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First name: Elijah

Last name: Conlee

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am writing as a both an individual climber and the director of a climbing-focused non-profit, board member of a local climbing coalition, and part of the bolt & anchor replacement team in central Oregon. I am also a wilderness educator and in the past 10 years have lived, worked, and used fixed protection in Oregon, Washington, Alaska, Wyoming, Nevada and Utah. I am in guide training and maintain a wilderness first responder certification.

In all of those categories, fixed anchors are crucial to personal and community safety. They also help avoid countless extremely costly rescue operations.

I know there are varying opinions, but I hope you will heed the words of the communities who use the wilderness and have formed national organizations to care for climbing, steward climbing areas, and educate responsible use (American Alpine Club, Access Fund, & Climbers for Christ, to name but a few).

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 for primitive and unconfined Wilderness climbing.

It is unreasonable 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.

Prohibiting fixed anchors will create immense 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.

Prohibiting fixed anchors obstructs appropriate exploration of Wilderness areas. Land managers need to allow climbers to explore Wilderness in a way that permits in-the-moment decisions that are necessary when navigating complex vertical terrain.

Prohibiting fixed anchors will threaten America's rich climbing legacy and could erase some of the world's greatest climbing achievements. Climbing management policy needs to protect existing routes from removal.

The climbing community represents the entire swath of American humanity. From coast to coast, from corporate leaders, doctors & lawyers (and politicians!) to young folks fresh out of school and from single folks to multi-generational families, visit any climbing area and you will find all of them engaged in climbing and working to climb safely, protect themselves and others, and enjoying and caring for our public lands.

Restricting the establishment of new routes to "existing climbing opportunities" on non-Wilderness lands is completely 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.

Please reconsider your proposal and listen to the community, professionals, and rescue organizations who oppose these policy updates. Please do not prohibit fixed anchors!