

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 11/29/2023 4:13:49 PM

First name: ABBY

Last name: DANKO

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am an avid public lands user, mostly human powered use. I do not feel that restriction and passing laws is the way to protect our lands. More restriction is almost never the answer as I believe the people and small organizations such as the American Alpine Club, the Access Fund, and climbing coalitions can handle matters on a sub level better than a larger entity. There are always going to be exceptions to the rule where people do not handle themselves properly in the wilderness, but that doesn't mean we eliminate all usage. Education is what is needed, not more laws.

No mechanized usage is an excellent rule in wilderness areas and I believe that should continue to be followed, thus putting in bolts only by hand drill should be allowed, in circumstances where there is no natural protection and the user deems this necessary for safety.

I think that climbing should continue to be allowed in NFS lands and wilderness areas. However, I think the amount of permanent installations (anchors) should be restricted. I think traditional climbing should be allowed (where the pieces placed for protection by climbers are removed by the following climber) as there is no imprint left. Some traditional climbing routes do have bolted anchors just for the belay stations. This allows for safety of the climbers for rappelling the route, otherwise pieces of protection or webbing must be left in order to safely get off of the wall/mountain, unless there is a walk-off. If webbing must be left that can be unsightly as well as potentially unsafe for future climbers to use, thus bolts for rappel stations and anchors are superior. Often bolts are incredibly difficult to find in these circumstances even by those that have a guidebook/know the route, so this should not affect the landscape visually.

I also believe that routes that already have fixed hardware should be left and should also be allowed to be retro bolted to fixed old/rusted/unsafe anchors. When bolts are removed from rock that leaves a mark, so leaving them versus chopping them to remove the routes of fixed hardware would be just as unsightly.

Climbers should have equal rights in wilderness/national forests as other trail users. If we are going off of the The Wilderness Act, it states in Section 2, sub-section (c), "... An area of wilderness is further defined to mean in this Act an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable..." .,all users of these lands have already defied the act, since creating trails alone is very noticeable, which is the number one part of creating land access for humans. While we all want to keep wilderness wilderness, we are humans and despite our leave no trace ethics, we have an impact on our landscape. The only way to truly keep wilderness wild is to allow NO use at all of any users, which is not viable.