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Comments: Climbers have achieved the seemingly impossible in USFS lands across the country. This entices climbers from around the world to visit these areas. Of course, most climbers are not professional. We aren't free soloing or doing anything mind-blowing, but we love climbing. We need fixed anchors/equipment to do it safely. We need to replace degraded bolts and gear to keep existing routes safe to climb. Climbing can feel really inaccessible as it is and this proposed policy will only add to the obstacles to climb safely. I say that from personal experience. I fear the proposed policies will diminish all the progress that has been made both in terms of what is possible for a human to achieve on vertical terrain, but also to the accessibility of the sport, especially for marginalized groups.

The following is a paraphrase of Access Fund language that I support: 1) Fixed anchors/equipment offer critical protection and are essential to climber safety. 2) Fixed anchors are not prohibited "installations" under the Wilderness Act. 3) Imposing unnecessary obstacles to the regular maintenance of fixed anchors, a responsibility undertaken by the climbing community, is a serious safety concern. 4) Fixed anchor maintenance needs to incentivize safe anchor replacement that does not risk the removal of existing climbing routes. 5) Appropriate exploration of Wilderness areas requires fixed anchors that allow for the navigation of complex vertical terrain. 6) Federal agencies have allowed, managed, and authorized fixed anchors for more than half a century and thus should work collaboratively with climbers to develop policies and management strategies. 7) The proposed policy threatens America's climbing legacy and could erase some of the world's greatest climbing achievements. Climbing management policy must protect existing routes from removal. 8) Restricting the establishment of new routes to "existing climbing opportunities" creates confusion for land managers and climbers alike and will be difficult to enforce.

There are many more pressing issues facing USFS lands than fixed anchors/equipment. Climate change being at the top of that list. There is no USFS land or on our planet for that matter that has not been impacted by human action or the deleterious effects of climate change.

Most climbers deeply care about the environment and take great care to ensure they make as little impact as possible.

This proposed policy is a form of weaponized bureaucracy that will only create more problems than it fixes. Many of the headaches created will be for the underfunded staff that have to attempt to enforce these new policies. The proposed policy concerning the management of fixed anchors/equipment on USFS lands is deeply problematic and will have many negative impacts on the climbing community and the progress of the sport. It cannot be a one size fits all approach as each USFS land is different. Please work with climbers/climbing organizations to create sustainability policies to manage these spaces.