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Comments: The current proposal is flawed for many reasons. Fixed anchors should continue in wilderness under the current management practices that have worked for the last 60 years.

Maintenance and safety:

Aging anchors increase accident risks. Maintaining existing ones is crucial but labor-intensive. Restricting maintenance will further jeopardize safety.

Environmental impact:

Fixed anchors protect delicate environments by directing rappels to specific, durable locations. They prevent vegetation damage, rockfall hazards, and rescue operations that might cause more harm.

Sparing use and wilderness character:

Bolts are placed sparingly and only where necessary to prevent falls. They have minimal impact on wilderness character, especially compared to alternative descent methods that damage vegetation and pose safety risks.

Responsible climbing and minimal impact:

Climbers have a long history of responsible wilderness use. Existing policy already limits fixed anchors, emphasizing careful placement and minimal impact.

Safety and rappel anchors:

Fixed anchors are crucial for safe rappelling, especially on summits and walls. They offer better durability and lower impact than alternative methods like slings on vegetation or natural features.

Ground-up approach and wilderness character:

Wilderness climbing emphasizes exploration and self-reliance. Restrictions on fixed anchors confine this experience and create safety risks for new route development.

Limited routes and permit concerns:

Requiring permits for fixed anchors would heavily restrict new routes, favoring only those with continuous crack systems and walk-off descents. This ignores essential safety needs and the unpredictable nature of route exploration.

Climber stewardship and responsible impact:

Climbers actively protect wilderness character through education and Leave-No-Trace practices. Their impact is significantly less than other wilderness users.

Fixed anchors and the Wilderness Act:

Judicious use of fixed anchors falls under the "de minimis" exception of the Wilderness Act, as they have minimal visual impact and prevent further damage by directing climber traffic away from sensitive areas such as putting slings on trees.

Cooperation and harm from restrictions:

Unnecessary restrictions will damage the cooperative relationship between climbers and land management agencies, harming both parties and failing to protect wilderness areas effectively.

Thank you for reading my comments.

