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First name: Solomon
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Organization:
Title:
Comments: To whom it may concern,
As a former National Park Service employee and a climber, I have strong views on this issue. Climbing is undoubtedly becoming more popular and it is important to consider the impact that increased climbing traffic will have on the national parks and national forests. Wilderness areas have a special character to them that is worth protecting and I agree that there are some areas where it may be best served by protecting them from climbing development. However, the way I read this policy it gives each park administration the authority to dictate the policy on bolting within there park. There are some guidelines but no restrictions on how park administrations can act. I am aware as a former NPS employee how a few administrators at a single park can dramatically change the culture and use of a park by pushing through their agenda. For example the wilderness in cascade national park has historically been used for climbing. However a set of administrators their decided they wanted to restrict the placement and replacement of climbing anchors. Due to that policy climbers were forced to descend down more treacherous routes off climbs which resulted in several accidents and I believe at least one death. If instead the policy towards bolting had been more lenient and the park had allowed climbers to place and maintain safe descent routes those accidents could have been prevented.

I fear that a policy this broad will create similar situations at other parks. I do not anticipate that this policy will effectively help manage the growth of climbing on nationa park and forest service lands. I believe climbers will still find ways to climb in the places they wish. Instead by making it more difficult or potentially illegal to place protection bolts the park administration will be incresing the risks of pursuing these activites in wilderness areas.

Sincerely,
Solomon Krevans