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First name: Charles

Last name: Thomas

Organization: Teton Climbers' Coalition

Title: Vice Chairman

Comments: The board of The Teton Climbers' Coalition acknowledges the importance of managing fixed anchors in Wilderness areas. At the same time, we believe a plan concerning fixed anchors must be three things: safe, realistic and necessary.

With traditional climbing-the predominant type of climbing found in Grand Teton National Park-fixed anchors are used occasionally during ascents. More commonly, they're used to descend routes safely. In either instance they help ensure the wellbeing of the climber, and should not be managed by officials who may not understand the specifics of their application.

In 2012, a climber in North Cascades National Park died after officials removed the bolts used to descend one of the Park's most popular climbs. The action forced the climber to descend a dangerous gully, where he fell to his death. Removing descent anchors without warning is akin to cutting the brake cables on a car. Management for Wilderness areas should not attempt to regulate the use of anchors, particularly when they are necessary for climbers' safety.

We furthermore believe that any management plan must be realistic. Climbing has been, and should continue to be, an accepted activity in Wilderness areas for more than 100 years. It is not realistic to permit climbing but undermine one of the key elements of its safe pursuit. Neither is it realistic to ask that climbers refrain from establishing new routes. New routes are established in part because climbers keep getting better. Future generations of climbers need a way to practice the pursuit safely. Climbers can't be expected to ask for permission to leave a fixed anchor while trying to descend, and management is unlikely to have either the staffing or the expertise to regulate the anchors that result.

Finally, we believe the regulation of fixed anchors should only occur when absolutely necessary. Fixed anchors are so small, climbers often have a hard time seeing them when climbing; they're almost impossible to see from the ground. Regulating anchors that are rarely visible to anyone but a person trying to get down from a climb is unnecessary. A simple guideline regarding the use of unobtrusive anchors (e.g., anchors that are painted natural colors to blend in with the rock) will keep Wilderness areas pristine without endangering the wellbeing of the public.

Climbing is a deeply American value, and one of our country's last remaining true frontiers. Some of the country's greatest environmental leaders-from John Muir to David Brower to Yvon Chouinard-fell in love with the natural world through climbing, and it is how many of us express our love for the wilderness. It is important to the physical, mental and spiritual health of millions of practitioners across the country. It is how we connect with nature, with our friends and loved ones, with our communities, and with ourselves. To adversely impact climbing with unsafe, unrealistic and unnecessary regulations would be both wrong and arbitrary. We therefore ask that any regulation concerning fixed anchors be safe, realistic and necessary.