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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear U.S. Forest Service,

As an avid user and climber within our great wilderness areas and national parks, I am concerned with the proposed draft prohibiting fixed anchors. I personally mainly depend on fixed anchors for rappelling and belay anchoring, i.e. the anchors that provide the most safety for me and my climbing partners.

\*Fixed anchors are an essential piece of climbers' safety system and are not prohibited "installations" under the Wilderness Act. I recommend following existing climbing policies that allow use of fixed anchors for more than a half century.

\*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.

\*Restricting the establishment of new routes to "existing climbing opportunities" on non-Wilderness lands is unenforceable and will create confusion amongst land managers and climbers. Non-Wilderness climbing management policy should maintain opportunities for new anchors unless and until analyses determine climbing should be restricted to protect cultural and natural resources.

\*This is a huge blow to climbers that not only threatens America's climbing legacy but puts the safety of our community at risk, and therefore I recommend adjusting the draft policy to allow fixed anchors under current management plans.

Respectively,

P.S. I would ask to withhold my personally identifiable information from public review.