

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/22/2024 2:19:31 AM

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Comments: To whom it may concern,

As a scholar and advocate for the conservation of wilderness spaces, I can understand your move to ban fixed climbing anchors in wilderness areas.

However, as an avid climber and outdoor educator, I strongly disagree with your move to ban fixed anchors in wilderness areas. Banning the use and existence of fixed anchors will inevitably lead to confusion and compromise safety. If a climber goes out to find they can't rappel from a route they've climbed several times because the bolts were cut or the slings removed, they will find themselves in a bad situation and probably require rescue or breaking LNT principles and leaving gear behind to get off the route safely. If a climber finds themselves part-way up a multi-pitch route when a thunderstorm rolls in and they don't have access to a bolted belay station, they will (again) either require rescue or leave gear behind. There are several kinds routes that require fixed gear in order to be climbed, i.e. face or slab sport routes, climbs with vertical or overhanging descents -- these routes would be rendered completely un-climbable without fixed gear. Lastly, as fixed gear wears out and needs replacing, less seasoned or desperate climbers might clip to a loose bolt or faded sling and gamble their life weighing that piece of gear to get through their climb.

Finally, the wilderness act is written to allow for exceptions, particularly for mining, and if that can be an exception, then fixed anchors should also be an exception.

Thank you,
Stephany Subdiaz