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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Hello USFS -

I care about climbing access and want to protect and preserve bolts, pitons and slings in our wilderness climbing areas.

The superintendent of Joshua Tree Natl Park, where they are actively managing all new fixed anchors and replacement of existing ones, suggested that we offer solutions when commenting.

I believe the climbing community can co-govern with the NPS and USFS in conjunction with local, regional and national climbing advocacy organizations and that we can continue to place fixed anchors responsibly. I believe we can utilize self-governance that limits the need and use of fixed anchors via 'clean climbing' ethics.

I also believe the MRA process may create a de facto fixed anchor moratorium, in that an already overwhelmed administrative system will not be able to promptly and effectively process the many requests.

I have lived and learned many lessons over three decades within our beloved U.S. wilderness areas. Almost all of them have involved clipping preexisting anchors albeit in Yosemite, Joshua Tree and in many National Forest areas in the Rockies and Sierra Nevada. At stake is having these anchors labeled as prohibitive installations under the 1964 Wilderness Act and potentially having them removed.

I want to continue our 60 year tradition of fostering wilderness stewardship and wilderness climbing in tandem, as those that use, understand and love these areas are the first to celebrate and protect them.

Wilderness land designation is about 2.5% in the 48-contiguous States, yet it encompasses nearly 100%, in my humble opinion, of the most beautiful, impactful and adventurous climbing and peak bagging locations. The aforementioned descriptors are why these places are being protected, celebrated and most importantly visited and explored.

I say 'most importantly' because if you do not get to know and hopefully love a place then it's less likely that you will want to stand up for it with your voice, vote and values.

Since my older brother Sean's paraplegia almost thirty years ago, and our subsequent adaptive ascents of many iconic wilderness walls and towers, even in Alaska's formidable Ruth Gorge, I have been sharing wilderness climbing with many other differently-abled athletes in Yosemite, Black Canyon of the Gunnison and in many USFS locales.

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Fixed anchors are subtle and sparse, not a blight on the landscape, and their use was never intended to be excluded nor prohibited by the framers of the 1964 Wilderness Act, in fact, those very authors placed and used fixed anchors in the very areas they sought to protect.

I am for the the inclusion and preservation of fixed anchors, and the inclusion and preservation of positive experiences that enduringly transform lives - albeit abled or disabled.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely
Timmy O'Neill