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First name: Anna

Last name: Jensen

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I have been climbing for 4 years now and my favorite part about it is the variety of beautiful places I get to experience in such a unique way. Many of the experiences I have had would not have been possible without fixed anchors whether they are used for getting up a route or getting back down safely.

Fixed anchors are an essential piece of climbers' safety system and are not prohibited "installations" under the Wilderness Act. Following existing climbing policies that allow judicious use of fixed anchors for more than a half century will do more to protect Wilderness character while providing opportunities for Wilderness climbing.

For example, to get back down from a route there needs to be a rappel anchor which is usually 2 bolts in the rock or maybe a thick plastic covered cable or nylon sling around a tree. If these were not there it might mean that climbers have to put their rope around a tree itself and then have to pull it from the bottom causing severe wear around the tree rather than less wear on replaceable metal rappel rings.

Prohibiting fixed anchors will create safety issues by imposing unnecessary obstacles to the regular maintenance of fixed anchors, a responsibility undertaken by the climbing community. Critical safety decisions often must be made in the moment and any authorization process should not impede those decisions. Fixed anchor maintenance needs to be managed in a way that incentivizes safe anchor replacement and does not risk the removal of climbing routes.

For example if a climber is going down a route they might notice that one of the anchors is close to being worn through making it unsafe to rappel on. In this case a climber would cut the old sling off and replace it. If they are not able to do this they risk the anchor failing causing them to fall and leading to severe injury or death.

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.

It does not make sense for federal agencies to create new guidance policies prohibiting Wilderness climbing anchors across the country when they have allowed, managed, and authorized fixed anchors for decades. It is not practical, as there are not enough funds or staff to assess all anchors and enforce broad prohibitions. It will cause increased damage to the environment and cause safety issues leading to increased injuries and deaths.

Thank you for reading.

Anna Jensen