Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/16/2024 9:38:02 PM First name: Anon Last name: Anon Organization:

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Comments: Climbers on national forest land rely on fixed anchors for their safety - should additional obstacles be imposed on the placement of fixed anchors, the lives of climbers visiting national forest lands could be put at risk. The sport of climbing is booming, and for many who are just being introduced to climbing outdoors, national forests are accessible and appealing. Fixed anchors contribute to this level of accessibility, providing those new to the sport with a level of safety and confidence that allows for their participation. If fixed anchors cannot be replaced or repaired efficiently or at all, the confidence any climber may have in the safety of existing anchors may be depleted, which is especially dangerous for newer climbers who may not have the experience to judge whether or not an anchor is safe. Fixed anchors are not prohibited under the Wilderness Act, and have been authorized by federal agencies for decades. Land managers must provide climbers the ability to use their expertise to ensure the sport is being engaged in safely, by permitting in-the-moment decisions, to protect their own lives and the lives of others. National Forest Service land is home to some of the most historically relevant routes in the sport. But without fixed anchors, these routes may become unclimbable. I ask that you please reconsider this proposed policy as it is written - just as established and newly developed trail systems are used by hikers, climbers use established and new routes (and bolt lines) during their time spent on National Forest Service land. We recognize that climbing has an impact on the landscape, and are willing to respect temporary area closures for ecological restoration, raptor nesting, etc., or even bans on new development in certain areas. Bolt prohibition, however, will not be a safe or effective method due to the popularity of the sport, and the importance of safety for those participating in a dangerous activity, and complete restriction of new route establishment is likely unenforceable. Opportunities to place new anchors should be maintained unless it is determined that fixed anchors placed in specific areas must be restricted to protect the natural resources and culture within the National Forest.