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Comments: As someone who has personally climbed primarily in Southern Arizona, I understand the pivotal role fixed anchors play in ensuring climbers' safety amidst the rugged beauty of these wild terrains. Contrary to misconceptions, fixed anchors are not prohibited "installations" under the Wilderness Act; rather, they are integral components of a climber's safety system.

Drawing on decades of established climbing policies that have permitted judicious use of fixed anchors, particularly in Wilderness areas, is not only a matter of tradition but a strategy that contributes to the preservation of the inherent Wilderness character. Having climbed amidst the timeless rock formations that define Southern Arizona, I firmly believe that adhering to existing policies promotes the coexistence of primitive, unconfined Wilderness climbing with the preservation of the natural landscape.

It appears impractical for federal agencies to introduce sweeping guidance policies prohibiting climbing anchors in Wilderness areas nationwide. This stance neglects the fact that these agencies have, for many years, managed and authorized fixed anchors without compromising the sanctity of these protected spaces.

A prohibition on fixed anchors could potentially jeopardize safety by creating unnecessary barriers to regular maintenance, a responsibility shouldered by the climbing community. The critical nature of safety decisions in the midst of a climb demands a streamlined process that doesn't impede swift action. Moreover, fixed anchor maintenance should be incentivized to ensure safe replacements and prevent the removal of climbing routes.

Beyond safety concerns, a prohibition on fixed anchors poses a threat to the exploration of Wilderness areas. Climbers should be allowed the flexibility to make in-the-moment decisions, especially when navigating intricate vertical terrain. Restricting fixed anchors limits the appropriate exploration of these pristine landscapes, hindering the unique experience climbers seek in the heart of the wild.

In considering climbing management policies, it is imperative to acknowledge the rich climbing legacy that America boasts. Any move to prohibit fixed anchors risks erasing some of the world's greatest climbing achievements, threatening the very essence of our climbing heritage. A balanced approach to climbing management policies must prioritize the protection of existing routes, ensuring they remain a testament to the enduring spirit of exploration and adventure.