 **United States Department of Agriculture**

Best Practices for Climbing and Climbing Management on the Bighorn National Forest



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Cover photo: View of the Steamboat Point climbing area (provided by U.S. Forest Service).

**Introduction**

This document will serve as a guide best practices for rock climbers, climbing organizations and resource managers on the Bighorn National Forest. Over the past decade, the number of climbers and climbing routes on the Forest has dramatically increased. With this increasing use, climbers, resource managers, and the public have expressed concerns about resource impacts associated with climbing area use and development. Through a collaborative process, interdisciplinary team members, including members of the climbing community, interested agencies, and Forest Service specialists, identified goals and objectives to address resource concerns. These concerns included impacts to soil, vegetation, geologic, water, cultural, wildlife, wilderness, and social resources. After identifying goals, objectives, and resource concerns, the interdisciplinary team developed this best practices document to minimize impacts and user conflicts of climbing on the Forest. Climbers, local climbing organziations, and Forest staff should promote these best practices through education and communication. This is a working document that should continue to be updated through continued collaboration with interested public and agencies.

This best practices document does not represent a decision by the Forest Service to engage in a major federal action which is defined as an agency action that “significantly

affects the quality of the human environment.” Major federal actions are interpreted as causing major effects and are potentially subject to federal control and

responsibility (i.e., funding and construction of a trail). A major federal action requires an environmental analysis under NEPA and Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations. The following reference in the Forest Service NEPA Handbook 1909.15 is useful in understanding how this document does not constitute engagement in a major federal action requiring a NEPA process:

***An operative term in the CEQ definition of proposal is the term “stage.” Most mid-level analyses, for example watershed analyses, are simply a stage where the Forest Service identifies what possible actions can be taken to move the Agency towards its desired future condition or “goals.” However, the results of these analyses generally are a description of the existing condition and a myriad of possible management actions. It is not until the Forest Service determines that it wants to move forward with one or more possible actions that the Agency is at a stage where a NEPA “proposal” exists. If the Agency does not know where or when an activity will occur or if it will occur at all, then the effects of that action cannot be meaningfully evaluated. Additionally, if the proposed action does not compel any direct action or inaction then it would be very difficult to meaningfully evaluate the effects of that proposed action, including alternatives and mitigations. If a proposed action results in no tangible or perceptible effects on the environment then the effects of that action could not be meaningfully evaluated and it is unlikely that NEPA would apply.***

Therefore, only best practices that climbers, land managers, and climbing organizations **SHOULD** take to address resource concerns are provided.

**Best Practice #1. Parking and Vehicle Travel**

**Climbers should:**

* Carpool to the approach trail to save both fuel and parking spaces.
* Seek out less popular climbing areas during peak-use holidays and weekends.
* Avoid backing vehicles into a busy road or highway and follow county, state, and federal regulations.
* Avoid parking on vegetation.
* Adhere to all Forest Service travel regulations.
  + For example, observe any regulations posted on the current Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM):
    - <https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fseprd614319.pdf>.

**Land managers and climbing organizations should:**

* Consider opportunities to work together to provide additional, or expand existing, parking areas, where appropriate, to alleviate parking congestion.
* Educate climbers on Best Practice #1 and existing travel and parking regulations.

**Best Practice #2 Access Trails**

**Climbers should**:

* Limit impacts to vegetation and soils by using existing access trails and avoiding creation of new approach/descent trails.
* Travel in smaller groups whenever possible (i.e., 2-4 persons).
* Walk within the existing trail prism as to not widen the existing trail.
* Not cut switchbacks.
* Not construct new trails without an authorization from the federal land managing agency.
  + New construction of trails requires a special use permit and environmental analysis.
* Volunteer to participate in trail improvement projects through their local climbing organization.

**Land managers and climbing organizations should:**

* Identify opportunities for site-specific improvement projects to address safety and environmental concerns along access corridors including the need for newly designated trails and the consolidation of unnecessary user-created trails.
* Organize and participate in trail improvement projects — use soil or gravel, waterbars, and steps to help minimize damage to heavily used trails.
* Consider opportunities for placing foot bridges at riparian area crossings.
* Maintain the current memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Access Fund and Bighorn Climber’s Coalition to allow for ongoing maintenance of access trails.
* Educate climbers on Best Practice #2.

