

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 12/19/2023 4:18:34 PM

First name: Molly

Last name: Hayssen

Organization:

Title:

Comments: The current proposal, if enacted, would decrease safety, discourage use of our national parks, and harm the US's reputation as a world famous climbing destination. By limiting climbers' ability to replace worn fixed anchors, you create situations in which climbers may be trusting their lives to unsafe equipment, exponentially increasing the risk of harm to climbers. While climbing is unavoidably risky, knowingly increasing that risk is unconscionable. Not to mention, the greater strain on park resources when, inevitably, more climbers will need assistance and rescue. Furthermore, the proposal would drive climbers away from national parks to climbing areas that respond to the needs of climbers and foster the sense of community and safety we have embraced at national parks for decades. Finally, the US is rightfully considered one of the premier climbing destinations in the world. However, the current proposal would seriously handicap its renown. It is also worth noting that 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. 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.

Reasonable replacement of fixed anchor systems has been the program for decades, and should remain the program for decades more.