

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/8/2024 12:08:32 AM

First name: Tommy

Last name: Bratton

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Sirs,

Mountaineering in Wilderness areas has had a profound positive influence on my life and the lives of many others. I climbed Denali in 1979 via the Denali Traverse by ascending the West Buttress, descending the Harper and Muldrow Glaciers, and hiking out to Wonder Lake. Many experiences on this climb shaped my career in the energy industry by instilling the bedrock principles of conservation and sustainability that are critical in managing our natural resources. The few fixed anchors we encountered were essential to our safety and contributed to our success. Like many other climbs in Wilderness areas, a few fixed anchors are essential for climbers like me to recreate safely in these remote areas.

I agree with the people with The Access Fund and many members of Congress. We need to conserve our natural resources. Absolutely. However, fixed anchors are essential to a climber's safety system. It is unreasonable for federal agencies to create new guidance policies prohibiting Wilderness climbing anchors when they have allowed, managed, and authorized fixed anchors for decades. Prohibiting fixed anchors will create safety issues by imposing unnecessary obstacles to the regular maintenance of fixed anchors, a responsibility accepted by the climbing community. Prohibiting fixed anchors obstructs appropriate exploration of Wilderness areas, and prohibiting fixed anchors will threaten America's rich climbing legacy.

The National Parks and Wilderness areas were established for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of all people and for all time. I can attest from personal experience that these goals have been met. Fixed anchors never compromised these goals, in fact, they contributed to my safety so I could return to these beautiful places for all time.

Regards,

Tom Bratton

Volunteer instructor for the Colorado Mountain Club