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First name: Caleb

Last name: Topolinski

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Forest Service,

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.

It is unreasonable for federal agencies to create new guidance policies prohibiting Wilderness climbing anchors across the country when they have allowed, managed, and authorized fixed anchors for decades.

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. Critical safety decisions often must be made in the moment and any authorization process should not impede those decisions. Fixed anchor maintenance needs to be managed in a way that incentivizes safe anchor replacement and does not risk the removal 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.

Fixed anchors are safer for both the climbers, bystanders and even rescue and park workers as they provide less chance of bad gear placement leading to falls and injures of both climbers and those below. In addition, safer climbing routes means less accidents that SAR, the Forest Service and NSP teams need to respond to thereby improving their safety by not having to place themselves in dangerous positions as often.

I urge you to please reconsider changes the changes this policy would enact for the good of the climbers, the sport, and those who directly or indirectly will be impacted by these changes.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Caleb Topolinski