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Comments: I am a rock climber who has spent nearly two decades rock climbing on National Park, National Forest and in Wilderness areas. The proposed directives would effectively ban wilderness climbing. This policy appears to be made without the input of the user groups who it will affect. Climbing has been an established activity in wilderness areas for more than 5 decades. The new management directives will cause more degradation of wilderness, erode trust between climbers and land managers and increase risk for climbers and subsequently rescuers alike. Mechanical (bolts) and rope/webbing anchors are necessary, usually in a minimal extent for the overwhelming majority of rock climbs located in wilderness areas. These "installations" are minimally visually obtrusive and are critical for safety of climbers. The directives hold climbers to a higher standard than other user groups...trails, established campsites, trailwork, trail signs all are also installations. Why would these be allowed but climbing anchors are not?

Non-wilderness climbing management policy needs to maintain opportunities for new anchors and anchor replacement unless analyses determine climbing should be restricted to protect cultural and natural resources. The current language will effectively ban placing or replacing fixed anchors until extensive analysis has been performed, but provides no additional resources for districts to do so. The result is a blanket ban on anchor placement and maintenance.

I am not opposed to management of climbing anchors but if a management directive is put in place, it needs to be with the buy-in of the user groups it's going to affect. I support the stance of the Access Fund. Climbing management plans need to be done on a Forest by Forest or Park by Park basis with the input from climbing groups.