

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/29/2024 9:19:56 PM

First name: Steve

Last name: Olson

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Hello, I am commenting today to voice my opinion on the proposed prohibition of bolts, pitons and slings in wilderness areas. These fixed anchors are an essential part of a climber's safety system and they are not prohibited "installations" under the wilderness act. In terms of recreation installations modern bolts and pitons can be some of the least obtrusive installations in all of wilderness recreation. I do not think that bolt installation should be completely unregulated, but I think that it would be unreasonable for federal agencies to create sweeping new guidelines that prohibit wilderness climbing anchors when they have allowed, managed and authorized fixed anchors for decades. In areas that need attention, it should be up to the local agencies to regulate bolts so that nuanced policies can be implemented that will best protect climbers and most importantly, the wilderness areas that we all love so much.

As a medical student and future emergency medicine physician, I think that prohibiting fixed anchors will create safety issues that will result in many injuries and likely even death. In non-wilderness climbing areas there is usually good access to Search & Recuse/medical services, where all but the most severe accidents can be handled with minimal loss of life. But in wilderness areas safety becomes even more important, as access to medical care may take an extremely long time or may be impossible all together. Even a broken ankle in a wilderness area could become life or death if climbers do not have the fixed anchors to safely rappel off of a wall and get themselves to safety.

Lastly, fixed anchors are a part of America's rich climbing legacy and removing them would erase many of the world's greatest climbing achievements. While I believe that this is secondary to the safety of those in our society, it would still be a travesty to erase such historic routes.