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First name: Kelly

Last name: Jewell

Organization:

Title:

Comments: As a responsible climber who has safely explored climbing routes in wilderness areas over the last several decades, I stand by the Access Fund and its partners to oppose the proposed restrictions on bolts and other fixed anchors in wilderness areas.

I take this stand for the following reasons:

- * 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.
- * 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.
- * 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 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.
- * 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.

Please carefully consider the possible safety ramifications that could result from this policy change. I have had to bail off climbs when the weather has turned, or other parties' climbing has affected our timing. This can happen despite the best of planning. Fixed anchors can be essential to do this safely.