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Comments: Please work with the climbing community in making reasonable upgrades to our existing Wilderness climbing practices. Your current draft policies can be improved by listening to climbers.

There is bipartisan legislation moving through congress in the form of the Protecting America's Rock Climbing Act and America's Outdoor Recreation Act. Both moved through their respective committees with unanimous support in 2023. When this legislation passes, it directs NPS, Bureau of Land Management, and USFS to write new national climbing management guidance that protects safe, sustainable access to Wilderness climbing. Please allow climbers to help make your proposed polices compatible with your past practices and this upcoming legislation.

Fixed anchors are a crucial component of a climbers' safety system and are not "prohibited installations" under the Wilderness Act. Continuing to follow existing climbing policies that have allowed well-judged use of fixed anchors for more than a half century will do more to protect Wilderness character while providing for primitive and inquisitive Wilderness climbing.

Prohibiting fixed anchors will create safety issues by imposing obstacles to the regular maintenance of fixed anchors, a responsibility undertaken by the climbing community. Critical safety decisions often must be made in the moment and authorization processes should not impede those decisions.

Fixed anchor maintenance needs to be managed in a way that incentivizes anchor replacement and does not risk the erasure of climbing routes. Prohibiting fixed anchors obstructs appropriate exploration of Wilderness areas. Land managers need to allow climbers to explore Wilderness in a way that permits in-the-moment decisions that are necessary when navigating complex vertical terrain.

Prohibiting fixed anchors will threaten America's rich climbing legacy and could erase some of the world's greatest climbing achievements. Climbing management policy needs to protect existing routes from removal as well as providing guidance for their maintenance.

Please seek more input on these proposed policies.

Restricting the establishment of new routes to "existing climbing opportunities" on non-Wilderness lands will create confusion amongst land managers and climbers and is unenforceable. Non-Wilderness climbing management policy needs to maintain opportunities for new anchors until analyses determine climbing should be restricted to protect cultural and natural resources.

Please seek more input on these proposed policies.