**Best Practice #3 Staging Areas**

**Climbers should**:

* Avoid enlarging the staging area by trampling vegetation outside of the existing staging area.
* Pick up all garbage and used tape.
* Volunteer to participate in staging area improvement projects through their local climbing organization.
* Not construct staging areas without an authorization from the federal land managing agency.
* Keep climbing equipment as close to the cliff face as possible to prevent expansion of the existing staging area.

**Land managers and climbing organizations should:**

* Identify opportunities for site-specific improvement projects to address safety and environmental concerns including the need to provide or improve staging areas.
  + Design staging areas large enough relative to the number of adjacent climbs and belayers.
  + Design staging areas with erosion controls (i.e., site hardening) and barriers to exclusion zones protecting vegetation and wildlife (i.e., stacked rocks or logs).
* Educate climbers on Best Practice #3 and the special use permit process for developing new construction proposals for staging areas.

**Best Practice #4 Route Establishment**

**Climbers should**:

* Follow best practices regarding the use of fixed-anchors for route establishment which will be determined at a later date.
  + Keep in mind that this document is a working document and can be updated in the future, as necessary, at any time.
* Only remove loose rock from its natural position when it poses a significant risk to the climbing party or a future climbing party.
* Be aware that chipping, gluing or attaching artificial holds is prohibited under existing regulations:
  + 36 CFR 261.9 Property: *Damaging any natural feature or other property of the United States.*
* Use removeable protection whenever feasible and appropriate given the natural geologic features available to provide reasonable protection opportunities.
* Communicate to the Forest Service about which routes are needing bolt replacement before any fixed-anchors or bolts are replaced.
  + Before replacing anchors, fill out and submit the Re-Bolting Proposal Form.
  + Whenever possible, replace unsafe or antiquated fixed anchors without modification of the anchor locations unless there is a legitimate concern for safety to relocate them elsewhere.
    - Camouflage fixed anchors when replacing old anchors to match natural rock color before installation in the rock.
* Avoid the use of permanent quickdraws (e.g., permadraws) unless they are absolutely necessary for safe following and lowering or to avoid sharp edges on severely overhanging climbs.
  + Never place permadraws within the Cloud Peak Wilderness Area.
* Not remove permanent fixed hardware without communicating with the local climbing organization and Forest Service.
* Not place a fixed rope for the purpose of retreating from a climb or working on a new project unless under the following conditions: (1) the climbing party intends to return to continue the climb, and (2) the placement does not exceed a period of three days.

**Land managers and climbing organizations should:**

* Establish a team, inclusive of local climbing community representatives, to provide technical input.
* Educate route developers on BEST PRACTICE #4 and any existing regulations for placing fixed anchors.

**BEST PRACTICE #5 Gear Caches**

**Climbers should**:

* Not cache climbing equipment at or near the base of a climb or boulder problem unless permitted through an operating plan issued under special use permit.
* Be aware of existing regulations restricting gear caching:
  + 36 CFR 261.16(e): *Abandoning any personal property*.

**Land managers and climbing organizations should:**

* Educate route developers on BEST PRACTICE #5 and existing regulations that restrict gear caching.

**BEST PRACTICE #6 Dispersed Camping**

**Climbers should**:

* Practice Leave No Trace Principles for Camping (see Appendix A)
* Follow existing regulations for dispersed camping:
  + 36 CFR 261.10 Occupancy and use.
    - <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/bighorn/alerts-notices/?cid=stelprdb5151832>
* Follow special orders which may restrict dispersed camping:
  + <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CFR-2012-title36-vol2/xml/CFR-2012-title36-vol2-sec261-10.xml>
* Take appropriate safety precautions in bear country.
  + Bearwise Wyoming webpage: <https://wgfd.wyo.gov/bear-wise-wyoming>

**Land managers and climbing organizations should:**

* Educate and inform climbers about best practice #6 and Leave No Trace ethics for dispersed camping, as well as regulations, and special orders for dispersed camping.

