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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am writing to strongly oppose the proposed legislation to limit fixed climbing anchors in NFS wilderness areas. I have been a climber for 20+ years and currently am the medical director of Seattle Mountain Rescue (SMR), a volunteer mountain rescue organization that operates in King County, WA, as well as the Local Emergency Medical Advisor to the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest. On SMR, we are frequently asked to assist in mountain rescues in the Mount-Baker Snoqualmie National Forest, the Okanogan-Wenatchee National forests, and others. Our job will be significantly harder without the existing fixed anchors in place and the ability to count on them being safe and secure.

Furthermore, we on SMR are all climbers and enjoy experiencing the wilderness in this format and have for years. Would you take out paved trails because they inhibit wilderness character? Let's hope not -- those trails allow people of all ages and abilities to enjoy the parks, inspire people to become stewards of the land and conserve its character, and they increase the value of the experience for almost everyone; even if they indeed reduce the "wilderness character" of the parks. For climbers, bolted anchors are like those paved trails -- they allow the extremely diverse and numerous members of the climbing community to enjoy our national parks safely and comfortably with minimal eyesore or disruption to the natural character of the rock. Without bolted anchors, you're restricting climbing to an elite few with the skills and experience to climb entirely free -- and there just aren't very many Alex Honnolds out there. Bolted anchors are an essential part of keeping rock climbing a safe and widely accessible in our national forests.