

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/23/2024 4:17:26 AM

First name: Gary

Last name: Gover

Organization:

Title:

Comments: The Wilderness Act prohibits installations and structures like permanent fixed climbing anchors in order to protect the areas' wild character. Fixed climbing anchors must not be allowed in Wilderness. Here are key points:

****Protecting Wilderness Character:****

* The Wilderness Act prioritizes maintaining the wildness of designated areas. This means structures like permanent fixed climbing anchors, which leave lasting impacts, are generally prohibited.

****Exceptions with a High Bar:****

* The Act allows some minimal installations under specific circumstances, but this doesn't justify widespread anchor placements for recreational activities.

****Prioritizing Preservation:****

* Land managers' primary responsibility is to safeguard Wilderness in its natural state. The exceptions to the installation ban must be rare and solely for protecting the wilderness itself.

****No Duty to Develop:****

* The Act doesn't require agencies to actively create specific recreational opportunities within Wilderness. Its very existence as a protected landscape inherently provides such opportunities, as long as its natural state is preserved.

****Compatibility with Climbing:****

* Climbing without permanent anchors aligns with Wilderness protection. Limiting climbs due to the absence of bolted routes isn't detrimental, especially considering the recent surge in recreational pressure on these areas.

****Alternatives Exist:****

* Climbers seeking challenging bolted routes have ample options outside of Wilderness boundaries.

****Wilderness Under Threat:****

* With less than 3% of Lower 48 land protected as Wilderness, these fragile landscapes face constant threats, including rising recreational pressures.

****Public Engagement:****

* Proposals for permanent anchor installations within Wilderness must involve public notice and comment opportunities through established protocols like the National Environmental Policy Act.