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Comments: As an avid outdoor enthusiast, I am deeply concerned about the potential impact of the new U.S. Forest Service draft recreation management directives. The classification of fixed anchors as prohibited "installations" in Wilderness areas would overturn decades of precedent and significantly restrict the ability of technical climbers to safely navigate and enjoy these natural landscapes.

Fixed anchors, such as bolts, pitons, and slings, have been essential tools for climbers to ascend and descend technical faces for years, well before the Wilderness Act was passed. To suddenly prohibit their use in these areas would not only hinder the ability of climbers to safely enjoy these environments, but also disrupt the longstanding traditions and practices of the climbing community.

Additionally, the prohibition of fixed anchors in Wilderness areas could have serious consequences for climber safety. Without these essential tools, climbers may be forced to take more dangerous routes or rely on less secure anchors, increasing the risk of accidents and injuries. This, in turn, could lead to increased costs to the taxpayer for search and rescue operations and medical care.

It is important that the U.S. Forest Service prioritize the safety of outdoor enthusiasts and work to find a solution that balances the protection of Wilderness areas with the needs of the climbing community. By doing so, we can ensure that these natural landscapes remain accessible and enjoyable for generations to come, while also minimizing the risk of accidents and injuries.

I urge the U.S. Forest Service to reconsider these directives and work with stakeholders to find a balanced approach that preserves the safety and enjoyment of outdoor enthusiasts while also protecting the natural integrity of Wilderness areas. It is crucial that any changes to recreation management policies are made with careful consideration of the long-standing traditions and practices of outdoor recreation.