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Comments: To members of the US Forest Service.

As avid climbers for the past 50 years, we are concerned about new policies being proposed regarding fixed anchors in America's parks and wilderness areas. I would like to state three points in defense of my position.

*Fixed anchors are an essential piece of climbers' safety system and are not prohibited "installations" under the Wilderness Act of 1964. Following existing climbing policies that allow judicious use of fixed anchors for more than a half century will do more to protect the wilderness character while providing for primitive and unconfined wilderness climbing.

*Prohibiting fixed anchors will create additional safety issues by imposing unnecessary obstacles to the regular maintenance of fixed anchors, a responsibility undertaken by the climbing community. In addition, existing fixed anchors aid in the rescue of both injured climbers and hikers who use the same area for their recreational use. Consider the dramatic rescue in 1967 in Grand Teton National Park, featured in Readers' Digest, a feat otherwise impossible without fixed anchors. Moreover, additional anchors were necessary to safely extract both parties off the mountain.

*Fixed anchors are a relatively benign feature on the walls of America's majestic mountains, barely noticeable from any distance, and do less damage to the wilderness and national park terrain than humans and horses engaging in other recreational pursuits.

Sincerely,

Chris Abbott

Lauren Holland