**BEST PRACTICE #7 Bouldering**

**Boulderers should:**

* Limit the movement of rock and woody debris for bouldering pad placements.
* Minimize the loss of vegetation when establishing landings and cleaning boulder problems.
  + Tie flexible shrubs and tree limbs out of the way rather than pruning.
  + Minimize the removal of moss, lichen and vegetation from boulder problems to the extent necessary to reasonably ascend the problem.
* When establishing new boulder problems, climbers should limit the amount of soil and plant disturbance as much as possible.
* Establish a landing area with a durable, sustainable, and safe pattern of use (i.e., removal of protruding, sharp rocks underneath boulder problems without digging up the soil and vegetation).
* Not drag bouldering pads across the ground.
* Wipe off tick marks and excess chalk after a bouldering session is finished.
* Clean up chalk and trash left by others even if it is not yours.
* Encourage seasonal chalk cleanups organized by local climbing organizations.
* Avoid gathering in large groups and keep noise disturbances to a minimum.
* Observe existing regulations relevant to the establishment of boulder problems:
  + 36 CFR 261.9 *Property:* 
    - *(a) Damaging any natural feature or other property of the United States.*
    - (c) *Damaging any plant that is classified as a threatened, endangered, sensitive, rare, or unique species.*
  + Be aware of existing regulations restricting gear caching:

36 CFR 261.16 (e): Abandoning any personal property.

**Land managers and climbing organizations should:**

* Educate boulderers on BEST PRACTICE #7 and existing regulations regarding the establishment of boulder problems.

**BEST PRACTICE #8 Pack out Waste: Human, Pet, and Litter**

**Climbers should:**

* Clean up after themselves and pack out all trash and garbage.
* Pack out human and pet waste in areas with moderate to high levels of use, and where appropriate means of disposal (e.g., catholes, privies) are not available or appropriate (particularly in Cloud Peak Wilderness).
  + Abide by standard Leave No Trace practices for packing out or disposing of human waste (Appendix A: LNT Principles).
* Follow existing regulations (36 CFR 261.11) for sanitation:
  + <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CFR-2012-title36-vol2/pdf/CFR-2012-title36-vol2-sec261-11.pdf>
  + Be aware of regulations and special orders related to packing out human waste: https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/bighorn/alerts-notices/?cid=stelprdb5151832.

**Land managers and climbing organizations should:**

* Consider the availability and placement of toilets in areas of high-use.
* Consider providing Waste Alleviation and Gelling (WAG) bags at trailheads in sensitive or high-use areas or directing climbers to purchase them at local climbing/camping outfitters.
  + WAG bags should be composed of biodegradable materials and utilized for disposal of human or pet waste.

**BEST PRACTICE #9 Minimize User Conflicts**

**Climbers should:**

* Be sensitive to the value of natural quiet and promote conduct that is respectful of the presence of others (i.e., avoid yelling curse words in the presence of other parties).
* Keep the noise at a low volume (i.e., discourage the use of portable speakers/radios).
* Avoid bringing barking or aggressive dogs to the climbing area.
* Dogs should be on a leash or under voice command. Be responsible dog owners at parking, staging areas, and trails.
* Be aware of onlookers and report any suspicious activity to the climbing ranger.
* Avoid approaching livestock and cattle herding dogs especially when trailing or herding of livestock is taking place (i.e., sheep, cattle moving from pasture to pasture).
* Respect the access to the climbing resource and follow Best Practices #1-16.
* Follow existing regulations and procedures for guiding and outfitting under a special use permit:
  + <https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fseprd605806.pdf>
  + <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CFR-2011-title36-vol2/xml/CFR-2011-title36-vol2-part251.xml>
* Follow existing regulations for noise and conduct on federal lands (i.e., operation of loud radios that disturb others):
  + 36 CFR 261.4: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CFR-2011-title36-vol2/xml/CFR-2011-title36-vol2-sec261-4.xml>.

**Land managers and climbing organizations should:**

* Monitor levels of use.
* Consider opportunities to address capacity limitations (e.g. allowable route densities, new fixed anchor authorizations, commercial use, group use, etc.) if user conflict or crowding occurs, or if there is unacceptable change to resource conditions (e.g., physical, biological, social, managerial).
* Seek proactive opportunities as partners to reduce user conflicts.

