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Comments: After reading the draft of the new guidelines for fixed anchors in wilderness areas, I am very disappointed in the NPS. While I do understand the need for some kind of management plan, the draft as it currently exists seems to be an overreach that will evolve into an outright ban on fixed anchors in wilderness areas. The permitting process will be too intensive for most small Wilderness jurisdictions and will lead to an outright ban on all fixed anchors in most areas.

Fixed anchors are incredibly important to modern rock climbing. They promote safe rock climbing and allow people with a comfortable and relatively low impact way to enjoy their public lands. Installations of new fixed hardware will always make rock climbs less dangerous and lead to fewer overall accidents. Making fixed hardware outright banned or tightly controlled will not stop the establishment of new rock climbing lines but it will promote a more dangerous method of climbing, which will lead to more accidents in wilderness areas.

Additionally, the replacement of outdated hardware is important and needs to be done occasionally by the community. Tightly controlling the replacement of fixed hardware will lead to fewer dangerous pieces of hardware getting replaced. The more hoops we have to jump through, the less we will want to do.

As a rock climber, hiker, and trail runner, access to outdoor recreation is incredibly important to me. Climbing is one of the most effective and consistent ways that I have seen people be exposed to the outdoors. In many of the wilderness areas I have visited, climbers are the ONLY regular visitors.

Putting any kind of ban on fixed anchors will decrease overall traffic to wilderness areas as well as the surrounding towns that rely on tourism from these areas. Most significantly, it will lead to fewer people being exposed to the outdoors, which I believe is against the goals of the NPS and not beneficial to the American people.

Thank you.