Data Submitted (UTC 11): 2/4/2020 7:00:00 AM
First name: Matt
Last name: Kalina
Organization:
Title:
Comments: Draft of Tonto National Forest Plan | Add language allowing existing rock climbing and fixed anchors

Dear Kenna Belsky, Forest Planner and Tonto National Forest Representative,

I am a rock climber who climbs a number of locations in the Tonto National Forest. I am aware that a new draft management plan is being considered. I wish to offer some suggestions to the draft plan that would improve it.

It appears that the plan on numbered pages 28 and 29 limits rock climbing to prior authorization. I have two comments with regard to those statements.

1. There is no mention of grandfathering in existing rock climbing areas, most of which have rock climbing anchors in place.

Please add a statement that grandfathers rock climbing routes and anchors that exist prior to the date of the adoption of the new management plan.

2. The draft plan appears to recognize fixed anchors only as a means of descent, which is incorrect. Fixed anchors or bolts are often used as a safety measure in ascending a route where removable anchors or pro are not feasible. Please add language recognizing that fixed anchors and bolts are also required for ascending a route.

Also, the draft plan does not deal with rock climbing on fixed anchors in the Wilderness areas, but much rock climbing does exist within the Superstition Wilderness area, for example. Language should be added that deals with such climbing and anchors. It may be feasible for the Tonto to allow for the safe replacement of aging bolts and anchors but not new bolts in new locations. Language should be added acknowledging rock climbing in the Wilderness areas but stating that bolts can be replaced on an individual basis only for safety reasons.

The draft plan also does not address the process for seeking and obtaining written authorization for rock climbing areas. Language should be added that spells out that process.

Thank you.

Sincerely,