

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/31/2024 3:06:17 AM

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Comments: Neither the National Park Service nor the United States Forest Service should consider fixed anchors "prohibited installations." Full stop.

In a time where the United States Government (USG) faces its comeuppance for a century plus of marginalization and exclusion, the USG through both the National Park (NPS) Service and United States Forest Service (USFS) doubles down on its marginalizing and exclusionary policies by prohibiting fixed anchors in wilderness areas. This decision is at best tone deaf, and at its worst another example of how the USG further abuses its social contract by withholding from its citizens the thing upon which this country was founded: freedom.

It used to go without saying, but since the NPS and USFS's tone deaf and wrong mistake of labelling fixed anchors as "prohibited installations" we remind the USG that these United States existed before the federal government, and the citizens of this country entrust the government to protect their freedom from threats within and without. Unfortunately, the NPS and USFS's policies demonstrate the threat is the USG itself. Fortunately, this can be remedied. One way to start is for the NPS and USFS to not consider fixed anchors "prohibited installations."

In the following, we will demonstrate both practical and policy-based reasons for why the NPS and USFS should not consider fixed anchors prohibited installations.

First, 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.

Second, It is unreasonable for federal agencies to create new guidance policies prohibiting Wilderness climbing anchors across the country when they have allowed, managed, and authorized fixed anchors for decades.

Third, 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.

Fourth, Prohibiting fixed anchors obstructs appropriate exploration of Wilderness areas. Land managers need to allow climbers to explore Wilderness in a way that permits in-the-moment decisions that are necessary when navigating complex vertical terrain.

Fifth, Prohibiting fixed anchors will threaten America's rich climbing legacy and could erase some of the world's greatest climbing achievements. Climbing management policy needs to protect existing routes from removal.

Only you can prevent forest fires. Only you can unfuck this terrible mistake.