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First name: James

Last name: Brisbane

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I have great concerns regarding the USFS proposal to limit or prevent installation of permanent anchor bolts in wilderness areas. I believe such limits or prohibitions would harm the future of technical climbing opportunities in the U.S. Please consider the following:

1. Permanent bolts are critical for providing safety on climbing routes when climbers are in the process of ascending, belaying, and rappelling. This benefit extends not only to the climbers themselves but also to the search & rescue personnel who otherwise might be required to perform a difficult and potentially dangerous rescue or recovery mission.
2. Historical use of bolts on climbing routes has shown that they have no adverse impact on the natural character of a wilderness area, given that the very small size of bolts (and their associated hangers) makes them essentially invisible to the human eye from any significant distance. In many cases, a bolt and hanger can be seen only by a climber who is on that particular route and/or within about 10 or 20 feet. For special situations, this minimal visual impact could be further mitigated by requiring the use of colored hangers that blend with the surrounding rock.
3. The use of bolted anchors on climbing routes is consistent with the installation of many other permanent man-made features in wilderness areas. Consider the fact that trails, bridges, boardwalks, puncheons, retaining structures, drainage elements, signs, pit toilets, composting toilets, tent platforms, bear wires, and countless other artificial features have been constructed or installed in wilderness areas for many decades. Why should something as small and inconspicuous as a climbing bolt be prohibited when much larger features are routinely allowed?
4. Historically, climbing communities have been able to monitor, govern, and maintain permanent bolt anchors in their local crag areas. In many wilderness locations, it would be most effective and fiscally efficient for USFS to simply coordinate with these local communities to create reasonable policies that are mutually agreeable.