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First name: Josh

Last name: Finkelstein

Organization:

Title:

Comments: To Whom It May Concern:

I have been a climber for more than 20 years and a longtime student of American climbing. I have written articles for the commercial climbing publications (Rock & Ice and Climbing), as well as the American Alpine Journal. I have climbed first ascents on 4 continents and repeated committing and difficult climbs all over the world.

I have climbed extensively in national parks all over the United States. 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 park 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 many national parks, 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 our national parks.

Sincerely,

Josh Finkelstein