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Organization:

Title:

Comments: US Forest Service

RE: Proposed Ban on Fixed Anchors in USFS Wilderness Areas

To Whom It May Concern:

Years ago as a beginner rock climber I received as a gift a book entitled, 50 Classic Climbs of North America. The front cover featured a beautiful photo of the famous Kor-Ingalls Route on Castleton Tower in the Canyonlands, Utah, one of the most iconic routes and towers in America. I can still see the picture in my head decades later - the rich red rock, the climber placing gear in a wide chimney feature. I remember thinking, "I MUST do this climb! This is the adventure I need!" And I did. It launched decades of exploration for me as a rock climber into Wilderness and non-Wilderness areas. It made me better appreciate the wonders of nature in our midst, the beauty that is America, and to stand as someone always willing to pass on the virtues of the outdoors with a generation of youth that is all too willing to pass days indoors, not outdoors, surfing Instagram.

Had I tried to climb the Kor-Ingalls Route after passage of the proposed fixed anchor ban, the wonderful journey that climb took me life on might never have occurred! Why? Because climbing that route without fixed anchors would have presented significant safety issues. And the labyrinthine regulations and permitting processes proposed would have dampened my enthusiasm to attempt the route in the first place.

These regulations, if promulgated, will form "Dark Patterns" effectively frustrating our cherished right to enjoy Wilderness. Why would our own government willingly place taxpaying citizens in a position of less safety? And give with one hand -- e.g., NPS Draft Guidance: "It is important to note that recreational climbing is an appropriate activity in NPS wilderness that connects people with the land, builds self-reliance, presents challenge, and requires skill. These experiential values can provide opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation and therefore be necessary to the administration of the wilderness area." -- while taking away (i.e., fixed anchor bolt ban) with the other? Government trust is at an all time low. Ill-advised and non-sensical actions like these will cause trust to descend further. Please reconsider. Thank you.

John Bliss