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Comments: I am writing to oppose your approval of the use of fixed climbing anchors in areas designated as Wilderness. Permanent fixed anchor use and maintenance in Wilderness is-and always has been-prohibited by the Wilderness Act's ban on installations. Areas designated as wilderness are meant to be maintained as wilderness and have strict prohibitions, including prohibitions on installations, and these cannot be overcome by a desire to facilitate or enhance a particular form of recreation. Furthermore, the narrow administrative exception for installations does not extend to the general public seeking to create developed recreational activities in Wilderness. What will be next - bike trails in wilderness? There are plenty of other federal lands where rock climbers can use fixed climbing anchors; they do not need access to every area, most especially when their use is prohibited by the Wilderness Act. Climbing without permanent fixed anchors is generally compatible with wilderness preservation. We cannot and should not allow the interests of a few to override the prohibitions of the Wilderness Act.

The agencies' primary duty is to protect Wilderness in its natural, untrammeled state, and the Wilderness Act's ban on installations can only be overcome in rare administrative circumstances where the installation is necessary to protect Wilderness in its natural, untrammeled state. This is not the case with climbing anchors. Less than 3% of all land in the Lower 48 is protected as Wilderness, and it needs to be left as the Wilderness Act intended - wild. There need to be places where nature can be enjoyed as God created it, and the Wilderness Act does this. Do not weaken the Wilderness Act by overruling the prohibitions on permanent installations. I most certainly do not want to see unsightly metal sticking out of rock walls in Wilderness areas. Please keep Wilderness wild.