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Comments: Hello,

The proposed policies by the NPS and USFS that would impact climbing anchors as "prohibited installations" would cause irrevocable damage to climbing across America and be a detriment to the lands and the people who recreate in them.

Being able to climb in these locations, and do so safely, has had an undeniable impact on me. I have had some of the best experiences of my life in our wildernesses while climbing on fixed hardware. These routes we have in place and those yet to be established by the climbing community come from a rich history of exploration, and offer an incredible chance for people of different walks of life to connect over shared experiences in our beautiful country.

I am by no means an expert in policy making or legislation but the Access Fund, an organization I donate to and trust to help protect climbing, has identified the following issues with the proposed policy that will jeopardize the past time I so love. There are also active and heavily supported efforts currently moving through our governing bodies (the Protect America's Rock Climbing Act and the EXPLORE Act) that show this country's and our government's support for the continuing use of these systems in our National Parks and Forest areas.

*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.

*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.

*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.

*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.

*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.

*Restricting the establishment of new routes to "existing climbing opportunities" on non-Wilderness lands is unenforceable and will create confusion amongst land managers and climbers. Non-Wilderness climbing management policy should maintain opportunities for new anchors unless and until analyses determine climbing should be restricted to protect cultural and natural resources.

In short, I hope you consider these comments and will work with us to not act against these opportunities that so many of us love.

Chris Rogers