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Comments: Attaching unnecessary bureaucratic red tape to the installation and replacement/maintenance of fixed anchors in wilderness would be a death knell to climbing in many long-established areas. Safe anchors and other fixed hardware are integral to safe climbing, and the maintenance of anchors, bolts, etc. has long been left to climbers themselves. The proposed guidelines would disincentivize anchor maintenance, while also taking away climbers' ability to improve an anchor in the moment, while high on a climb-where inaction could have dire consequences. Instead, climbers would be forced to go through a long, drawn-out process to gain permission to improve or install an anchor, something that simply isn't possible when you're already up on a route. In other words, the guidelines are incompatible with the reality of climbing.

Subjecting anchor installation and improvement to case-by-case reviews would reduce climbers' margins of safety, and perhaps even close entire routes or areas, depending on the climbing management plan that is adopted. Further, on non-wilderness lands, the stipulation that installing new anchors or replacing existing ones can happen only where there are "existing climbing opportunities" is muddy at best, guaranteed to sow confusion rather than provide a clear path forward for climbers and land managers.

Taken as a whole, this byzantine level of proposed oversight has no place in climbing, a pursuit that has been accepted on USFS-managed lands for decades. Why throttle it now? The best guidelines would support safe climbing, not undercut it.