

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/29/2024 8:55:48 PM

First name: Webster

Last name: Crittenden

Organization:

Title:

Comments: The USFS has a very difficult mission and has been successful at it primarily due to hard work and community involvement!

Fixed anchors are an essential piece of climbers' safety system and are not prohibited "installations" under the Wilderness Act. Following existing climbing policies that allow judicious use of fixed anchors for more than a half century will do more to protect Wilderness character while providing for primitive and unconfined Wilderness climbing. It is unreasonable for federal agencies to create new guidance policies prohibiting Wilderness climbing anchors across the country when they have allowed, managed, and authorized fixed anchors for decades. The partnership between the government bodies and the climbing community have been worldly successful and should continue.

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. Critical safety decisions often must be made in the moment and any authorization process should not impede those decisions. 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 obstructs appropriate exploration of Wilderness areas. Land managers need to allow climbers to explore Wilderness in a way that permits in-the-moment decisions that are necessary when navigating complex vertical terrain. Disallowing these anchors also would encourage the use of damaging temporary gear, causing much greater and continuous damage.

America has established a legacy of climbing that rivals the Alps! Proposed regulations could erase some of the world's greatest climbing achievements. Climbing management policy needs to protect existing routes from removal.

Please continue working WITH the Climbing Community to preserve and protect our nations beauty and climbing heritage.

Thank you for your work and consideration.