

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/24/2024 2:36:23 AM

First name: Anon

Last name: Anon

Organization:

Title:

Comments: As a climber of 20 years who loves the outdoors and enjoys getting off the beaten path, I strongly disagree with the proposed procedure. While I do not think that new, fully bolt protected sport routes belong within a wilderness area. I do think that existing sport, traditional, and mixed climbs should stay, and the development of new traditional and mixed climbing routes should be allowed. By a "mixed" climb I mean a traditional climbing route that requires the placement of a few fixed anchors to provide adequate protection for the lead climber. These climbs of "mixed" traditional and fixed anchor protection still maintain the wilderness feel while providing a reasonable level of safety for experienced climbers. I believe these type of climbs will represent a large part of climbing exploration and ascents within America's wilderness areas and should be allowed to continue within a climbing management plan.

However, my biggest concern is regarding fixed anchors for the descents of climbing routes. While many routes can be climbed up without the use of any fixed anchor gear, getting down or, descending from those climbs is often dangerous, impossible or very economically costly to the climber. Without fixed anchor bolts climbers tend to leave behind gear, (slings, webbing, cord etc,) in order to descend, which degrades rapidly in the elements. This poses a safety problem for future climbers wanting to use what's there and not lose their own gear and ultimately causing an excess of trash left behind in the wilderness.

I believe part of this proposal could be amended to disallow new routes that are of complete bolt protection and allow routes that require 50% of the protection or less to be bolt protected and to allow bolts for safe descending.

The second issue I feel strongly about is that an inspection of all climbing anchors within wilderness areas to decide if they should remain or be removed is an impossible task and almost completely unenforceable. It seems also a waste of resources to use personnel to inspect climbing anchors. Not much information on the quality of a fixed anchor can be gained from an "inspection". The decision of whether an anchor should remain or be removed seems largely a matter of opinion. In my experience current fixed anchors do not hurt or take away from anyone's experience in the wilderness. Fixed anchors are often hard to notice and placed inconspicuously. From my experience, the placement of fixed anchors is not out of hand and in no way impacting these wilderness areas. If anything more fixed anchors, and the permission to place such after initial exploration, especially for descending routes, are needed to prevent future accidents. If the concern is about wilderness areas gaining popularity by becoming fully bolted "sport" climbing areas then I hope my comment above alleviates those concerns.

Furthermore to my point there have been many accidents, such as one recently within North Cascades National Park where two climbers died in a descending accident that could easily be prevented by fixed descending anchors. I have also lost a climbing friend from the failure of a left behind "tat" anchor in the Red River Gorge, KY. Both of these and many more accidents can be prevented by fixed descending anchors. Please revise this procedure and do not let more and more accidents happen for no good reason. Fixed anchors are cheap and easy to install, they are by far the best option for descending a climbing route and when no traditional protection can be placed.