

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/31/2024 2:30:58 AM

First name: Jenna

Last name: Nickless

Organization:

Title:

Comments: As a new rock climber that is drawn to the incredible alpine terrain in Washington state and trad climbing throughout the country I find it incredibly disheartening to learn of the proposed change to fixed anchors. One of the things I love most about the climbing community is the care individuals have for our lands and how to be respectful and low impact while recreating in them. I see this on almost every climb I do and that includes utilizing fixed anchors. Fixed anchors are an essential part of climbing for the safety of each individual climbing as well as those around them. I am frightened to see the number of injuries and potential deaths of climbers in my community that could come from attempting historic climbs that no longer have safe ways from climbers to get down.

I would like to re-iterate:

Fixed anchors are an essential piece of climbers' safety system and are not prohibited "installations" under the Wilderness Act. Following existing climbing policies that allow judicious use of fixed anchors for more than a half century will do more to protect Wilderness character while providing for primitive and unconfined Wilderness climbing.

Prohibiting fixed anchors will create safety issues by imposing unnecessary obstacles to the regular maintenance of fixed anchors, a responsibility undertaken by the climbing community. Critical safety decisions often must be made in the moment and any authorization process should not impede those decisions. Fixed anchor maintenance needs to be managed in a way that incentivizes safe anchor replacement and does not risk the removal of climbing routes.