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First name: Cameron

Last name: Townsend

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear USFS,

I am reaching out to provide my perspective on the proposed guidance concerning fixed anchors in wilderness areas. As someone deeply invested in both the climbing community and environmental conservation, I believe it is imperative to strike a balance between preserving the integrity of wilderness areas and ensuring the safety and accessibility of climbing.

Fixed anchors are a critical component of safe climbing practices. They provide necessary security for climbers to navigate routes, especially in challenging terrains. Completely prohibiting or excessively restricting these anchors could significantly increase the risk of accidents and injuries.

Climbing has long been a part of the wilderness experience and contributes to the cultural and historical richness of our public lands. Many climbing routes have existed for decades, becoming a part of the climbing heritage. It is important to protect these routes for future generations of climbers.

Environmental stewardship is undoubtedly a priority, and I believe the climbing community is capable of and committed to responsible practices that minimize environmental impact. The development of comprehensive, collaborative management plans that include input from climbers can ensure that fixed anchors are used sustainably.

Furthermore, climbing activities in wilderness areas contribute significantly to local economies. Restrictive policies on fixed anchors could negatively impact these economic benefits, affecting local businesses and communities.

I recommend that the USFS develop guidelines that allow for the responsible use and maintenance of fixed anchors. Such guidelines should be clear, practical, and formulated with input from both environmental experts and the climbing community. This approach will ensure the safety of climbers, the protection of natural resources, and the preservation of climbing as a valued outdoor activity.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on this important matter.

Best regards,

Cameron Townsend