**BEST PRACTICE #10 Minimize Impacts to Cultural Resources**

**Climbers should:**

* Observe any existing restrictions or avoidance areas that limit climbing to protect cultural and paleontological resources.
* Leave any cultural and paleontological resource discoveries found, intact and in place.
  + 36 CFR 261.9 (g) The following are prohibited: *Digging in, excavating, disturbing, injuring, destroying, or in any way damaging any prehistoric, historic, or archaeological resource, structure, site, artifact, or property.*
* Never climb on, or near, cultural resources such as pictographs, petroglyphs, milling surfaces and historical structures.
* Immediately notify the Bighorn National Forest by telephone of the discovery of any culturally significant objects including antiquities or other objects of historic or scientific interest, including but not limited to historic or prehistoric ruins, fossils, or artifacts.
  + Bighorn National Forest Supervisor’s Office: 307-674-2600
  + Or email using the following link: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/contactus/bighorn/about-forest/contactus>
* The area immediately in and around the Medicine Wheel and associated features is managed for recreation in a tightly controlled environment... All other recreation use (e.g., hunting, camping, hiking, picnicking, etc) is prohibited in this area.

**Land managers and climbing organizations should:**

* Educate climbers on BEST PRACTICE #10 and existing regulations regarding cultural resource damage.
* Conduct and maintain cultural surveys of existing climbing areas.
* Conduct surveys of new climbing areas before any construction activities, trails, staging areas, or other ground disturbance is established.
* Seek opportunities to identify avoidance areas to protect cultural sites (i.e., petroglyphs).
* Educate climbers on the protection of cultural resources and Best Practice #10.

**BEST PRACTICE #11 Minimize Impacts to Wilderness Character**

Note: Applies only to climbing within the boundaries of the Cloud Peak Wilderness Area and Rock Creek Recommended Wilderness.

**Climbers should:**

* Preserve the “qualities of wilderness character,” as required by the Wilderness Act of 1964, which are “untrammeled, undeveloped, outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation, and other features of value.”
* Be aware that any climbing use or related activity may be restricted or prohibited when its occurrence, continuation or expansion would result in unacceptable impacts to wilderness resources or interfere significantly with the experience of other visitors.
* Practice traditional, clean climbing techniques that have minimal impacts to wilderness character as the norm.
  + Removeable, temporary climbing protection and anchors that do not alter the environment (e.g., slings, cams, wired nuts, chocks, stoppers, hexes) should be utilized.
  + Fixed anchors should be placed rarely and only when removeable protection opportunities are unavailable to:
    - safely protect a lead climb
    - provide a set of rappel/belay anchors
* Not use power drills (and other motorized equipment) in designated wilderness:
  + 36 CFR 261.18 (a): The following is prohibited in a National Forest Wilderness*:*

*Possessing or using a motor vehicle, motorboat or motorized equipment except as authorized by Federal Law or regulation.*

* Observe the following prohibitions for the Cloud Peak Wilderness:
  + Entering or being in the Cloud Peak Wilderness without current required registration signed and in the possession of the group or individual.
  + Building, maintaining, attending, or using a campfire, other than a self­contained chemical stove above 9,200 feet in elevation. Below 9,200 feet in elevation campfires must be contained on a fire blanket or within a fire pan or enclosed stove so as not to be directly on the ground. Techniques for building a fire in the Cloud Peak Wilderness: (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5415766.pdf>)
  + Building, maintaining, attending, or using a campfire within 300 feet of lakes, streams, or Forest Service designated trails.
  + Possessing, storing, or transporting any part of a tree including branches, limbs or trunk above 9,200 feet in elevation.
  + Camping within 100 feet of all lakes, streams or other free flowing waters.
  + Camping in violation of posted instructions.
  + Stock:
    - Hitching, tethering, restraining, or hobbling a horse or other saddle or pack animal to a live tree, except while loading or unloading.
    - Hitching, tethering, restraining, or hobbling a horse or other pack animal within 100 feet of lakes or streams, except while loading or unloading, is not permitted.
  + Failure to dispose of debris, garbage or other waste including camp structures such as hitching racks, tent frames, and pegs after the use period.
  + Failure to dispose of solid human waste in the West and Middle Tensleep drainages portions of Cloud Peak Wilderness by packing it out and disposing off of the Bighorn National Forest in an approved waste disposal facility. Refer to Special Order 2016-01 and the map showing where this regulation applies.
  + Using the Cloud Peak Wilderness with a group larger than 10 people and/or with more than 15 head of recreational stock in any group, larger groups than permitted must split into separate groups which meet the group size limits and must remain a minimum of 1/2 mile apart even at campsites. Groups may have an additional two people in their group if a member of the group is trained in Leave No Trace outdoor skills and ethics and has a copy of their certification with them.
  + Short cutting a switchback in a trail.
  + Possessing or using a wagon, cart, wheelbarrow, bicycle, or other vehicle (including game carts).
  + All stock feed must be processed, and certified weed free.
  + The above prohibitions could change and be updated in the future at: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/bighorn/specialplaces/?cid=stelprdb5162301>

