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Comments: Comments on the Evaluation and Authorization Procedures for Fixed Equipment in National Park Service Wilderness Areas.

I'm a climber, skier, and backpacker who has enjoyed our public lands for 65+ years. I came to climbing late, at age 55 and discovered a supportive, inclusive community with ethical conservation and safety principles that far exceeded my expectations. I'm a former air-traffic controller and take safety procedures seriously!

Why climbers need to keep existing anchors and why the anchors are important.

*Fixed anchors are an essential piece of climbers' safety system. They 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 to ask federal agencies to create new guidance policies prohibiting Wilderness climbing anchors.

They have allowed, managed, and authorized fixed anchors for decades.

*Prohibiting fixed anchors will create safety issues.

Imposing unnecessary obstacles to the regular maintenance of fixed anchors, a responsibility already undertaken by the climbing community, will cause more accidents/incidents not alleviate them. 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.

*Prohibiting fixed anchors will threaten America's rich climbing legacy and could erase some of the world's greatest climbing achievements. Climbing management policy needs to protect existing routes from removal.

Respectfully,

Paula Corrette-Fay

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