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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear representative/reader,

I hope you're well. I'm writing to express serious concerns about the proposed removal and banning of bolts in wilderness areas without an unreasonable and lengthy review and approval process, a decision that threatens recreational activities and canyoning enthusiasts.

The move to categorize fixed anchors, including bolts, as prohibited "installations" in designated wilderness areas by NPS and USFS is troubling. This decision endangers the safety of canyoning participants and imposes unnecessary restrictions on exploration of wilderness landscapes. In both climbing and canyoning much of the risk comes from the anchors being used. These are minimally invasive but provide a substantial increase in safety. Bolts are and should be prepared to deal with issues at anchors on descent, but bolts provide a more secure, safer, faster and reliable method in both standard practice and emergencies. I have had to haul seriously injured partners from bolts in locations where the alternatively available anchors would have been sufficient for body weight but not the 3-10x body weight required for such emergency situations. Fixed anchors allow for a faster exit and avoidance of emergency situations and rescue as well on things like descent from alpine climbing routes when crowds and daylight become significant factors. All of these activities and situations I have personally encountered within national parks and wilderness areas and been significantly aided in avoidance of risk and rescue due to the presence of fixed anchors.

Removing all bolts from wilderness areas is a shortsighted approach undermining the principles of sustainable outdoor recreation. The proposed Minimum Requirements Assessment (MRA) for existing anchors introduces bureaucratic hurdles, risking the removal of safety features and provide a lack of reasonable options for an individual or small group to proceed through. The consequences extend beyond canyoning, affecting all wilderness enthusiasts.

The outright prohibition of bolts in non-wilderness forest service land is problematic, limiting exploration opportunities. It's crucial to recognize that fixed anchors, including bolts, contribute to responsible recreation, ensuring safety and enjoyment in wilderness areas.

I implore you to reconsider this proposal and recognize the indispensable role fixed anchors play in wilderness exploration. Please oppose the removal and banning of bolts in wilderness areas and support bipartisan bills in Congress for a balanced approach to fixed anchor management.

Your decisive action can preserve the integrity of wilderness areas, allowing people to continue experiencing the beauty of nature responsibly.

Thank you for your attention and commitment to maintaining the accessibility and enjoyment of our wilderness spaces.

Sincerely,  
Zachary