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Comments: In my own experience, the absence of fixed anchors in wilderness areas (where they are occasionally prohibited locally) has led to unnecessarily dangerous situations for recreational users arising from a lack of information about a particular climbing route in the wilderness. This lack of information is often what climbers love about the adventure, but there are times where an otherwise safe and fun route has one section that is needlessly risky and this could be remedied by the placement of permanent anchors in an area that is not used by (or often visible to) any other kind of recreational user. Typically the placement of such anchors also has little to no impact on flora and fauna.

Allowing climbers and climbing organizations to skip the fight over safety in climbing in the wilderness, as it relates to the use of fixed anchors, would free up more time, money, and energy to educate climbers on the responsible use of wilderness areas in general, helping our community reduce the impact our user base has on wilderness access sites.

Our nation is widely respected globally in the sport of climbing and has contributed deeply to the global community. Help us to better partner with our global partners, and community and tribal organizations to establish local best practices. Our community and our partners have a vested interest in the protection of the wilderness.

I echo the sentiments of the Access Fund in regards to these issues:

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.