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Comments: I am writing regarding the proposed policy on managing the placement of permanent climbing anchors in wilderness areas. While I think it is important to protect our wild spaces, and I understand the spirit of these policy, I am concerned that the bureaucracy this policy would create might encourage people to try and sidestep the policy and bolt without approval. Additionally, given the amount of established route in wilderness areas, I am concerned that maintenance might be delayed, causing safety issues, or that established routes may be removed due to a lack of available resources for reviewing them (as opposed to legitimate concerns about their impact on the wilderness area). My hope is that the USFS would partner with climbing organizations, such as the Access Fund, to figure out ways to mitigate the impact of fixed anchors on wilderness areas, while protecting the unique history (and potential future) of climbing in these areas. I believe that the USFS partnering with climbers would be a win-win for both, as the USFS could help provide guidance on which areas are most sensitive to climbing development and which can be developed/maintained responsibly, and climbers would be able to provide context on the value of specific climbs/areas, and have ownership in helping to mitigate the impact of climbing on wilderness areas and thus be more likely to do so responsibly.

Sincerely,

Nico Francis