

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/22/2024 9:28:53 PM

First name: Ashley

Last name: Horn

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am a land manager and an avid rock climbing, both for the past 20 years. In my careers I have often met with and admire wilderness advocates and I understand their desire to preserve wilderness to be untrammeled by humans and preserve nature in its most raw form. However, the Wilderness Act also clearly states that wilderness is intended for "outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation". I believe we can have it all, preservation, solitude and recreational opportunity. I believe rock climbing is one of the best ways to experience solitude in the wilderness, especially as number of visitors increase.

I believe every rock climbing area has its own unique set of issues and concerns, and therefore I recommend that climbing installations be managed at the local Forest or Park level. This would allow each agency at the local level to develop climbing management plans to suit the communities surrounding those areas.

As things stand now, when I'm out climbing on public lands in Wilderness, when I go to repel a route (to use my ropes to get back down to the ground), there's so much webbing (flat rope) left behind (in areas where bolting isn't allowed), that's it's very dangerous to use to repel (because it ages quickly in the elements) and leaves behind a lot of garbage for birds and small mammals to eat (which of course is harmful to their health). If we just allowed some bolting, then climbs that are climbed in Wilderness can be clean of any old webbing, and safer, with a few bolts.

Honestly, I have not met anyone out hiking who's said "wow, there's just too many bolts to enjoy this wilderness area", because people I met in the woods, can't even see any of the bolts. The bolts in wilderness for the use of climbing, are so small and hard to see, they do not diminish someone's experience in the wilderness. Now without bolts, there will be a ton of webbing left behind, and that can be seen by people below and bad for animals who eat it.

I am an advocate for local National Forests and National Parks developed climbing management plans that suite the type of climbing and communities they serve. And that installations and route bolts are allowed, within reasons as described in the climbing management plans.

Thank you!