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Organization:

Title:

Comments: To whom it may concern:

I have been climbing for more than 40 years, having begun in Linville Gorge as a North Carolina Outward Bound student. That experience was life-changing for me and after ardently pursuing rock climbing for a few years, I became a rock instructor at Outward Bound, and later, an international mountain guide. I honed my skills and developed judgment, discipline, patience, and teamwork through my climbing adventures in iconic wilderness areas such as Yosemite, Rocky Mountain National Park, the Black Canyon of the Gunnison, and the Wind River Range.

I would like for my children to have the same opportunities as I have had, to grow through the adventures that climbing offers. Many of the historic climbs that I've done would not be possible without the judicious use of fixed anchors such as pitons, bolts, and slings for belay anchors, climbing protection, or rappel descents.

America has wilderness climbs that are part of a heritage that is world-renowned and that we should be proud of. These routes should be maintained and fixed anchors should not be removed from them. Additionally, possibilities still exist for young explorers to find new lines of ascent. Part of the tradition in climbing is judgment, creative solutions, and stewardship of the land and resources that offer positive personal growth.

Please revise your climbing guidance to allow for judicious use of climbing anchors, and maintenance of anchors, in wilderness and non-wilderness areas - as has been the practice for the last sixty years. I acknowledge that there are increasingly difficult management decisions to be made, but I believe the best way forward is through joint problem-solving with the climbing community. I also believe that our land managers should be proud of the precedent and practices that they have employed during the last half a century and reconsider any drastic change such as prohibiting fixed anchors in the wilderness.

Sincerely,
Kitty Calhoun