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Comments: I am writing to express strong opposition to the proposed policies that will cripple safe access to the outdoors, result in the deaths of outdoor visitors, and remove from outdoors spaces their most passionate advocates and conservationists. I am also concerned about the NPS and USFS imposing on themselves a significant increase in responsibility and workload for already undervalued, under-resourced, and overtasked teams of passionate professionals. I've spent 19 years working in the federal government as member of the United States Navy. I know our incredible capacity and the dedication of our employees. I know also the wasteful inertia of ill-conceived regulatory changes. We introduce well-intended and apparently small shifts that actually spread thin already overworked teams, increase disillusionment, drive unnecessary hiring, and create massive expense. Learn from our mistakes and do not build your own obstacles.

Our National Parks and National Forests are among the greatest achievements of this nation, and should be guarded jealously. Part of guarding them is ensuring that people love them, often derivative of using them responsibly. There are many significant threats from installations and infrastructure to these great spaces; small safety devices for climbers are not among them.

Fixed anchors are an essential piece of climbers' safety system and are not prohibited "installations" under the Wilderness Act. Following existing climbing policies that allow judicious use of fixed anchors for more than a half century will do more to protect Wilderness character while providing for primitive and unconfined Wilderness climbing.

Prohibiting fixed anchors will create safety issues by imposing unnecessary obstacles to the regular maintenance of fixed anchors, a responsibility undertaken by the climbing community. Critical safety decisions often must be made in the moment and any authorization process should not impede those decisions. Fixed anchor maintenance needs to be managed in a way that incentivizes safe anchor replacement and does not risk the removal of climbing routes. Here in Washington, our climbers with The Mountaineers use fixed anchors to learn the basics of climbing in a safe and responsible manner. Part of our instruction includes training on conservation, leave no trace principles, and many days of environmental stewardship on public lands.

Prohibiting fixed anchors obstructs appropriate exploration of Wilderness areas. 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.

Restricting the establishment of new routes to "existing climbing opportunities" on non-Wilderness lands is unenforceable and will create confusion amongst 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.

Prohibiting fixed anchors will threaten America's rich climbing legacy and could erase some of the world's greatest climbing achievements. Climbing management policy needs to protect existing routes from removal. People travel from all over the world to climb the majestic lines in our public lands. Let those spaces continue to be accessible beacons that underscore our values of equity, access, and adventure.