

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/30/2024 1:41:17 AM

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Comments: The below comments are in response to the draft policies that would make fixed anchors prohibited in America's Wilderness areas and offer suggestions on ways this guidance should be improved. National level guidance is desired as we are a growing community that does not want to negatively impact America's Wilderness areas. In fact, climbing is a wilderness dependent activity and the climbing community have been incredible advocates for wilderness and are appreciative of all aspects of the climbing landscape, not just climbing itself. However, we do want a workable solution that is not properly represented in this draft policy.

These new policies would classify fixed anchors as "prohibited installations" in Wilderness areas. This new classification would apply to both new and existing anchors-hindering Wilderness exploration, threatening the existence of longstanding established routes, and obstructing climbers' ability to replace old, unsafe bolts. This is a huge blow to climbers that not only threatens America's climbing legacy but puts the safety of our community at risk.

Fixed anchors are an essential piece of climbers' safety system and 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 for federal agencies to create new guidance policies prohibiting Wilderness climbing anchors across the country when they have allowed, managed, and authorized fixed anchors for decades.

Prohibiting fixed anchors will create safety issues by imposing unnecessary obstacles to the regular maintenance of fixed anchors, a responsibility undertaken by the climbing community. 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.

Restricting the establishment of new routes to "existing climbing opportunities" on non-Wilderness lands is unenforceable and will create confusion amongst land managers and climbers. Non-Wilderness climbing management policy should maintain opportunities for new anchors unless and until analyses determine climbing should be restricted to protect cultural and natural resources.

We climbers and wilderness climbing advocate groups wish to find common ground on a pragmatic management policy that does not burden government agencies and still allows passionate and responsible climbers to climb these spectacular, life changing routes in a safe and sustainable manner.

Thank you for your time.