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Comments: Hello,

I am writing to express my interest in protecting rock climbing anchors and keeping our environmentally conscious community safe. Climbing anchors enable safe passage up and (most importantly) down off of the formations in our wilderness lands. The restriction of fixed anchors would lead to more accidents in wilderness lands and provide more strain on the organizations working to protect the land. The users of fixed anchors are responsible and conscious of replacing and maintaining the existing bolts. If this practice is to be restricted, old bolts will be unmaintained and could lead to accidents as well. 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. Precedent has been set that climbing is a valid and valuable means of recreating in our wilderness lands. It is unreasonable for federal agencies to create new guidance policies prohibiting wilderness climbing anchors across the country when they have allowed, managed, and authorized fixed anchors for decades. 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. I have personally used climbing as a tool to educate friends who grew up in cities away from wilderness areas how to behave in the wilderness. By creating more users who are good stewards of the land we turn into a powerful group of environmental activists who will work to conserve nature. 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.

Dylan Keen