

### **Climbing and Canyoneering Management**

Erosion off the rock – Climbers and canyoneers often bushwhack and scramble to gain access to the base of the cliff or into/out of a slot canyon. Numerous approach trails have resulted in some areas. These access trails typically are braided with other trails to the same area. Because they travel either straight up or down grade, water flows down the trails, causing soil loss, trenching and vegetation loss. Also, at the base of some climbs in high use areas, the ground is compacted and denuded of vegetation. Social trails often contour along the base of the rock formation to the start of other climbs.

To remedy these problems access trails to the base of well-known and heavily used climbing routes and slot canyons would be identified and delineated in order to prevent further erosion and loss of vegetation. In some instances signs may be placed to direct climbers away from problem or sensitive areas in order to protect resources. No more than one access route up/down a slope to the base of a climb, area, or canyon would be allowed.

Educational efforts could also be used to encourage visitors to use non-erosional surfaces or to follow one identified access route. Within the Pristine Zone, any efforts to control erosion should be disguised such that it is not apparent that they are human built.

Social trails that have developed over time, but currently see infrequent use, would be rehabilitated to discourage further travel. Travel in high use areas would be on established access routes.

Erosion on the rock – Through continuous use the rock surface becomes smoother and freer of lichens, moss and dirt. Ledges and cracks also lose dirt and vegetation from climbing use. Toe and finger holds become worn off or are not a useful location for some climbers. To make a climbing route more accommodating a few climbers alter routes by gluing an artificial hold or they may chip or pry the rock to create improved holds. The gluing and chipping of holds would be prohibited. Aggressive, intentional cleaning the rock or soil and vegetation would be prohibited.

Specific climbing routes would be closed (seasonal or permanent) to address a specific resource concern. Examples include nesting species, hanging gardens, or archeological sites. Closures would be kept to the minimum area and duration necessary to protect the affected resource.

Visual impacts associated with climbing vary depending on the viewer's attitude towards climbing in general and their proximity to the activity. Bright colored slings, shiny metal bolts, white chalk and the sight of climbers and ropes on an otherwise undisturbed formation can be viewed as intrusive.

Climbers would be encouraged to use rock climbing protection, slings, and other equipment that blend with the natural surroundings. If anchors detract from the aesthetics of the cliff faces of ZION and thus general visitor's experience, additional management actions would be taken. The use of chalk would be allowed, however climbers would be encouraged to be sensitive to this issue. It is also the responsibility of climbers to ensure that their ropes are not left on walls for long periods of time. If problems persist, management actions could include requiring the use of natural colored anchor material, closing area, and/or the creation of a climbing management plan.

Bivouacs are allowed on the wall of climbs only. Overnight camping at the base of the cliff is prohibited.

Climbers must tube or bag human waste and toilet paper and carry it out. Waste must be deposited in an RV dump station. The presence of human waste at the base of climbs would be monitored using the same standard as designated campsites (90 percent of climbs would have no more than two visible piles of human waste near the base of a climb). If a climbing area is found to be out of standard, actions that could be taken include education, requiring the use of a portable toilet system, or closing areas.

Bolts should be considered the tool of last resort by visitors who are creating anchors. As mentioned above climbers, canyoneers, and others creating anchors would be encouraged to use natural colored anchor material (slings and hangers). The park would continue to monitor bolting in the backcountry.

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