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First name: Tito

Last name: Galdo

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am all for recreation in Wilderness and deeply understand the positive impacts of being active in and engaged with wild places. I am not an avid climber but have enjoyed the experience several times and can relate to its value and benefits. That said, I do believe there need to be limits to human access/activity in wild places and that human recreation should not be the top priority when making decisions about these places. I believe conserving the wild character of these places and ecosystems is of the utmost importance. There are so few uncompromised wild places in this world--less than 3 percent of land in the Lower 48 is protected as Wilderness! We need to take strong measures to ensure the wild places that remain are protected and not permanently altered by human activity.

With that prioritization of wild ecosystems and lands in mind, I feel strongly that fixed climbing anchors must not be allowed in Wilderness. The Wilderness Act's strict prohibitions, including its prohibition on installations, must not be compromised or overridden by a desire to facilitate or enhance a particular form of recreation. I think it is already generous that temporary anchors are allowed--this is an excellent compromise that allows recreation without permanent impacts on the delicate balance of factors that give wild places their character and immeasurable value, allowing humans to interact with these places while leaving them relatively intact for the animals and plants that depend on them. And for those climbers seeking developed climbing opportunities, there are loads of permanently bolted climbs outside of Wilderness.

I am also reminded that the USFS's primary duty is to protect Wilderness in its natural, untrammeled state, and the Wilderness Act's ban on installations can only be overcome in rare administrative circumstances where the installation is necessary to protect Wilderness in its natural, untrammeled state. Permanent installations to facilitate recreational rock climbing does not meet this standard.