

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/30/2024 11:02:28 PM

First name: John

Last name: Herberg

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear US Forest Service;

I am writing to you regarding proposals to legalize fixed anchors for climbing in areas designated as Wilderness Areas. I urge you to uphold the Wilderness Act by keeping such anchors out of those areas for the following reasons:

* The Wilderness Act prohibits installations and structures like permanent fixed climbing anchors in order to protect the areas' wild character. Fixed climbing anchors must not be allowed in Wilderness.

* Climbing without permanent fixed anchors is generally compatible with wilderness preservation. While it may be true that fewer people will climb certain routes in Wilderness if they don't have fixed bolts or other permanently-installed protection, natural limits on use is not a bad thing when it comes to wilderness protection, particularly with the recent explosion of outdoor recreation uses in Wilderness.

* For those climbers seeking developed climbing opportunities, there are ample permanently bolted climbs outside of Wilderness.

* Furthermore, agencies have no duty to develop Wilderness to provide "opportunities for primitive recreation." Wilderness, by its very existence, provides these opportunities-the agencies need only to protect the Wilderness according to the provisions of the Wilderness Act to safeguard the opportunity.

* Wilderness is an endangered landscape. Less than 3 percent of land in the Lower 48 is protected as Wilderness, and it is under threat, including from rapidly escalating recreation pressures. On that basis alone, Wilderness should be considered a higher priority than increasing recreation opportunities.

* Any specific proposals for permanent fixed anchor installations in Wilderness must be subjected to public notice and an opportunity for public comment pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act.

Thank-you for your time,
John W. Herberg