Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/31/2024 3:55:32 AM
First name: Travis
Last name: Williams
Organization:
Title:
Comments: Dear USFS,
I'm contacting you regarding my strong concerns with the draft for management of fixed anchors for rock climbing in the wilderness. I have grown up with rock climbing and have been climbing for over 25 years. I have climbed all over the country and have now taken my family all over the world for rock climbing. Fixed anchors or bolts have been an acceptable means for protecting rock climbers and making the sport safe. Every country and region has established rules and ethics on to appropriate use of fixed anchors. In the US it has been accepted that fixed anchors can be used in national forest and wilderness. Wilderness, being more nationally protected, has also always had more strict regulations to protect it's character. 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. It has been accepted that fixed anchors are acceptable in the wilderness and must be placed by hand drilling. This has preserved the adventure of the sport as this is a very arduous task and can only be done by the very experienced.
To suggest that these fixed anchors are no longer an accepted practice in the wilderness goes against to foundation of this recreation and threatens the safety of those involved. Prohibiting fixed anchors will create safety issues and make it more challenging to do regular maintenance of fixed anchors. Placing more regulations on fixed anchors can influence the safety of a party if they need to retreat in an event of an emergency. In addition to safety, prohibiting fixed anchors dramatically influences the opportunity for adventure and exploration of new areas within the Wilderness. 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 and allow for appropriate maintenance and future development.
Sincerely,
Travis Williams