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Comments: I am a recreational climber and backpacker, and make frequent use of lands managed by the Forest Service. I want to write in opposition to the classification of fixed anchors as "installations" as described in the Wilderness Act. I believe that it is important to preserve the character of America's wilderness, but also that it should allow equitable access. Fixed anchors lower the barrier to entry for climbing, which is essential for equitable access.

They also increase safety margins in climbing, both directly as safety equipment and indirectly as a route-finding aid. This is particularly important in remote locations where medical assistance is often far away. Fixed anchors are similar to trail markers: they are a minimally obtrusive device to ensure the safety of people engaging in a particular activity in the wilderness.

Where wilderness resources are particularly sensitive, the managers of those resources should be empowered to create management plans which reduce impact. In extreme cases it is reasonable to limit the placement of anchors to achieve this. However, requiring climbing management plans by default, and requiring land managers to assess whether every fixed anchor is minimally necessary, puts additional burden on already-overworked Forest Service staff.

I also would like to write in favor of technical standards for fixed hardware. These can reduce visibility, and increase the safety and longevity of placements.

I also would like to thank the Forest Service for considering the interaction between climbing and forest service lands as the sport grows in popularity. This is critical to ensure safe, responsible recreation continues in Wilderness Areas.