

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/29/2024 5:50:31 PM

First name: Scott

Last name: Larsen

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am writing in reference to the request for public comment regarding the placement of permanent bolts, chains and other climbing equipment in wilderness areas. I sincerely love the outdoors and have for many decades been the beneficiary of opportunities to enjoy the beauty and exhilaration of outdoor experiences.

One of the great joys I've found in the past few years is rock climbing. Through climbing I've gained a greater appreciation for what our great parks, forests and wilderness areas have to offer. I've been able to create relationships with great people and to introduce youth to the wonderful opportunities that abound outdoors, as opposed to in front of their tv screens and gaming monitors.

I'm very much in favor of protecting our resources. If disallowing fixed-bolt anchors is being considered then I am opposed to that for the following reasons:

*Fixed-bolt anchors are vital for climbing safety for many climbing routes. The alternative, "trad" gear, is very expensive, adds extra risk of injury, eliminates the opportunity for most climbers, and significantly reduces the areas where climbing can be done.

*Fixed-bolt anchors are usually not noticeable unless you're looking for them. If simple being an eye-sore is a concern regarding fixed-bolt anchors, to me that shouldn't be a major concern. Most anchors blend into the rock fairly well, are not visible more than a few feet away, and I've found, often difficult to see even when you're looking for them.

*Existing bolted routes require periodic maintenance in order to remain safe. If maintenance is not allowed then the existing system will become a grave safety risk for climbers who expect to trust the existing bolts.

*Climbing is a fantastic way of staying in shape and gaining a greater appreciation for nature. It is growing in popularity and bringing people out-of-doors in a way that builds friendships and community. Curbing the opportunities for climbing is a disservice to the community and a misuse of public trust.

Clearly there are areas where the limitation of fixed-bolt anchors should be considered: to protect antiquities, to protect wildlife and natural resources, and to protect the public from hazardous rock conditions. However, those prohibitions should be few relative to the expanse of potential areas.

Thank you for your consideration of this feedback.