

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/30/2024 7:07:44 PM

First name: Cara

Last name: Nager

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Good morning,

The Evaluation and Authorization Procedures for Fixed Anchors and Fixed Equipment in National Park Service Wilderness Areas poses multiple issues, most importantly safety issues. 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.

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.

In addition, 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.

I am against the proposed authorization for these reasons. Please strongly consider these comments.

Thank you.