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Organization:

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Comments: My name is Christopher Davis, an Emergency Room physician with additional training in Wilderness Medicine, as well as a conservationist, avid hiker, backpacker, and climber. I have concerns regarding the proposal for a blanket ban on fixed anchors and bolts for climbing in public wilderness settings.

Climbing has had an explosion of popularity in the past several years across the country in addition to the long history established over the past 100 years. Safety is always a concern for all climbers, and is taught from Day 1 of learning to climb. Popular climbing areas, from Red Rocks in Nevada, to the Garden of the Gods in Colorado to the limestone and granite climbs of Vermont, have a long history of popular climbs, with well mapped routes maintained by local climbing and outdoor groups. Many of these routes have fixed anchors and bolts that both improve the safety of climbing as they are maintained by the local groups, as well as limit every climber from setting all new anchors and increasing wear on the rocks.

A blanket ban on, or limiting maintenance of, fixed anchor systems on established routes will only decrease the safety for climbers and increase the wear on those same routes. Making maintenance of those routes cumbersome in paperwork and delayed approvals for repair also may have adverse, and even potentially, deadly, consequences for climbers.

As an ER Physician, a climber, and a father of kids who climb, I ask that these proposals be reconsidered before implementation. Utilizing national groups such as Access Fund and American Alpine Club, or local regional groups to selected wilderness areas, would allow for a longer term, safer, and ecologically more friendly approach to use of public wilderness areas.

Respectively,

Christopher Davis, MD, FAWM