

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

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Comments: I am an American ex-pat and just missed the comment period for the proposal to ban climbing in national parks in the USA. I am sending my comments to you directly.

As an American climber living abroad, I'm shocked, worried and disappointed by this incomprehensible proposal that would effectively ban climbing in the United States. Banning all fixed gear on routes means banning (safe and legal) climbing. Even in the UK where I currently live and where the traditional climbing style has been taken to the extreme, many routes still have a fixed anchor. This is especially true of routes in places where you can't just easily walk off the top of the route, where natural protection is sparse or nonexistent, or where you need to rappel down first to start the climb such as on a sea cliff. The fixed gear is an essential safety feature -- imagine a scenario where a climber has become injured or trapped and needs to be rescued from the wall. It is not always possible to reach them on the wall by helicopter. In such a scenario, the possibility for the rescue team to quickly and safely set up a rappel is essential. Moreover, the anchor used for a rescue must hold up to 400 kg of static weight -- thus a fixed anchor such as a stake in the ground is often the only safe option.

Banning fixed gear on climbing routes puts everyone's lives at risk. It would result in tragic and avoidable accidents. In a time where climbing is become more democratized, this proposal would turn back the clock and make climbing the most elitist of sports by making the outdoors off limits to almost all climbers.