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First name: Ronnie

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear National Park Service,

As a rock and ice climber and advocate of environmental preservation, I wish to express my deep concerns regarding the proposed prohibition of fixed anchors in Wilderness areas.

Fixed anchors are not only integral to climbers' safety systems but have been responsibly utilized for over half a century in accordance with established climbing policies. Creating new guidance to restrict their usage nationwide is unnecessary and threatens the very essence of responsible Wilderness climbing.

This proposal raises significant issues, from impeding critical safety decisions to jeopardizing the regular maintenance of fixed anchors-essential responsibilities shouldered by the climbing community.

The proposed prohibition may inadvertently compromise safety and the preservation of climbing routes, hindering the unique in-the-moment decisions required in navigating challenging vertical terrain. Furthermore, restricting fixed anchors obstructs the appropriate exploration of Wilderness areas, limiting the ability of climbers to engage with these environments in a manner that permits dynamic decision-making during complex ascents.

The existence of fixed anchors on popular climbing routes does have some impact on the environment, but it is far outweighed by the value they provide in allowing safe outdoor recreation. Climbers have long been allowed to police these issues themselves; local coalitions and motivated volunteers have done a great job with this so far and should be allowed to continue.

Sincerely,

Ronnie Eric Stapleton