

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/3/2024 8:32:53 PM

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Comments: RE: Prohibition of fixed anchors (bolts, pitons, slings) in America's Wilderness.

I am writing to express my concern over the recent draft policies around rock climbing and the use of fixed gear (specifically bolts). I disagree with the stance of prohibition and believe that management strategies would be far more effective and beneficial to both use groups and land managers alike.

Please consider the following points:

Fixed anchors (specifically) are an essential part of the climbing and canyoneering safety systems. In addition, they are not "prohibited installations" under the Wilderness Act. Allowing judicious use of fixed anchors will do more to protect the wilderness by eliminating use of vegetation as anchor material, as well as eliminate cliff-top access (which contributes massively to erosion and destruction of vegetation).

Fixed anchor use has been in place for decades now across all of America's wilderness areas. Prohibition would be an extremely cost and time prohibitive activity for very little return on wilderness protection. Resources could be much better allocated.

Safety concerns. Fixed anchors are managed by the climbing community and any additional processes (such as lengthy permitting processes) could jeopardize the timely replacement of aging or faulty hardware. This would be users at much greater risk.

Prohibition of fixed hardware would obstruct safe exploration of our wilderness areas. Climbers and canyoneers should be allowed to explore our wilderness in a safe manner that allows safe decision making. Fixed anchors are a vital part of the backcountry safety system.

Prohibition threatens the deep history of exploration, climbing, and canyoneering in America. Any management policies need to ensure protection of existing routes and anchors and allow for ease of maintenance and replacement of such.

In addition, these sorts of policies would essentially be un-enforceable. Many anchors and fixed gear are in inaccessible areas and locations that require highly specialized skill sets to reach. 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.

I trust these issues will be taken into consideration for the sake of current and future land users. I believe land management can co-exist with user groups without the use of prohibition style bans.