

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/30/2024 5:10:35 PM

First name: Alex

Last name: Johnston

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I was raised by two USFWS employees in Northern Michigan. I spent my formative years living on federal fish hatcheries- conservation is in my blood. My parents taught me to respect public land, care for the environment and love our national parks. When I was a kid, I volunteered at every opportunity to help get others get involved in conservation, from picking up litter to my favorite- letting the sea lamprey control folks stick little lamprey on me for educational demonstrations.

As an adult, I've found a new way favorite to experience nature with rock climbing.

I would urge the FWS to consider that the very definition of public means that this land is for the people, and rock climbers are passionate enough to care for the equipment and put their own time, money and effort into a community experience that gets more people outside. Climbers have been doing this independently for decades. With this in mind, banning bolts from more geologically unstable areas and having government oversight of bolt safety is a good idea, provided the Ranger knows as much about bolt placement and route safety as a climber. Would a Ranger know when a bolt is too "run-out" or high for a start? Can they do the quick mental math of rope stretch, swing factor, weight difference between climber and belayer, potential rope redirects or belay anchors that climbers do every single time someone gets on a wall? These are how we've kept ourselves safe, through decades of knowledge and traditions passed down from previous generations.

I understand restrictions around climbing to keep people safe, but the people making the rules need to fully understand what climbers already do to keep ourselves and each other safe.