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Comments: To whom it may concern,

Thank you for taking the time to read through this comment. I am sure you are very busy and have a lot of priorities competing for your attention.

I am writing in reference to the recently released draft policies regarding fixed anchors in America's Wilderness areas. As an avid climber and outdoor recreationist I believe we all have the same goal of protecting our resources and wilderness areas.

As you likely know fixed anchors are an essential piece of climbers' safety system, and are not prohibited "installations" under the Wilderness Act. There are existing climbing policies that allow use of fixed anchors that will and can do more to protect Wilderness character while providing for primitive and unconfined Wilderness climbing. While climbing's recent explosion in popularity certainly requires additional thoughtfulness in how folks are interacting in these wild places, it would be unreasonable to create new policies that completely prohibit these essential safety items.

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. Additionally when critical safety decisions must be made in the moment, without the ability to refer to or rely on fixed anchors it could long term cause more damage to the environment (ie using non-sustainable anchors/rappels such as trees) and any authorization process should not impede those decisions. Fixed anchor maintenance needs to be managed in a way that incentivizes sustainable anchor locations, safe anchor replacement and does not risk the removal of climbing routes.

Additionally, 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 taking these points into consideration. I'm sure this group is doing everything they can to come to a solution that allows for continued safe and sustainable climbing recreation for years to come.

Thank you,

Jasmine