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Comments: I am writing to express my concern and opposition to the proposed policy that seeks to restrict or prohibit the use of fixed anchors in Wilderness areas. Fixed anchors play a crucial role in climbers' safety systems, and their responsible use has been an integral part of climbing practices for decades. I believe that these anchors are not in violation of the Wilderness Act, as they are not "installations" that compromise the essential qualities of Wilderness character.

It is imperative to consider the longstanding climbing policies that have permitted the judicious use of fixed anchors for over half a century. Rather than imposing sweeping restrictions, adhering to existing climbing policies will better serve the dual purpose of safeguarding Wilderness character while allowing for primitive and unconfined Wilderness climbing experiences.

The proposal to create new guidance policies across the country, prohibiting fixed anchors, appears unreasonable and counterproductive. Federal agencies have historically permitted, managed, and authorized fixed anchors, recognizing their importance in ensuring climbers' safety. Prohibiting fixed anchors may result in safety issues by obstructing the regular maintenance of these anchors, a responsibility that the climbing community undertakes diligently. Critical safety decisions often need to be made on the spot, and any authorization process should not impede these necessary actions. It is crucial to manage fixed anchor maintenance in a manner that encourages safe replacement without risking the removal of climbing routes.

Furthermore, restricting fixed anchors hampers the appropriate exploration of Wilderness areas. Climbers should be allowed to navigate complex vertical terrain with the flexibility to make in-the-moment decisions. Prohibiting fixed anchors may impede the climbing community's ability to responsibly explore and enjoy Wilderness areas while maintaining safety standards.

Lastly, I want to emphasize the potential threat to America's rich climbing legacy and the risk of erasing some of the world's greatest climbing achievements. Climbing management policies should prioritize the protection of existing routes from removal, ensuring that the climbing heritage is preserved for future generations.

In conclusion, I urge you to reconsider the proposed policy restricting fixed anchors in Wilderness areas. By acknowledging the historical context, adhering to existing climbing policies, and considering the vital role of fixed anchors in climbers' safety, we can strike a balance between preserving Wilderness character and fostering a thriving climbing community.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I trust that you will consider the perspectives of the climbing community in shaping the final policy.