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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Rock Climbing Belongs on Forest Service Lands

March 3, 2020

Dear Beth Rumpza,

Rock climbing is an appropriate recreational activity on Forest Service lands.

Fixed anchors are critical tools for climbing. They are essential for the safety of the climbing public, and they often prevent damage to natural resources like vegetation. Climbers have been using fixed anchors for decades to access Wilderness areas like the Superstition Wilderness. These existing fixed anchors provide exceptional recreation experiences. Unless the draft plan specifically addresses existing fixed anchors and the need for continued maintenance, it will dramatically restrict recreational access to our public lands. The fixed anchors that already exist within the forest need to be specifically mentioned in the plan language and "grandfathered" in. It should be permissible to replace any existing fixed anchor if a climber should come across one that he/she feels is unsafe. If Tonto National Forest recommends moving forward with the Resolution Copper mine project, as part of its EIS, the loss of the Queen Creek and Oak Flat climbing areas will put significant strain on the rest of the forest, especially the Superstition Wilderness, as the large Phoenix rock climbing community seeks out replacement climbing opportunities.

Sincerely,