

White Mountain National Forest (WMNF) Climbing Management Direction

Taken from the 2005 WMNF Land and Resource Management Plan

Goals and Objectives for Rock and Ice Climbing

Goals

The White Mountain National Forest has both traditional and sport climbing areas. The Forest Service will recognize the value of both types of climbing areas and will continue to provide a range of climbing opportunities while protecting natural and cultural resources. It will emphasize traditional climbing over sport climbing.

Objectives

1. The Forest Service will work closely with the climbing community to locate new and developing rock climbing areas in order to address emerging issues in a cooperative manner, track new areas, and prevent route development that will affect Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive (TES) species.

Forest-Wide Management Direction for Rock and Ice Climbing

S-1 The White Mountain National Forest is open unless designated closed to rock, ice, and mixed climbing.

S-2 Except in Wilderness (see MA 5.1) where it is prohibited, storing (caching) equipment, including fixed ropes is permitted for no more than 14 days.

S-3 Chipping to create foot and hand holds, gluing to stabilize features, and attaching permanent artificial handholds is prohibited.

S-4 Route cleaning is prohibited where federally-listed threatened, endangered, and sensitive species occur.

S-5 To protect natural features, the use of mechanical or motorized devices, explosives, or chemicals for cleaning or developing climbing routes is prohibited. Hand drills and power drills are permitted for the installation of bolt protection, except in Wilderness where power drills are prohibited.

G-1 Specific areas should be closed or limitations placed on use, including group size, if recreational climbing creates unacceptable social or natural resource impacts. This may result in temporary or permanent closures or limits on number of outfitter/guide permits authorized.

G-2 To minimize social and environmental impacts, climbing party size should be limited to 12 persons, except in Wilderness, where group size is limited to 10.

G-3 Removing, altering, or manipulating vegetation, soils, or other natural features at the cliff edge, talus slope, or cliff base should be avoided.

G-4 Climbing or new route development may be restricted to protect federally listed threatened, endangered, and sensitive species.

G-5 Climbing should be restricted where there is potential to impact heritage resources.

G-6 When issues are no longer effectively addressed by application of standards and guidelines, climbing plans for specific areas should be developed to minimize environmental and social impacts.

G-7 Removable traditional protection should be used. Fixed protection may be considered when the use of removable protection is impossible, impractical, or causes increased or ongoing unacceptable resource impact. If installation of fixed protection for a new route, or the replacement of fixed protection on an existing route, is required, the following guidelines should be used:

- a. 3/8" expansion bolts with hangers (or other acceptable industry standard that has the same or less impact) should be used. Ring hangers should be used for rappel stations. Webbing should not be used on new bolt anchors.
- b. Replacement bolts should use the existing holes when possible.
- c. Natural-colored webbing should be used on tree anchors.
- d. All bolt hangers should be painted to blend with the color of the cliff face.
- e. Hand drills, battery powered rock drills (except in Wilderness), hammers, crowbars, and wrenches are recognized as standard tools for fixed anchor installation and maintenance.

G-8 Reasonable cleaning of a route is allowed (except per S-4). Hand tools such as wire brushes, hand brooms, and toothbrushes are recognized as standard tools.

Rock and Ice Climbing Special Use Permits

S-1 To minimize social and environmental impacts from commercial group use, rock and ice climbing outfitter/guide group size must be limited to 12 persons. In Wilderness, the group size limit is 10 persons.

G-1 Rock and ice climbing recreation events permits should limit group size to 12 persons.

G-2 Numbers of permits per cliff for outfitter/guide and recreation events may be limited to protect natural resources or the recreation experience.

Wilderness Management Direction for Rock and Ice Climbing

S-1 Wilderness is open unless closed to rock, ice, and mixed climbing.

S-2 The use of power drills is prohibited.

S-3 Storing equipment, including fixed ropes, is prohibited.

S-4 Installation of fixed protection, including webbing, bolts, or pitons, is prohibited on new climbing routes.

G-1 Existing fixed protection on established climbing routes may be replaced consistent with Forest-wide standards and guidelines, as necessary to preserve known routes and to protect visitor safety.