Data Submitted (UTC 11): 12/19/2023 12:05:13 AM First name: Robert Last name: Steger Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am commenting on the draft policy on fixed anchors in wilderness. Fixed anchors are an essential piece in the climbers' safety system, are unobtrusive, and aren't prohibited installations under the wilderness act. Please keep existing policies allowing the sensible use of fixed anchors in order to provide for "primitive and unconfined recreation" and protect climber safety. For decades, federal agencies have successfully allowed, managed, and authorized fixed anchors, and the proposed policies are unsafe and will lead to many accidents in complex vertical terrain. The proposed policies will create obstacles to regular maintenance of fixed anchors as well as obstacles for "outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation" in wilderness. Fixed anchors are vital to maintaining climbing access in wilderness areas, and I urge you to NOT classify fixed anchors as "prohibited installations" in wilderness areas. Thank you.