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Title:

Comments: Dear US Forest Service,

Thank you for providing me the opportunity to publicly comment on the proposal entitled "FSM 2355 Climbing Opportunities #ORMS-3524". As a climber of over 20 years, a trauma surgeon, and trauma medical director, I have several concerns about how these proposed changes could directly impact the health and safety of the public.

First and foremost, fixed anchors are an essential piece of climbers' safety system and are not prohibited "installations" under the Wilderness Act. Following existing climbing policies that allow judicious use of fixed anchors for more than a half century will do more to protect Wilderness character while providing for primitive and unconfined Wilderness climbing. If these fixed anchors are allowed to age and become dilapidated, there is potential this could directly lead to climber injury or death. Given the long history of support on fixed anchors, changing this policy such that climber health and lives could be threatened seems ill-fated.

Second, 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. As I look forward to teaching my two young daughters to enjoy our wilderness areas as climbers, having the inability to access safe fixed anchors is distressing. By obstructing replacement of existing fixed anchors, or new fixed anchors for new routes, these changes would directly limit the public's ability to enjoy these wild places.

Appreciate your consideration,

Dr. Joe Forrester