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First name: Greg

Last name: Petliski

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am writing to express my displeasure with the proposed action by the NPS and USFS regarding fixed anchors in Wilderness. I believe this proposed action is actually at odds with the core concept of the Wilderness Act of 1964, in which climbing has already been deemed by the federal government as a legitimate use of wilderness as stated in Directors Order 41 (7.2). Climbing has been taking place in Wilderness since long before the Wilderness Act was penned by Howard Zahniser in the early 1960's and passed into law by the Johnson administration in 1964. For the past sixty years, fixed anchors have been accepted in Wilderness by various land managers of all three major agencies that are home to climbing (NPS, USFS, and BLM). Why all of a sudden the change of mind?

Part of the Wilderness Act is allowing for the public to enjoy wilderness, to actually be out there and experiencing it. Fixed anchors allows for people to actually experience wilderness, and not to make their National Park experience one that is concentrated near the side of the road as it is for the majority of visitors. Actually, some Wilderness is near the side of the road. My understanding is that 200' above the floor of Yosemite Valley is designated Wilderness. How are the fixed anchors on El Capitan detracting from a wilderness experience when you can almost read the license plates on the Coca-Cola truck making deliveries to Yosemite Valley from 200-feet up? If concentrated use is a concern, as the NPS and USFS states that "bolt intensive climbs" are, then what of the Half Dome cables? The cables see more users in a day than most climbing routes do in a year. The hypocrisy is disgusting.

If fixed anchors are suddenly classified as installations, this makes them inherently incompatible with wilderness unless approved by an MRA. This is a very backhanded move, pretending that fixed anchors will continue to be allowed as long as they are subject to an MRA. If each and every fixed anchor were to require an MRA to be placed or replaced, there is no way I am believing that the NPS or USFS has the time or the budget or even the experience to deal with thousands and thousands of MRAs. It's fair to say that the climbing community will view this as a de facto ban on fixed anchors. Decades of trust that has been built between climbers and land managers will be eroded in an instant if this passes.