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Organization:

Title:

Comments: To Whom It May Concern,

I'm writing to oppose a Bolt Prohibition in Wilderness Areas. I am part of a strong community of climbers in Utah, which you know boasts some of the best wilderness area in the country. The various wilderness areas also have some of the best climbing in the country. These areas include Big and Little Cottonwood Canyons, American Fork Canyon, & etc. By responsibly placing bolts/bolt hangers/anchors in these areas, climbers are much safer to climb than they would be having to place their own protection. In some cases, placing their own protection will not be possible, cutting off access to climbing in these areas altogether.

Climbers, like myself, are some of the greatest advocates in protecting and enjoying our wonderful wilderness areas safely and responsibly. It would be a massive shame and detriment to climbing and to the overall wilderness area experience to prohibit bolts in the wilderness areas, and thus prohibit climbing in those areas.

On the following point: "Although fixed anchors may be small, there is no 'de minimis' exception to the Wilderness Act's restriction on installations, and the combined impact of many fixed anchors in a single area or rock wall can have a significant effect on wilderness character..." an argument for many other activities and industries could fall in this category. For example ski resorts in Big Cottonwood (Solitude and Brighton resorts) and Little Cottonwood (Snowbird and Alta resorts) have a much bigger footprint than the bolts do. I am not advocating for a removal of the ski resorts (which I also enjoy!) but rather more for an equitable perspective. Do the ski lifts, gates, have an impact of the wilderness character?

In lieu of the proposal to prohibit bolts, I would propose instead USFS representatives work with local climbing organizations, such as SLCA (Salt Lake Climbers Alliance) to encourage regular testing of bolts and anchors for safety and aesthetics, a practice already under way by the SLCA.

Thank you for your consideration,

Javan