

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 4/6/2024 4:00:00 AM

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: As a lifelong climber and hiker, I would like to voice my objections to the proposed language restricting fixed anchor replacements in designated wilderness areas. This will immediately affect the safety of many climbing routes in a negative way.

I believe that climbers have a long history of self-regulation demonstrated by the many climbing coalitions established throughout the US. These coalitions are responsible for managing climbing access on public and private land, including oversight of the development of new climbing routes. These coalitions have the best understanding of the nuances of the relationships between climbers and other interest groups, including hikers, land owners and others. These coalitions have proven their ability to make informed decisions about the development of climbing areas.

I would also like to acknowledge what I believe to be the intent behind the proposed restrictions. It seems that this proposal is meant to provide an over-arching regulatory framework for preventing excessive anchor installations. The restriction

Firstly, I believe that the issue of replacement of existing anchor installations is not productive to the goal of keeping climbing development in check. Don't get me wrong, there are probably some forgettable routes that have been put up in questionable places. But prohibiting the replacement of a bad bolt isn't going to keep people from climbing those routes. Truthfully, it is much more likely to just get someone hurt.

Secondly, I believe that decisions regarding new route development, as well as opening / closing of climbing areas are decisions that are best left to local organizations. Many of these organizations are led by people that truly care deeply about responsible, sustainable route development. I've done my share of trail work at places such as the Red River Gorge, KY and the Flatirons of Boulder to build sustainable trails that are resistant to erosion. As an extension of that, they also care deeply about the safety, quality and impact of new and existing climbing routes.

I think some overall regulation in how climbing access is managed could be a good thing. Climbing coalitions currently keep track of an array of regulations and land use restrictions. Overall guidance on what factors these organizations should consider might help bring clarification where regulations are not clear. However this should be set up as a regulatory framework that the local organization can operate under but still make decisions that are appropriate to the specific situation and history of the area.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I believe we are all trying to ensure access to wild places is preserved, but the ability to recreate safely in these places is fundamental to that access.