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Comments: I am writing to voice my opinion regarding the USFS proposal to prohibit fixed rock climbing anchors in American Wilderness areas. The proposal is short-sighted, goes against the rich history of American wilderness exploration and incredibly important achievements in rock climbing, and will not improve safety nor protect wilderness areas.

Climbers gonna climb! In "permitted" areas and in the Wilderness. It is an essential part of our past time to explore where others do not. Fixed anchors are an essential part of climbing safety, allowing climbers to descend routes with much less risk and at a much lower impact to the environment. Fixed anchors should not be classified as "installations" and proper nuance is necessary when approaching any effort to classify them. Banning them outright would not actually eliminate the activity of climbing in wilderness areas, but would rather more likely lead to more dangerous and impactful scenarios where climbers leave their own slings, gear, and so on in order to descend, which over time can become unsafe due to weather impacts and unsightly as more and more people add their own gear to the existing pile.

Due to the inherent danger in our sport, we are very largely self-regulating, and do not need nor want Federal oversight. The prohibition on fixed anchors or limitation to existing opportunities will add confusion and an adversarial requirement for land managers and climbing rangers, and will do nothing to improve safety or lessen impact. When fixed anchors need to be added, our community knows best how, when, and where to do so that minimizes impact (an incredibly important ethic of our lifestyle), and we also are best positioned to replace aging hardware when needed.

Rock climbing is an important American past time and - under the current system of careful self-regulation - fits perfectly with American ideals of exploration, adventure, and challenge in the wilderness of the country's great, great outdoors. The climbing community is well aware of the role they play and is the best positioned group to handle the issues of increased traffic and use of wilderness areas. Please decline to pass this prohibition.

Thank you.