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Comments: Hello:

I understand that the United States Forest Service (USFS) and National Park Service (NPS) want to limit the installation and maintenance of fixed anchors, bolts, pitons, and even slings on public land. Together with the rest of the climbing community, I wanted to express my opposition to this ill-guided proposed regulation and recommend that it be denied.

Besides making climbing less fun and limiting new route development, this will cause an increase in climbing accidents, resource degradation, and use vital volunteer Search and Rescue (SAR) resources.

Amid increasing usage of wilderness climbing routes, prohibiting service and installation of pitons, bolts, slings, and other fixed hardware would create a worsening public safety issue. (Rappelling, maintenance of fixed anchors, overuse of existing gear, safety hazards)

Aging hardware makes climbing routes and descents less safe, which causes more accidents. This would increase demand on already overworked volunteer Search and Rescue (SAR) organizations.

The language in the new directives does not clarify whether volunteer SAR members would be permitted to place and determine the location of emergency rescue bolts.

Bolts and fixed rappel stations prevent resource degradation in fragile alpine environments.

On wilderness routes, bolts are already placed sparingly. In situations where no removable gear can be placed, bolts are placed to prevent catastrophic falls. Prohibiting these bolt placements will lead to more catastrophic falls in the wilderness and more SAR rescues.

Many routes require rappelling in some form.

Thank you for your consideration,

John Fisher