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Comments: Dear US Forest Service:

As an active climber, outdoor enthusiast, and frequent visitor to US Forest Service land, I was greatly concerned to see that proposed directives related to climbing management on National Forest System (NFS) lands would prohibit fixed anchors such as bolts, pitons, and slings. Specifically, I am concerned about the proposed new section (2355 - Climbing Opportunities) to Forest Service Manual (FSM) 2300 - Recreation, Wilderness, and Related Resource Management, Chapter 2350.

Fixed pieces of hardware are essential to climbers' safety and are not prohibited "installations" under the Wilderness Act. Following existing climbing policies that allow thoughtful and appropriate use of fixed anchors makes the most sense as a way to protect Wilderness character and the people who access it to climb.

Additionally, prohibiting fixed anchors obstructs climbers from appropriately exploring Wilderness areas and navigating complex, and potentially dangerous, rock walls. Further, the proper maintenance of fixed anchors, in a way that is agreed to by the climbing community, will do the most to incentivize safe anchor replacement on climbing routes that already have been established and enjoyed for many decades.

Finally, 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.

Thank you for making climbing management policy that protects existing routes from removal, allows for appropriately-placed fixed anchors and enables Americans to continue to fulfill our country's rich climbing legacy.

Liz