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Comments: I am writing to strongly discourage the Forest Service from implementing the proposed rules against bolted anchors in Wilderness Areas. There is already a long history of climbers placing anchors, without power tools, in Wilderness Areas. These bolts are an essential part of any climber's safety system and often must be placed on a spur-of-the-moment basis when navigating complex vertical terrain to ensure climber safety. These bolts are not prohibited under the Wilderness Act. The Forest Service should follow existing climbing policies that allow judicious use of fixed anchors, policies that have been in place for decades. This will do more to protect Wilderness character while providing for primitive and unconfined Wilderness climbing.

Prohibiting fixed anchors will lead to critical issues around climber safety. Furthermore, it would obstruct appropriate exploration of Wilderness areas. It would impose unnecessary obstacles to the regular maintenance of fixed anchors, a responsibility born by the climbing community. As mentioned earlier, critical safety decisions often must be made with speed, 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.

The prohibition on fixed anchors also would endanger America's rich climbing legacy and could have an even greater impact by eliminating some of the world's greatest climbing achievements. Climbing management policy needs to protect existing routes from removal.

Furthermore, 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.

Again, I strongly urge the Forest Service to reconsider this proposed anchor policy and to work towards a solution that preserves existing climbing anchors, allows judicious use of bolted climbing anchors for future climbing route development, and encourages climbing as an appropriate use of our public lands.