

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/11/2024 1:52:29 AM

First name: ADRIENNE

Last name: PASTULA

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am in favor of continuing to allow fixed anchors in wilderness for the following reasons.

Climbing is a well-established use of wilderness and is legitimate just like other wilderness uses.

Fixed anchors are well-established devices used to protect climbers both during ascent of otherwise unsafe expanses of rock, and as points of protection for safe belays and for safe escapes (rappelling). They have been used for half a century or more. They are not prohibited installations under the Wilderness Act.

Prohibiting fixed anchors or removing already existing anchors will create serious safety issues to climbers AND to the rescue squads dispatched in an emergency (at which point the rescue squads will be forced to create fixed anchors for safety reasons).

Most climbers maintain an ethos of minimalism which is evident particularly in less popular wilderness areas. If over bolting or excessive use of fixed anchors is noted in specific, well defined areas (such as a particular crag or line of ascent), then the appropriate agency should be allowed to develop a management plan to better preserve that particular area, with public comment. It does not make sense to me to ban or regulate fixed anchors in all wilderness areas at the outset for a few reasons:

- Broad enforcement would be impossible over such a large area- the government would need to employ dedicated teams of climbers and land managers across the country to effectively manage the use of fixed anchors
- Reasonable climbers will continue to build fixed anchors in situations where no alternatives for safe retreats exist. Unless climbing is banned, unapproved fixed anchors will always exist (and given precedent, even if it is banned they will continue to exist)

I have been climbing for 12 years and have never encountered a problem with fixed anchors that wasn't managed appropriately by the amateur climbing community. Regulating fixed anchors would be an unnecessary, expensive, and ineffective use of taxpayer funds given all of my experience climbing.