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Organization:

Title:

Comments: To Whom It May Concern:

I have been a climber for more than 40 years and a longtime historian of American climbing, both as a writer and as the editor of two leading climbing magazines (Rock & Ice and Climbing), and most recently as the editor of the American Alpine Journal for the past decade.

I have climbed extensively in national forests and designated wilderness areas all over the United States. The use of fixed anchors in wilderness areas has long been an essential practice. Many historic climbs that I have done would not be possible without limited use of fixed anchors such as pitons, bolts, and slings, either for belay anchors, climbing protection, or rappel descents. Moreover, the use of fixed anchors on rock climbs and mountain routes in wilderness has been a well-established practice in the United States for nearly a century. Piton use began in many places that would become designated wilderness areas in the 1920s, and expansion bolts began to be used in the 1930s.

It is essential that the safe and responsible use of fixed anchors in national forests and wilderness areas remains available to the climbing community. I believe the large majority of visitors enjoy and appreciate the fact that climbing is a part of our wild and mountainous areas, and I also believe that fixed anchors can be part of a sustainable wilderness experience.

Please revise your climbing guidance to reflect the practice and precedent of at least the last 60-plus years: that fixed anchors for climbing can be used, replaced, and maintained in designated wilderness areas in national forests.

Sincerely,

Dougald MacDonald

Editor

The American Alpine Journal