**Land managers and climbing organizations should:**

* Educate climbers on Best practice #11, Leave No Trace practices for wilderness in Appendix A, and provide wilderness and climbing rangers to enforce regulations and monitor the wilderness resource.
* Provide volunteer opportunities to restore wilderness character where impacts are unacceptable (i.e., restore dispersed campsites and fire rings; remove fixed anchors placed illegally by motorized drills).

**BEST PRACTICE #12 Minimize Impacts to Vegetation & Rare Plants**

**Climbers should:**

* Observe restrictions on climbing to protect federally listed threatened, endangered, sensitive, and rare plant species.
* Monitor and assess climbing impacts regularly to ascertain needed management adaption or necessary improvements.
* Pad trees when utilized as a natural anchor.
* Utilize rappel rings on trees when used as a natural anchor (as opposed to pulling ropes around the base of trees and damaging bark when removing ropes from a rappel).
* Follow existing regulations for the protection of vegetation.
* Limit vegetation removal from any route or boulder problem to the minimum necessary to reasonably ascend the climb.
  + Damaging or removing any plant that is classified as a threatened, endangered, sensitive, rare, or unique species is prohibited under 36 CFR 261.9(c)(d).
  + Cutting a live tree without a special-use authorization is prohibited under 36 CFR 261.6(a).
* Consider fixing anchors below the summit to avoid damage to fragile clifftop vegetation such as moss and trees.
* Become educated on the presence of noxious weeds, especially houndstongue which affixes its seeds to humans and dogs. Learn to properly dispose of seeds once attached to people or dogs by removing and placing in a trash bag and not just taking off of animal and humans and throwing on the ground.
* Participate in volunteer projects for weed pulling and protection of vegetation and soil resources.

**Land managers and climbing organizations should:**

* Conduct and maintain a survey of sensitive plants in the Leigh Creek Canyon Research Natural Area (RNA).
* Design trails and any other construction activities to avoid sensitive plant species.
* Post restrictions and closures for resource protection at the local Ranger District offices and provide links to regulations/closures on the local climbing organization’s website and post hard copies on the ground near logical access points.
* Provide volunteer opportunities for the pulling and removal of invasive plant species along trails and parking areas.
* Provide physical barriers for the protection of sensitive/rare plant resources in close proximity to climbing areas where trampling would be likely.
* Educate climbers about Best Practice #12 and identification of sensitive/rare and invasive plant species.

**BEST PRACTICE #13 Minimize Impacts to Wildlife**

**Climbers should:**

* Observe restrictions on climbing to protect federally listed threatened, endangered, and sensitive wildlife and rare plant species.
  + Observe seasonal wildlife closures and avoidance areas for the protection of habitat:
    - Avoid climbing, camping, or lighting campfires in roosting areas of bats (i.e., caves).
    - Avoid climbing near identified raptor nests during nesting season.
    - Avoid the disturbance of elk herds during winter and calving season.
    - Avoid the disturbance and harassment of wildlife including, for example, loud yelling, loud audio devices, and using nesting cavities for handholds or footholds, or removing of nests.

**Land managers and climbing organizations should:**

* Consider opportunities for voluntary seasonal closures in areas within close proximity to raptor nest sites.
* Educate climbers on minimizing or avoiding impacts to wildlife.
* Encourage opportunities to collaborate on wildlife (e.g., raptor) monitoring and other citizen science initiatives.

