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First name: Cameron

Last name: Fabbri

Organization:

Title:

Comments: To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the draft policies proposed by the National Park Service and the U.S. Forest Service that aim to prohibit fixed anchors in Wilderness areas. These policies not only threaten to undermine nearly six decades of sustainable climbing practices but also compromise the safety of climbers and the integrity of iconic American climbing routes.

Fixed anchors are not merely installations; they are integral to climbers' safety systems, enabling both the exploration and preservation of Wilderness areas. The historical precedence and the climbing community's responsible management of these anchors demonstrate that their use is in harmony with the Wilderness Act's intentions. The proposed blanket prohibition disregards the nuanced balance between preserving Wilderness character and allowing for human engagement with these landscapes.

The safety implications of this policy cannot be overstated. By hindering the maintenance and necessary replacement of aging anchors, we risk not only the legacy of pioneering climbs but also the lives of climbers. The climbing community has long taken the responsibility of maintaining these anchors, ensuring that climbing remains a safe activity. Introducing prohibitive policies would create barriers to this essential maintenance, contradicting the very ethos of Wilderness preservation by fostering unsafe conditions.

Furthermore, the exploration of Wilderness areas is a dynamic process that requires the flexibility to make in-the-moment decisions based on the terrain and conditions. Fixed anchors are a critical tool in this process, enabling climbers to navigate challenging routes safely and responsibly. The proposed policies would severely limit this exploratory spirit, diminishing the Wilderness experience.

I urge you to consider the long-standing relationship between the climbing community and Wilderness conservation, which has been characterized by mutual respect and a shared commitment to preserving these pristine landscapes. I recommend that the policies be revised to reflect a more balanced approach that recognizes the importance of fixed anchors for safety, exploration, and the preservation of America's climbing heritage.

Thank you for considering my perspective on this critical issue.

Sincerely,

Cameron Fabbri

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