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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear USFS.

I am writing to implore you, strongly, not to prohibit 'fixed anchors' at climbing sites in Wilderness Areas of US National Forests. I am a strong supporter of protecting our dwindling wildlands. Clearly, part of that protection includes limiting/minimizing human impact upon nature. At the same time, the wilderness is a resource that ought to be enjoyed at the same time that it is protected. This is essential to the human psyche and, frankly, it is essential to the long-term vitality--and even viability--of the National Forests & Parks. Citizens need to visit and actively appreciate the wild in order to fully embrace its protection.

As you well know, climbers are nature lovers and, for the most part, excellent stewards of the environment. That is why the climbing community itself has been a leading advocate for preservation. Indeed, the community has long supported bans in Wilderness Areas on bolting routes for 'Sport Climbing.' That is to say, the community advocates bans, in Wilderness, on drilling and installing climbing-protection bolts every few meters in order to create clippable-protection points. While many climbers cannot 'trad climb' and rely on these bolted routes, the community has come together and deemed them inappropriate for Wilderness Areas.

Bolted anchors, however, are a different story. Anchors and rapel stations are extremely sparingly placed in climbing areas--and b/c they are not put on climbing faces, they can readily be placed without any damage to natural rock structures. These anchors allow trad climbers to enjoy, safely and with--literally--negligible impact, very remote and beautiful places. And, this visitation helps to reinforce in climbers the need to protect these spaces.

I know that many within the USFS appreciate the difference between bolting to create sport-climbing routes and bolting fixed anchors. But, I fear some do not. Fixed anchors are far less impactful than trails, camp sites, etc. But, fixed anchors are critical enabling safety items. Please explore/explain to all the key difference between bolting practices--and revise draft policy to allow appropriate fixed anchors.

Sincerely,

Kirk Palmer