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Comments: I am writing in response to proposed restrictions to new and existing climbing anchors in wilderness areas.

I have been rock climbing for nearly 30 years. The use of fixed anchors (bolts, pitons and slings) is an essential part of the climbing experience.

One of the things I love best about rock climbing is how it enables me to travel throughout the country and access beautiful wilderness areas unlike any other activity. It is singularly the only way to access certain areas that would just not be possible otherwise. It also supports local economies as people travel far and wide to access iconic areas such as Yosemite, Rocky Mountain National Park, Joshua Tree, Linville Gorge, the Wind Rivers and Sierra Nevada. I have been to some of these and look forward to being able to visit more in the future but that will be largely impacted by these potential policy changes.

Creating and maintaining safe anchors for climbers is critical for use of the outdoor space in a safe manner. Rock climbers are already conditioned to use the land in a respectful manner related to nesting bird populations and other wilderness concerns. We should continue promoting a culture of conservation with the climbing community by engagement with the land in a safe, effective way, not blocking access.

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.

I hope you will take this matter under consideration and recognize the importance of the installation and maintenance of new and fixed climbing anchors in wilderness areas. Please consider revising the proposed

policy changes to take into account the above points and better support rock climbers' access to these spaces while also preserving wilderness and promoting community engagement.