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Comments: As an engaged member of the climbing community and a strong advocate for the preservation and responsible use of our national forests, I am reaching out with deep concern regarding the proposed changes to the rules governing the use of fixed anchors in climbing activities within national forest lands.

For over 60 years, climbers have responsibly utilized fixed anchors, not only as a means to ensure our safety but also as a tool to minimize our environmental footprint within these treasured landscapes. The proposed restrictions on fixed anchors present a significant risk to climber safety, especially considering the critical role these anchors play in the maintenance and upgrading of aging climbing equipment and rappel stations. The transition from temporary, less reliable equipment such as slings to more permanent, safer bolts has been a key advancement in both reducing environmental impact and enhancing climber safety.

I respectfully urge you to reconsider the proposed rule changes. Prohibiting the use of fixed anchors could inadvertently lead to climbers engaging in unregulated, potentially hazardous practices. This not only poses a threat to human life but could also result in greater environmental damage, contrary to the stewardship goals of the National Forest Service. It is imperative that our policies reflect a balance between preserving the natural beauty and integrity of our national forests and ensuring the safety and enjoyment of all who visit them, including the climbing community.

Therefore, I kindly request that the National Forest Service revise its climbing guidelines to allow for the continued use, replacement, and maintenance of fixed anchors in designated national forest areas. This approach would honor the long-standing tradition of safe and responsible climbing, align with the principles of environmental conservation, and acknowledge the important role of climbers in the stewardship of our national forests.

Thank you for considering my perspective on this critical issue. I am hopeful for a resolution that aligns with the best interests of both the climbing community and the conservation of our national forests.