

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 12/18/2023 9:07:45 PM

First name: Deanna

Last name: Lapen

Organization:

Title:

Comments: To whom it may concern:

My family and I are avid outdoor enthusiasts. We have spent many weekends and summers exploring by hiking, backpacking, climbing, and camping. These experiences have bonded our family by creating priceless memories. We want these adventures to be available forever so we can pass on these priceless climbing adventures to our future generations. Fixed anchors and bolts are necessary installations for climbing safety and access to so many amazing climbing destinations. Prohibiting or removing fixed anchors or bolts would be devastating to the future of outdoor climbing recreation.

Fixed anchors are an essential piece of climbers' safety system and are not prohibited "installations" under the Wilderness Act. Following existing climbing policies that allow judicious use of fixed anchors for more than a half century will do more to protect Wilderness character while providing for primitive and unconfined Wilderness climbing.

Prohibiting fixed anchors will create safety issues by imposing unnecessary obstacles to the regular maintenance of fixed anchors, a responsibility undertaken by the climbing community. Critical safety decisions often must be made in the moment and any authorization process should not impede those decisions. Fixed anchor maintenance needs to be managed in a way that incentivizes safe anchor replacement and does not risk the removal of climbing routes.

Prohibiting fixed anchors obstructs appropriate exploration of Wilderness areas. Land managers need to allow climbers to explore Wilderness in a way that permits in-the-moment decisions that are necessary when navigating complex vertical terrain.

Prohibiting fixed anchors will threaten America's rich climbing legacy and could erase some of the world's greatest climbing achievements. Climbing management policy needs to protect existing routes from removal.

Restricting the establishment of new routes to "existing climbing opportunities" on non-Wilderness lands is unenforceable and will create confusion amongst land managers and climbers. Non-Wilderness climbing management policy should maintain opportunities for new anchors unless and until analyses determine climbing should be restricted to protect cultural and natural resources.

Keep us exploring while keeping us safe! Encourage us to climb, hike, and adventure more!

Thank you!