

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/5/2024 3:44:13 AM

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Comments:

As an avid climber and canyoneer, and someone who has spent time in wilderness climbing settings, this policy concerns me in terms of safety and threatening the perpetuation of the United States' climbing culture. Climbing in wilderness areas on fixed anchors creates an environment that can be safer and more approachable for climbers of all backgrounds, demographics, and skill levels, and prohibiting new fixed anchors in wild areas threatens this increasing diversity of the sport. From a safety perspective, restricting the replacement and placement of new bolts can and will lead to more backcountry rescues, injuries, and deaths. Qualified climbers notice issues with previously placed bolts and make replacements to maintain the integrity of the environment while keeping the community safe. I fear for many climbers becoming injured because a bolt was not replaced.

All said, I do support improved regulation in the bolt setting practices in the United States. Bolts should be painted to match the environment they are in to remove distractions, and standardized spacing bolt placement and type could also improve the safety of climbing while protecting the environment from unnecessary damage. Overall, I am of the opinion that while there is room for improvement, a full fixed anchor prohibition is not the approach, and I appreciate your willingness to reconsider.

Thank you,

Gabriel Walker