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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear US Forest Service,

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. Not only are such installations lasting signs of human development, but they also attract and concentrate use, at great expense to native plants and animals for whom Wilderness is often a last, safe refuge.

Yet your agency has proposed new policies that attempt to legalize the use of fixed anchors in Wilderness areas administered by you. Agencies such as yours have no duty to develop Wilderness to provide "opportunities for primitive recreation." You need to recall that your primary duty is to protect Wilderness in its natural, untrammelled state. Therefore, you should not listen to climbers and lobbyists for the outdoor recreation industry with its trillion dollar a year business, instead of wilderness advocates.

Although some climbing organizations champion a non-existing extant "right" to their installations in Wilderness, at the expense of Wilderness itself, the fact is that climbing in Wilderness existed long before modern methods of placing fixed anchors became common and increased the ability of climbers to climb previously impossible routes. The increased access provided by modern technology has spurred, a significant increase in use, along with resultant damage to the rock and adjacent areas.

Wilderness is an endangered landscape. Less than 3 percent of land in the Lower 48 is protected as Wilderness, and it is under threat, including from rapidly escalating recreation pressures. Kindly due your duty and withdraw these proposed new policies that allow the use of fixed climbing anchors in Wilderness areas.