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First name: Jonathan

Last name: Banks

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Land Managers,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important issue.

The use of fixed hardware in rock climbing is an important way of preserving the land and minimizing the impact of climbers.

Anchors are a necessary part of rock climbing. Formations that allow climbers to walk off after reaching the top can be climbed without leaving any hardware. But formations that require any rappelling for descending require that climbers leave some sort of anchor behind to rappel from. Additionally, climbers occasionally must retreat from a climb and leave anchors behind to rappel the route. To build these anchors, the main options are 1. leaving removable protection devices such as nuts and cams, 2. webbing anchors wrapped around trees, boulders, or constrictions in the rock, or 3. bolted anchors. Leaving removable protection is uncommon as it is expensive for individual climbers. Webbing anchors are common because they are inexpensive, but are undesirable for multiple reasons. Bolted anchors are more expensive and take more effort to install, but are the preferred type of rappel anchor for most climbers for reasons presented below.

Restricting the use of fixed hardware will increase the use of soft good anchors - webbing wrapped around a tree, boulder, or constriction in the rock. These webbing anchors are an eye-sore as they contain bright colors. Webbing anchors pose a higher risk of accidents as fixed webbing ages and deteriorates over time, especially in the sun. Finally, webbing anchors are often wrapped around trees, which wears on the trees over time and will eventually kill them.

The lowest impact solution anchors is to allow for bolts to be placed. Bolted anchors, offer a permanent solution that has minimal visual impact, preserves the life of nearby trees that would have otherwise been used in webbing anchors, and bolt anchors do not deteriorate anywhere near the rate of nylon webbing. Bolted anchors can be painted to match the color of the rock, minimizing their visual impact. They can be installed using hand tools - no power drills required, which can minimize the sound impact of the installation. Installing bolts by hand is a long and tedious process, so requiring the installation to be done by hand will limit the number of bolts that will go in.

Please allow for hardware for the use of rock climbing to be allowed in wilderness areas. Fixed anchors will always be present in rock climbing and bolted anchors provide the lowest impact, safest, long term solution.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Banks