

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/4/2024 5:03:06 PM

First name: Riley

Last name: Gaines

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Fixed anchors are an important part of climbing. Climbing itself is an activity that fits well within the language of the Wilderness Act and any action that restricts climbing and fixed anchors should be carefully considered. Climbing as an activity provides "outstanding opportunities for solitude" along with being a "primitive and unconfined type of recreation." Many of the protected Wilderness areas have historically been climbing areas and climbing is an activity that is so ingrained in human society that UNESCO has recognized alpinism as an intangible cultural heritage. Climbing is compatible with Wilderness and climbers are important advocates for wilderness.

Fixed anchors allow for safe ascending and descending on steep terrain. Fixed anchors are safer and leave less impact than other anchoring methods such as leaving cordage behind. Fixed anchors are relatively inert to the natural world and can be camouflaged to blend into the rock on which it is placed. Since fixed anchors are placed higher on rocks than the trails below, most people cannot see fixed anchors unless they are very close to them. Safe fixed anchors also keep climbers safer and help reduce the need for rescues which often need to violate the Wilderness Act to be successful (EX: short-haul rescue via helicopter) When considering the impact of climbing in wilderness areas it leaves far less impact than other accepted user groups (EX; Pack animals). It is an ancient activity that provides recreation in an untrammled environment. Fixed anchors are important for safe and low-impact climbing. Climbing is an activity that is compatible with wilderness character and should be managed as such. Climbers themselves are a group interested in managing their own impact and climbers have a strong ethic to place as few fixed anchors as possible.