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Comments:

Fixed anchors play a vital role in climbers' safety systems and are not considered prohibited "installations" under the Wilderness Act. Adhering to established climbing policies that have allowed the careful use of fixed anchors for over fifty years is crucial for preserving Wilderness character while facilitating primitive and unconfined Wilderness climbing.

The introduction of new guidance policies by federal agencies, universally prohibiting Wilderness climbing anchors, contradicts decades of permitting, managing, and authorizing fixed anchors. This prohibition raises safety concerns, imposing unnecessary obstacles to regular fixed anchor maintenance, a responsibility borne by the climbing community. Given the often critical safety decisions required in the moment, any authorization process should not impede swift actions. The management of fixed anchor maintenance should encourage safe replacements and prevent the risk of removing climbing routes.

Prohibiting fixed anchors not only impedes the proper exploration of Wilderness areas but also limits climbers' ability to make necessary, in-the-moment decisions when navigating complex vertical terrain. Land managers should allow climbers to explore Wilderness in a way that accommodates real-time decision-making in challenging environments.

Furthermore, the prohibition of fixed anchors poses a threat to America's rich climbing legacy and jeopardizes some of the world's most significant climbing achievements. Climbing management policies should prioritize the protection of existing routes from removal.

Restricting the establishment of new routes to "existing climbing opportunities" on non-Wilderness lands is impractical and may lead to confusion among land managers and climbers. Non-Wilderness climbing management policies should maintain opportunities for new anchors unless analyses determine that climbing should be restricted to protect cultural and natural resources.