

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/29/2024 6:10:09 PM

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Comments: The use of fixed anchors for wilderness climbing has been overseen by federal land managers for nearly 70 years. Over that time a safety system was developed that allows for reasonably safe recreation. I've been climbing for 50 years and my dad was a mountain guide. In that time, climbing has exploded in popularity. If fixed anchors in wilderness areas are prohibited, based on my experience I predict the following will occur:

- 1.Climbing will become more dangerous and accidents will increase due to (1) pioneering climbers venturing into unexplored terrain without the option to place a bolt or piton and (2) failure of aging fixed anchors.
- 2.Search and rescue costs will increase due to the federally mandated increase in the hazard involved in wilderness climbing that will result from this bill. In addition, the impact of rescue (where rescue teams often have to drill bolts, cause severe erosion, and require large teams to travel through otherwise pristine areas) will increase.
- 3.Multiple high profile lawsuits and public pressure will target federal land managers for authorizing a public use to be developed for decades, then prohibiting globally established safe practice protocols.
- 4.Public pressure and high-profile accidents will result in fixed anchors being allowed again, but not until after the damage is done.

Wilderness climbers already only place bolts and fixed hardware as a last resort when removable protection is not available so the reduction of human impact that could result from this bill will be minuscule in comparison to other human impact - a single guard rail built at a tourist overlook at any given wilderness area contains more material than all the fixed hardware in the area combined and the toxicity caused by campstove spills, sunscreen, land management infrastructure and automobiles far exceeds whatever impact climber's hand oils and gymnastic chalk have on the environment. Protecting wilderness is a great idea - but a bill that will require wilderness climbing to be more dangerous won't help.

Finally, the USFS idea of limiting climbing to "existing climbing opportunities" speaks to the disconnect between the writers of this bill and the reality of wilderness climbing. This is unenforceable and will drive the practice of wilderness climbing underground and do nothing to protect the areas that would benefit from increased protection.