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Comments: As a multi-pitch traditional climber, I found myself torn on this proposed directive. Having adventures in Wilderness areas is what keeps me in this sport. I love being "out there" and disconnected from the world in a special way, high above terrain like I hadn't been before climbing. I can understand wanting to protect and maintain that pristine and beautiful Wilderness.

However, I would like to believe that most folks out there climbing in Wilderness areas share that same love and want to continue climbing in Wilderness areas. The existing fixed anchors in Wilderness areas provide safety where it is most needed. If climbing is an approved use of Wilderness areas, our truest and biggest impact to the environment is actually getting there.

Finding the right approach/trail/climber access path can sometimes be very tricky. This fall I recently visited Yosemite with my climbing partner, my husband. We got to the park and thought we would run up an easy, moderate route quickly. This particular route has no fixed anchors. It does not have a good rappel route. So the standard descent is to walk off from the top. It took us more trouble finding the descent trail than the actual climbing route. Trampling through the woods to find the trail felt unnecessary, dangerous, and destructive. We found the trail and followed it down. I wanted to share this story as an example that if there was a good rappel route, that entire trail could be given an opportunity to grow back. Fixed anchors can actually preserve areas.

I am also very concerned with the removal of existing fixed anchors. Will existing routes be grandfathered in? If so, what is the plan for communicating that with the climbing community? What if existing routes are NOT grandfathered in? How will that be communicated? How will we know if those fixed anchors are still up there? If I am climbing in a Wilderness area and I know that a route has fixed anchors, I plan for that accordingly on the ground. Going forward, will I climb with uncertainty as to what is at the top of these routes?

My husband also volunteers for our local county's Search and Rescue team. We know several people who are on various SAR teams. Fixed anchors are relied on in rescue situations. I also believe that removing fixed anchors will not deter climbers. I do not think this will decrease the number of climbers visiting Wilderness areas if that was an intent for this directive. If anything, the lack of fixed anchors will only have a bigger negative impact on the environment due to an increase in rescues and more complicated rescues.

I do appreciate that there is an opportunity for Tribal consultation in this directive.

Thank you for giving the climbing community an opportunity to voice our concerns.