

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 4/6/2024 4:00:00 AM

First name: Sheila

Last name: Miller

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I grew up hiking, camping, and fishing in the Colorado Rockies. Now, most of my outdoor time is devoted to hiking, backpacking, and, above all, climbing.

I oppose the proposed effective ban on fixed hardware in wilderness areas.

Climbing in wilderness areas is an expression of the drive to explore wild spaces without destroying them. To pass through vertical terrain with minimal impact, it is sometimes necessary to use fixed hardware, as climbers have been doing for many decades. Such protections are essential for minimizing environmental impact and for human safety.

The proposed universally mandated impact assessments are overkill and incompatible with the actual wilderness experience. They effectively prohibit climbing unknown terrain safely. Banning fixed hardware will not stop climbing; it will make it more dangerous.

The proposed ban denies climbers reasonable access to the wilderness granted for other user groups like hikers, hunters, and fishers, in spite of the facts that trails clearly create more environmental disturbance than fixed hardware and that vertical exploration and experience are part of the rich history of American National Parks.

I oppose the unnecessary ban on fixed hardware in wilderness areas. Such equipment is not an installation in the spirit of a road, trail, bridge, or building and should not be treated as such.