

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/4/2024 3:38:07 AM

First name: Graham

Last name: Zimmerman

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear US Forest Service,

I trust this message finds you well. As a professional Alpine climber, advocate, and President of the American Alpine Club, I wish to express my deep concerns regarding the proposed prohibition of fixed anchors in Wilderness areas under your jurisdiction.

Fixed anchors are not only integral to climbers' safety systems but have been responsibly utilized for over half a century in alignment with established climbing policies. Considering the proposed restriction on the establishment of new routes to "existing climbing opportunities" on non-Wilderness lands, I urge you to reconsider this approach.

Such a restriction is unenforceable and risks creating confusion among both land managers and climbers. Non-Wilderness climbing management policies should prioritize maintaining opportunities for new anchors, allowing analyses to determine if climbing restrictions are necessary to protect cultural and natural resources.

This proposed prohibition raises significant issues, from impeding critical safety decisions to jeopardizing the regular maintenance of fixed anchors-essential responsibilities shouldered by the climbing community. It also obstructs the appropriate exploration of Wilderness areas, limiting climbers' ability to engage dynamically with these environments.

As the President of the American Alpine Club, I urge you to work collaboratively towards a climbing management policy that upholds the delicate balance between protecting Wilderness character and preserving America's rich climbing legacy.

Your attention to these concerns is crucial, and I appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,

Graham Zimmerman

President, American Alpine Club