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First name: Thomas

Last name: Kimbrell

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Sir:

I have been climbing for over 50 years, and professionally as an international guide for a large majority of that time. As a result, I have climbed in most every area in the US, and in particular in the National Parks, Forest Service, and BLM lands. As a guide I held special use permits for guiding climbing in the Okanogan National Forest District in Washington State.

Over the years I have witnessed the incredible growth of climbing from being a fringe sport, during my earlier years, to becoming mainstream today. If ever there should be a movement towards safe climbing practices, we are there. To mandate against fixed anchors in these lands, which incidentally belong to all of us, is frankly ludicrous.

Fixed anchors are a fundamental part of our safety systems, both as protection, sound belay anchors and for efficient means of descending off climbs. To take these away will radically increase the danger factors, not to mention slowing down the process, resulting in climbers being benighted accordingly. As a result, your SAR costs will skyrocket!

To be sure, the budgets for the management of OUR national lands are shrinking, and I get the reasoning behind reducing your concomitant management of these lands. That said, you have always looked for a way to deter climbing on our lands, so this comes as no surprise.

Perhaps charging higher fees to the large corporations who provide services in the parks etc, all the while raking in huge profits, would provide more money towards management of our lands. But I digress.

Climbers are extremely environmentally aware, and are self governing regarding fixed anchors. I would venture to say that your "LE" costs regarding climbers pales in comparison to other visitors. Let's keep it that way.

Lastly, I think that you are focusing on the wrong group, and the wrong issue in this matter. If environmental issues are what this new ruling is about, you have much larger fish to fry. Alienating a group that is arguably your biggest supporter is simply appalling.

Sincerely,

Tom Kimbrell