**BEST PRACTICE #14. Search and Rescue Considerations**

**Climbers should:**

* Dial 911 if requiring rescue or emergency medical care services on the Bighorn National Forest.
  + Much of the national forest is outside of cell phone coverage so climbers are advised to carry a SPOT device in remote climbing areas and schedule periodic check-ins with a designated contact who has a map of their route.
* Plan accordingly, be self-reliant, and have a plan for self-rescue.
  + There is no availability of high angle rescue teams in the local municipalities.
    - Cody, Wyoming has the closest high-angle rescue team and is a long distance away.
  + Search and Rescue incidents occurring in designated wilderness do not allow for use of motorized equipment or mechanized transport, except in life threatening emergencies.

**Land managers and climbing organizations should:**

* Coordinate with rescue personnel to identify key points of access and to identify, with commonality, key rock features and climbing areas.

**BEST PRACTICE #15. Partnerships**

**Climbers should:**

* Seek volunteer opportunities through local climbing organization events (i.e., Bighorn Climber’s Coalition) to steward the climbing resource.
  + For example:
    - fixed-anchor replacement
    - cleaning of heavy chalk build-up
    - camouflaging of fixed-anchors
    - removal of litter
    - maintenance and construction of access trails and staging areas
    - rehabilitation of dispersed camping sites
    - monitoring of sensitive resources
    - mapping of trail system and new routes

**Land managers and climbing organizations should:**

* Maintain the existing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Access Fund (including their local affiliate, the Bighorn Climber’s Coalition) and the U.S. Forest Service in order to retain the cooperative relationship between the parties, to continue to define common interests and goals, and to maintain communication lines.
* Work with the climbing community to identify the need for further collaboration and partnerships.
  + The Bighorn National Forest, (307.674.2600) will be the main point of contact for the USFS.
  + The Access Fund (303.545.6772) and Bighorn Climber’s Coalition ([bighornclimbers.org](http://www.pikespeakclimbersalliance.org/)) will be the main points of contact for the climbing community.
* Improve education of the climbing community through engagement in public outreach including use of educational events, social media, articles, etc. An education plan for user direction may be developed.
* Develop an inventory, description, and maps of existing climbing in the Bighorn National Forest including: significant crags/sub-areas, parking situation, approach paths, existing conditions and areas of concern, area emphases (e.g., traditional, sport, mixed, bouldering, ice, alpine), and estimated levels of use (e.g., low, moderate, high) by sub-area.
* Promote stewardship efforts and events.
  + For example, provide personnel and volunteers, media, outreach, and seek potential funding sources.
* Consider formation of a fixed hardware review team to address concerns about bolting in the area.
  + Consider requiring all new fixed anchors to be reviewed and approved by the Forest Service.
  + An anchor replacement committee, including Bighorn Climber’s Coalition representatives, should review anchor replacement proposals for specific routes.

**Best Practice #16. Education and Communication**

**Climbers should:**

* Provide information on the best practices in this document through word-of-mouth and referencing to webpages and kiosks.

**Land managers and climbing organizations should:**

* Educate climbers and personnel on the best practices in this document by:
  + Constructing a climbing best practices webpage and provide a link to climbing community and Forest Service webpages and encourage the links to be provided within climbing area guidebooks.
  + Provide a summary of this document at trailhead kiosks.
* Post restrictions and closures for resource protection at the local Ranger District offices and provide links to regulations/closures on the climbing organization and Forest Service websites and post hard copies on the ground near logical access points.
  + Restrictions and closures by special order are provided on the Forest Service webpage and will be updated periodocially: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/bighorn/alerts-notices/?cid=stelprdb5151832>.
* Seek opportunities to provide kiosks at trailheads and signage to communicate best practices.

**Appendix A: Best Practices Incorporated by Reference**

<https://www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/climbing-ethics.html>

<https://lnt.org/why/7-principles/>

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/bighorn/specialplaces/?cid=stelprdb5162301>

**Glossary of Terms**

**anchor replacement**: replacing bolts or fixed anchors on established climbing routes.

**artificial holds**: a shaped grip that is usually attached to a climbing wall so climbers can grab or step on it.

**bouldering pad**: a rectangular crash mat that consists of multiple layers of foam covered in a heavy duty material. The pad is placed where the climber is expected to fall to cushion their landing.

