

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/29/2024 6:53:26 PM

First name: Brenna

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my opposition for the new policy that would prohibit fixed anchors and equipment in National Park Wilderness Areas. I was born and raised in Utah and studied Outdoor Education at Weber State University. My passion for the preserving our natural landscapes and respecting the beautiful recreation areas extends into everything that I do.

I am a very passionate Rock Climber, which is often my drive to visit National Parks and other areas of the world. I have worked as a guide for outdoor sports including climbing and canyoneering and worked in the indoor climbing industry for 5 years. Climbing is an incredible sport which allows people to enjoy the outdoors and push their own capabilities and limits.

From my guiding and indoor gym experience, I have seen people's lives changed through the outdoors. Climbing as an industry has boomed through the introduction of climbing into the Olympics, mainstream movies, and the pandemic. Because of this, there are so many new climbers who are eager to see what climbing has to offer. The gym can only offer so much.

Climbers new and old, rely on various forms of protection to ensure safety. Area and climb depending, removable anchors and protection are not always feasible or the most safe option. As a guide and hobbyist, I have seen first hand how lack of protection can lead to unsafe experiences and a barrier to the sport.

As mentioned prior, climbing is what supports my travel goals and exploration of the outdoors in most contexts. By removing or limiting fixed anchors and equipment in Wilderness areas would discourage my usage of these areas. It would also erase historic lines and stories told from climbers before me.

An additional concern is that climbing organization will have more hoops to jump through to manage and maintain the safety of these areas. In my current position at Black Diamond Equipment, I host fundraisers all across the US to raise money for the local climbing organizations and their anchor maintenance crew. These groups are very underfunded and put so much effort into keeping climbing accessible and safe for everyone. This advocacy increasingly more relevant.

I volunteered with the Ogden Trails Network for several years and now work very closely with Salt Lake Climbers Alliance. These entities have put in many painstaking hours to go through the proper channels of working with the Forest Service to bolt, develop, and maintain these areas correctly and efficiently as it will create more confusion, and more traffic in Non- Wilderness climbing areas.

I continue to live in Utah because of the access to the climbing of Zion and American Fork Canyon. I urge you to take into account the opinions of locals and climbers in moving forward with this decision. There are alternatives to making this decision that can still help protect the lands that we all enjoy and love in our own unique ways.