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Comments: Hello,

I am writing to express my concerns and provide feedback on the proposed changes to climbing anchor policies within Wilderness areas. I appreciate the efforts of the US Forest Service in managing these valuable natural resources and ensuring a balance between conservation and recreation.

Fixed anchors are an integral component of climbers' safety systems and are not prohibited "installations" under the Wilderness Act. It is crucial to acknowledge that following existing climbing policies, which have allowed judicious use of fixed anchors for over half a century, is the most effective way to protect Wilderness character while accommodating primitive and unconfined Wilderness climbing.

I find it unreasonable for federal agencies to introduce new guidance policies that would prohibit Wilderness climbing anchors nationwide. Over decades, the climbing community has responsibly managed and maintained fixed anchors, and any changes in policy should be considerate of this history.

Prohibiting fixed anchors could pose safety issues by creating unnecessary obstacles to the regular maintenance of these anchors, a responsibility undertaken by the climbing community. Critical safety decisions often need to be made in the moment, and any authorization process should not impede these decisions. It is essential that fixed anchor maintenance is managed in a way that incentivizes safe replacement and does not risk the removal of climbing routes.

Furthermore, prohibiting fixed anchors may impede appropriate exploration of Wilderness areas. Land managers should allow climbers the flexibility to make in-the-moment decisions when navigating complex vertical terrain, fostering a responsible and respectful approach to wilderness exploration.

I am also concerned that such prohibitions may threaten America's rich climbing legacy and potentially erase some of the world's greatest climbing achievements. Climbing management policy should prioritize the protection of existing routes from removal, ensuring the preservation of our climbing heritage.

In conclusion, I urge the US Forest Service to reconsider any proposals that would prohibit fixed anchors in Wilderness areas. Collaborative efforts with the climbing community, grounded in the historical context of responsible climbing practices, would be more effective in achieving the dual goals of conservation and recreation.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I trust that, together, we can find solutions that balance the needs of climbers and the preservation of our cherished Wilderness areas.

Sincerely,

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