

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/9/2024 6:01:57 PM

First name: John

Last name: Raaf

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Committee,

I am writing to express my opinion that the use and maintenance of fixed climbing anchors should remain allowed in wilderness areas. Rock climbing is a core outdoors activity in wilderness areas and parks, and to pursue it safely, climbers need to utilize fixed anchors. The impact of fixed anchors is far less than the impact of trails, service roads, and campsites, as anchors are only visible when a person is quite close to the cliff. I have been a climber for over 35 years and have seen the evolution of wilderness policy over the decades. I encourage you to recognize that participation in rock climbing is growing exponentially in recent years. If the current Forest Service administration prohibits the use and maintenance of fixed anchors in wilderness areas, the direct result will be an increase in climbing accidents and calls for rescue.

America has a rich climbing legacy. Changing the Forest Service's policy on fixed anchors would erase some of the world's greatest climbing achievements. Climbing management policy needs to protect existing routes from removal.

Thank you,  
John C. Raaf