

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/29/2024 5:43:08 PM

First name: Rey

Last name: Costello

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to express my concern about the potential impact of proposed policies that aim to prohibit fixed anchors in Wilderness areas. As an advocate for climbing safety and the preservation of our climbing heritage, I believe it is crucial to consider the following points:

Safety System Essentials:

Fixed anchors are a fundamental component of climbers' safety systems. These installations have been integral to climbing practices for over half a century and are not in violation of the Wilderness Act. Adhering to existing climbing policies that judiciously allow fixed anchors is the key to maintaining safety while preserving the primitive and unconfined nature of Wilderness climbing.

Unreasonable Restrictions:

It is unreasonable for federal agencies to introduce new guidance policies prohibiting Wilderness climbing anchors nationwide. Federal agencies have successfully managed and authorized fixed anchors for decades. Creating unnecessary restrictions contradicts established practices and may compromise safety.

Maintenance Challenges:

Prohibiting fixed anchors poses a threat to safety by obstructing regular maintenance, a responsibility shouldered by the climbing community. Swift, in-the-moment decisions are often necessary for critical safety measures. Any authorization process should not impede the timely replacement of anchors and must encourage safe practices to avoid the removal of climbing routes.

Exploration and Access:

Prohibiting fixed anchors hinders appropriate exploration of Wilderness areas. Climbers must be allowed to navigate complex vertical terrain with the flexibility required for in-the-moment decisions. Land managers should facilitate responsible climbing practices that contribute to the preservation of our natural spaces.

Preservation of Climbing Legacy:

The proposed prohibition threatens America's rich climbing legacy and risks erasing some of the world's greatest climbing achievements. Climbing management policies should prioritize the protection of existing routes, ensuring they remain intact for future generations.

I urge you to reconsider and oppose any policies that prohibit fixed anchors in Wilderness areas. Let's work together to preserve the safety of climbers, the integrity of our climbing heritage, and the natural beauty of our Wilderness spaces.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter. I look forward to your support in safeguarding our climbing traditions.

Sincerely,

Rey Costello