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Comments: While I think most proposals arise with good intent, this is a very complex matter for climbers and nature lovers across our country, and so it is with great respect and concern that I write you today.

Fixed anchors, when installed well and correctly as most are, are absolutely needed for a safety system and are not prohibited under the Wilderness Act. Done right, they do not detract from the natural beauty and feel of the area, and in fact they also protect the trees from being used as rappel stations. Following the existing climbing policies that allow judicious use of fixed anchors (SPECIFIC to each locale), for more than a half century now, will do more to protect the land.

It is unreasonable for federal agencies to create new guidance policies prohibiting climbing anchors across the country when they have allowed, managed, and authorized fixed anchors for decades--and with good reason applied. These types of decisions should continue to be a large part of the local conversation, and take all voices into account; park users, neighbors, and the indigenous. A flat out ban on fixed anchors will create a myriad of safety issues by imposing unnecessary obstacles to the regular maintenance of fixed anchors, a responsibility undertaken by the climbing community, and frankly done very well. Critical safety decisions often must be made in the moment *while* routes are being discovered, and any authorization process should not impede those decisions; for which the fallout may be grave. Land managers need to allow climbers to explore Wilderness in a way that permits in-the-moment decisions that are necessary when navigating complex vertical terrain safely; and most have once they meet with the climbers themselves and discuss the matter. Fixed anchor maintenance needs to be managed in a way that incentivizes safe anchor replacement and does not risk the removal of climbing routes. Anyone who develops climbing routes and is a seasoned veteran in the field also knows that, with our modern gear tech, and unnecessary bolts can be easily removed and filled to restore the original look of the area as well. We are a group that very much prides itself on being mindful to only bolt and anchor when necessary, per first ascensionist ethics--so this proposal is not needed, at least not at this time. If and when there is a cry to note frivolous over-bolting, then by all means, please step in with mandates. Everyone who understands the matter already knows that a ban on the establishment of new routes to "existing climbing opportunities" on non-wilderness lands is completely unenforceable and will create confusion and likely discord between land managers and climbers. Non-wilderness climbing management policy should maintain opportunities for new anchors unless and until analyses determine climbing should be restricted to protect cultural and natural resources; which nearly all route developers are hyper mindful of already.

Lastly, a prohibition on fixed anchors will threaten America's rich climbing legacy, which is ever growing because of the variety of parks and wilderness that we have and enjoy here in the States. Please, don't jeopardize this. Climbers are true stewards of the land, and are the first to correct other/new climbers and hikers when they see any misuse of the wilderness. I implore you, before any decisions are made, go climbing in these areas yourself with certified guides and route maintenance crews, and judge for yourself. Decisions on this MUST be completely and truly informed if they are to be just.

Thank you for your consideration in this important matter,

Jessi Lazcano

Educator, Alpinist, Nature Lover