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Title of Presentation: Vertical Challenges – Creating Sustainable Rock Climbing in Banff National Park

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Abstract:

Each year adventure tourists come from around the world to challenge themselves on the thousands of established bolted climbing routes in Banff National Park. Climbing is experiencing a global surge in participation, and Canada's National Parks are also experiencing an all-time high in popularity with approximately 4.2 million visiting Banff in 2018 alone. Existing legislation and management planning for the national parks is outdated with regards to climbing. The bolting of climbing routes remains largely illegal under the *Canada National Parks Act* (S.C. 2002, c. 32), and no best practices guide or climbing management plan exists for Banff National Park. Climbing spaces in the parks are primarily developed and managed clandestinely by climbers with no formal involvement from land managers or other stakeholders. As tourist numbers grow, fragile alpine environments are increasingly exposed to the problems that accompany higher volumes of human traffic. This research addresses the need for modern and forward looking protections which reconcile conservation of environmental integrity with the evolving ways in which people interact with natural spaces in Banff National Park.