

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/11/2024 1:37:24 AM

First name: Leonardo

Last name: Franchi

Organization:

Title:

Comments: To whom it may concern,

I write expressing my concern at the recently released "Evaluation and Authorization Procedures for Fixed Anchors and Fixed Equipment in National Park Service Wilderness Areas" policy.

I am an avid outdoor recreationalist: a climber, ski mountaineer, hiker, and resident of our mountain communities.

It is my strong belief that this policy will make outdoor recreation less safe. Fixed anchors are an essential part of recreating responsibly in the backcountry via technical rock climbing, ski mountaineering, and more. They are not prohibited installations under the Wilderness Act, and following existing policies that allow judicious use of fixed anchors will protect the Wilderness character of wilderness areas while also allowing primitive and unconfined Wilderness climbing.

Prohibiting fixed anchors causes a huge set of unintended consequences. Safety decisions are crucial and fixed anchors support safe, respectable and responsible outdoor recreation.

Prohibiting fixed anchors obstructs appropriate exploration of Wilderness areas. Land managers need to allow climbers to explore Wilderness in a way that permits in-the-moment decisions that are necessary when navigating complex vertical terrain.

Restricting the establishment of new routes to "existing climbing opportunities" on non-Wilderness lands is unenforceable and will create confusion amongst land managers and climbers. Non-Wilderness climbing management policy should maintain opportunities for new anchors unless and until analyses determine climbing should be restricted to protect cultural and natural resources.

I urge you to halt this proposal and engage with the climbing community - stewards of our Wilderness areas and forests - to develop a policy that supports responsible recreation and maintains safety for all recreationalists.