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Comments: To Whom It May Concern at USFS:

I'm writing because I oppose and do not support the proposed FSM 2355 Climbing Opportunities #ORMS-3524 for climbing and fixed anchors and equipment in Wilderness areas.

I'm a climber of more than 20 years, and value climbing in Wilderness areas across the country, and the ability to use, place and replace fixed anchors for climbing.

Fixed anchors are critical to climbers' safety system. They are not prohibited "installations" under the Wilderness Act. I recommend that the USFS following existing climbing policies that allow for judicious use of fixed anchors in Wilderness. Doing protect and enhance Wilderness experiences and character, not detract or conflict with Wilderness. Judicious use of fixed anchors also allows for primitive and unconfined Wilderness experiences, like climbing.

Fixed climbing anchors have been allowed by USFS managers in Wilderness for decades, in some Forests for 50+ years or more. The proposal is an unreasonable reversal, especially when you review Forest management and plans that have successfully managed for climbing, fixed anchors and Wilderness. It's simply not reasonable for federal agencies like the USFS to create new guidance policies prohibiting Wilderness climbing anchors across the country because they have already allowed, managed, and authorized fixed anchors for decades.

Fixed anchors in Wilderness are critical for climber safety. Not allowing fixed anchors will create real and serious safety issues by imposing unnecessary obstacles to the regular maintenance of fixed anchors, a responsibility undertaken by the climbing community, often voluntarily. Critical safety decisions often must be made in the moment and any authorization process should not impede those decisions, otherwise this proposed policy will place climbers in danger. Fixed anchor maintenance should be managed in a way that incentivizes safe anchor replacement. It's simply unacceptable for this proposal to risk the removal of climbing routes in our parks; this represents the loss and erasure of Wilderness climbing routes, and a significant loss for unconfined Wilderness experience.

Wilderness is meant for exploration, and this proposal effectively blocks climbers' ability to explore and navigate vertical terrain in a Wilderness setting. Prohibiting fixed anchors obstructs appropriate exploration of Wilderness areas. Land managers should allow climbers to explore Wilderness in a way that permits in-the-moment decisions, such as placing a fixed anchor for ascent or descent, that are necessary when navigating complex vertical terrain.

Wilderness climbing is a part of the Wilderness heritage USFS is charged with preserving and protecting. Yet this proposal will freeze and potentially degrade or destroy our Wilderness climbing heritage. 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, so present and future climbers can continue to access these unique and special Wilderness climbing experiences.

Thank you for considering my comments.