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Comments: I urge you to amend the current proposal regarding fixed anchors on wilderness lands. As an avid climber, hiker, and naturalist who works to maintain local wilderness and nature areas, I believe some of these policies will be counterproductive, promote unsafe climbing and wilderness exploration, as well as deter future and existing nature enthusiasts from learning to care about and maintain the wilderness areas available to them.

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. Climbers are promoters of leave-no-trace principals and most consider themselves stewards of the areas they visit. The relationship between the climbing community and our natural lands will be harmed by excluding this community from recreating in traditionally accessible wilderness areas.

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. Taking away or reducing access to known areas is a very challenging task, and those without the proper understanding and ethics stress likely to still visit these areas and climb on older unsafe gear, or illegally install their own. This will likely cause more damage to the areas long-term than allowing proper continued maintenance and use of existing climbing anchors.

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, because they can come at the cost of people's lives. When damaged anchors are discovered in popular areas, they need to be replaced immediately or risk being used by those without appropriate safety knowledge. Additionally resources to reach and replace the anchors are likely to be limited if they can't be fixed when discovered. 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. Climbers are an important source of economic development in many areas, as well as great promoters of natural spaces and environmental principals. Harming this relationship is likely to harm to larger public's relationship to the Wilderness and other natural areas across the country. Climbers can also be entitled asses and will break rules if they are prohibited from climbing long-established areas, and in the process will likely install unauthorized anchors. However if you safely manage their access, they will gladly participate in the rules of an area.

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.