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First name: Nancy

Last name: Weidman

Organization:

Title:

Comments: As a average person who has backpacked, climbed, and hiked Wilderness Areas for over 50 years, I find the proposed policy to prohibit fixed anchors in all Wilderness Areas in National Parks and USFS lands is extreme. I have no objections to reasonable limitations on either climbing or installation of new fixed anchors in Wilderness Areas, but it should be subject to decisions of individual land managers, not to a blanket nation-wide regulation. The restriction requiring an MRA for replacement of existing anchors will be burdensome and expensive for managers, invites litigation, and is overkill.

Fixed anchors are often essential to the safety of recreational climbers. Over the years, I've climbed in various wilderness and nonwilderness public lands in the west. Fixed anchors contributed to my safety on some routes. Removing or not allowing climbers to maintain fixed anchors on established routes will reduce the opportunity to climb for all but elite and risk-averse climbers.

There is no need for a "one-size-fits-all" policy on fixed anchors to be imposed by federal agencies across the country and across all wilderness areas. Wilderness managers have managed, allowed, and authorized fixed anchors for decades in individual jurisdictions, and the decisions should continue to be left to local managers with knowledge of the specific region's current and past use and impacts to that specific environment.

Prohibiting fixed anchors could create safety issues for both climbers and the currently overwhelmed Search and Rescue teams tasked with saving stranded, injured, and deceased climbers. Fixed anchor maintenance needs should allow for and encourage anchor replacement and not risk the removal of climbing routes.

Climbing has a long tradition in American Wilderness Areas and is part of our wilderness heritage. The proposed fixed anchor policy could limit climbing opportunities to elite climbers and those who can afford paid guides. Limiting or prohibiting fixed anchors on existing routes will limit even moderate climbs to those who are thrill-seekers, wealthy enough to afford guides, and those willing to flout regulations.

Restricting the establishment of new routes to "existing climbing opportunities" on all non-wilderness lands seems unenforceable. Decisions on restricting fixed anchors on USFS non-wilderness lands should be left to the individual National Forest managers, not specified as a nation-wide plan.