climbing community. As tax payers, citizens and lovers of the outdoors we deserve far better.