**boulder problem**: specific route one takes when climbing up a boulder which is usually 7 to 15 feet high, and is made up of a sequence of moves that are climbed without a safety rope.

**chipping**: a prohibited practice using a hammer and chisel or a powerdrill (or other similar tools) to create artificial hand-holds by altering the natural rock (i.e., drilled pockets to place fingers in).

**climbing hardware**: climbing equipment placed in cracks or on faces to protect climbers from falling, including wired nuts, camming devices, hexes (hexcentric-shaped metal wedges), pitons, and bolts.

**dispersed camping**: camping anywhere in the National Forest OUTSIDE of a designated campground. Dispersed camping means no services; such as trash removal, and little or no facilities; such as tables and fire pits, are provided.

**fixed-anchors**: hardware requiring the alteration of the rock where the placement is to occur. Permanent fixed anchors, primarily, include bolts and pitons. This definition does not include temporary anchors, such as slings, nuts, camming devices, and other removeable anchors that do not alter rock surfaces.

**fixed software**: any rope, cord, or webbing, etc., which has been placed to aid in the ascent or descent of a route and remains in place when the climbing party is not on the route.

**industry-standard**: the standards published and accepted by the wider rock climbing equipment manufacturing industry and non-profit affiliates (i.e., International Cimbing and Mountaineering Federation (UIAA).

**memorandum of understanding (MOU)**: an agreement between two or more parties outlined in a formal document.

**permadraws/permanent quickdraws**: A quickdraw permanently left on a route, composed usually of a steel cable and carabiners, screw-locked to a bolt. Often located in high-traffic sport climbing areas with steep routes.

**removeable protection (aka traditional or trad protection or natural protection)**: any equipment (cams, wired nuts, hexes, etc.) that is temporarily placed in natural features of the rock for protection of falls on a climb and later removed during the climb.

**riparian area:** ecosystems that occur along watercourses or water bodies. They are distinctly different from the surrounding lands because of unique soil and vegetation characteristics that are strongly influenced by free or unbound water in the soil. Riparian ecosystems occupy the transitional area between the terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. Typical examples would include floodplains, stream banks, and lake shores.

**special order:** special orders are put into effect to address particular management problems. Special orders are signed by Regional Foresters and Forest Supervisors and vary in duration. Special orders are posted at Forest Service Ranger District offices and Forest Supervisors offices in the office nearest to the area affected, or they may be posted at the Ranger Station and the actual site.

**special use permit:** a legal document such as a permit, term permit, lease, or easement, which allows occupancy, use, rights, or privileges of agency land. The authorization is granted for a specific use of the land for a specific period of time.

**sport climbing:** a mode of rock climbing that may rely on, primarily, permanent anchors fixed to the rock for protection, in which a rope that is attached to the climber is clipped into these fixed anchors to arrest a fall.

**staging area:** the location where climbing gear is organized and climbers prepare to climb and belay.

**tick marks:** typically stripes or dots of gymnastic chalk marking the location of a handhold on a boulder problem or climbing route.

**traditional climbing**: a mode of rock climbing that relies primarily on removeable protection (aka natural protection), in which a rope that is attached to the climber is clipped into the removeable protection (i.e., cams, wired-nuts, hexes, etc.) when an opportunity is available in the natural features of the rock (i.e., a vertical or horizontal crack). Some traditional climbs are referred to as mixed climbs where there are fixed-anchors (i.e., pitons or bolts) on portions of a climbing route where no removeable protection is presented by the natural features of a climb (i.e, a sheer face with no cracks).

**trail prism or trail corridor:** best thought of as a tunnel through the woods, it includes all the elements of a trail affected by construction and maintenance workers including the excavated back-slope and tread, and the entire area within the clearing limits.

**untrammeled:** forces of nature operate unrestrained and unaltered and are free from man’s control.

**user-created trails:** informal trails, which are not National Forest System Trails, created through repeated use or illegal construction.

**Waste Alleviation and Gelling (WAG) bags:** the overall term for any pack-it-out bag system. WAG bags are produced commercially for human and pet waste disposal.