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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Representatives,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the recently proposed policies that would classify fixed anchors as "prohibited installations" in America's Wilderness areas. This potential bolt ban, if implemented, could have severe consequences for the climbing community, safety, and the rich climbing legacy of the United States.

Fixed anchors are an integral part of climbers' safety systems, and designating them as prohibited installations under the Wilderness Act seems unreasonable. Following established climbing policies that have allowed judicious use of fixed anchors for over half a century would better protect Wilderness character while facilitating primitive and unconfined climbing.

Federal agencies have historically allowed, managed, and authorized fixed anchors for decades. Creating new guidance policies that prohibit these anchors across the country is not only unreasonable but also poses safety issues by obstructing regular maintenance. The climbing community takes responsibility for maintaining fixed anchors, and impeding this process could compromise safety decisions made in the moment.

Prohibiting fixed anchors also hinders appropriate exploration of Wilderness areas. Land managers should permit climbers to navigate complex vertical terrain with the flexibility necessary for in-the-moment decisions. Restricting fixed anchors would threaten America's climbing legacy, potentially erasing some of the world's greatest climbing achievements. Climbing management policy should prioritize the protection of existing routes from removal.

In the case of the USFS, the proposal to restrict the establishment of new routes to "existing climbing opportunities" on non-Wilderness lands is problematic. This approach is unenforceable, creating confusion among land managers and climbers. Non-Wilderness climbing management policy should maintain opportunities for new anchors unless analyses determine climbing restrictions are necessary to protect cultural and natural resources.

I urge you to reconsider these proposals and support the bipartisan Protecting America's Rock Climbing Act and America's Outdoor Recreation Act, which offer a more balanced approach to climbing management. Your collaboration is crucial to preserving the safety, exploration, and legacy of climbing in America.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Warren Maddox