

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/29/2024 6:03:24 PM

First name: Sabine

Last name: McCarthy

Organization:

Title:

Comments: As a rescuer, I'm shocked that there is even the idea of prohibiting climbing hardware in wilderness. The lack of appropriate hardware not only can but most certainly WILL cause completely avoidable accidents. When (not if) those happen, search and rescue gets deployed - with helicopters, bolt drills, lots of people involved and so many more invasive factors. Having some bolts here and there is far less impact on wilderness and how it has been defined in the wilderness act, than even just one single rescue. And we'll have to deploy to many of them.

Why? Lack of bolts leads to "adventurous" safety concepts, some of which will fail. Yes, there is trad gear to be placed, but nobody leaves it behind on rappels, due to the very high cost of the gear. Also, there will be massive route finding issues when there aren't any bolts to follow. Going uphill, that can be bad, but going downhill (rappelling), this can prove fatal. And has done so in so many locations already...

I do understand the idea of keeping wilderness wild, but safety has to come first. That same thought is the reason why all hiking trails have been equipped with signs. They are human impacts, but their benefits outweigh the impacts. Same goes for bolts. Besides, from an ecological perspective, having 2 bolts is way, way, way better for the environment than climbers using trees and bushes as rappell anchors. Talk about impact...