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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear National Forest Service,

While I welcome recognition of climbing as part of the recreational use of national forest lands, I oppose banning bolts and fixed anchors in all wilderness areas. I am a lifelong climber and educator. We want to encourage sustainable and safe use of America's wild lands that honors the long traditions of climbing, which is part of the history of American wilderness.

Please see my concerns below.

Peter A Bates

Fixed anchors are an essential piece of climbers' safety system and should not be prohibited under the Wilderness Act. Following existing climbing policies that allow judicious use of fixed anchors for more than a half century will not hinder wilderness designation.

Federal agencies should not create new policies prohibiting climbing anchors when they have allowed, managed, and authorized fixed anchors for decades.

Prohibiting fixed anchors will create safety issues by imposing unnecessary obstacles to the regular maintenance of fixed anchors, a responsibility undertaken by the climbing community. Fixed anchor maintenance needs to be managed in a way that incentivizes safe anchor replacement and does not risk the removal of climbing routes.

Prohibiting fixed anchors will threaten America's rich climbing legacy and could erase some of the world's greatest climbing achievements. Climbing management policy needs to protect existing routes from removal. This is part of the history of American wilderness exploration, just like John Muir's trails.

Restricting the establishment of new routes to "existing climbing opportunities" on non-Wilderness lands is unenforceable and will create confusion amongst land managers and climbers. Non-Wilderness climbing management policy should maintain opportunities for new anchors unless and until analyses determine climbing should be restricted to protect cultural and natural resources.