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First name: Jacob

Last name: Edson

Organization:

Title:

Comments:

I am writing to voice my strong opposition to the proposed prohibition of fixed climbing anchors in US Wilderness areas. The use of fixed anchors is an integral aspect of climbers' safety systems and does not violate the provisions of the Wilderness Act. Maintaining the current climbing policies that have allowed the careful use of fixed anchors for over fifty years will uphold the Wilderness character while ensuring safe and responsible climbing practices in these pristine areas.

Proposing new guidance policies that aim to ban fixed climbing anchors nationwide is unreasonable, especially when federal agencies have historically permitted, managed, and regulated such anchors. Prohibiting fixed anchors would not only raise safety concerns but also obstruct the regular maintenance of these anchors, a duty that the climbing community has consistently shouldered. In critical moments, the ability to quickly make safety decisions should not be hindered by an authorization process that may delay the replacement of fixed anchors. Effective management of fixed anchor maintenance is essential to ensure safe replacement and protect climbing routes from removal.

Additionally, banning fixed anchors would impede the appropriate exploration of Wilderness areas, inhibiting climbers' ability to make necessary, real-time decisions, especially when navigating complex vertical terrain.

Furthermore, the proposed ban on fixed anchors poses a significant threat to America's rich climbing legacy and jeopardizes some of the world's greatest climbing achievements. Climbing management policies should emphasize the protection of existing routes to preserve the historical and cultural significance of these climbing destinations.

In closing, I urge the US National Park Service to carefully consider the adverse implications of banning fixed climbing anchors in Wilderness areas and instead collaborate with the climbing community to develop policies that prioritize safety, preserve the Wilderness character, and maintain America's climbing legacy.

Thank you for your attention to this pressing matter.