

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/17/2024 5:34:11 PM

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Comments: I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed MRA procedures for Fixed Anchors. They will lead to unnecessary delays for replacement of unsafe climbing anchors and protection bolts, and extra work for USFS personnel. Replacement of existing fixed anchors should not be restricted in any way as aging hardware makes climbing routes and descents less safe, which causes more accidents.

Rappelling from some type of fixed anchors is often the only option for climbers to safely retreat from routes without SAR rescue. Prohibiting maintenance of these anchors could cause more catastrophic falls in the wilderness and more SAR rescues. In addition, it would unnecessarily endanger the lives of rescuers.

Bolts and fixed rappel stations prevent resource degradation in delicate environments. These types of planned descent routes not only avoid vegetation damage (rappelling from trees, scrambling through fragile sections of alpine plants, etc.) but also create descent options that reduce rockfall hazards, minimize chances of climbers getting ropes stuck on descents, and avoid dangerous situations and costly rescue operations.

The perceived benefit of enhancing the wilderness experience for other USFS users is minimal, as bolts and pitons are not easily visible, and are almost always located far from places non-climbers would access.

Placing undue and unreasonable restrictions on climbing will not protect wilderness areas but will severely strain a largely beneficial and cooperative relationship between the climbing community and land management agencies. This will benefit neither climbers nor the USFS.