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Comments: Climbing management policy should protect climbers, not place them in more danger. The prohibition of fixed anchors will create safety issues for climbers. We rely on fixed anchors to protect us in an already dangerous sport and environment. Prohibiting fixed anchors will only result in climbers resorting to less-safe methods. Park rangers and climbers have historically had a contentious relationship; however, through years of hard work, that relationship has dramatically improved. This policy could revert that relationship to its less-desired form. Prohibition would send climbing in Yosemite back to the Stonemasters' era, in which climbers and rangers were fighting against each other. Instead, climbers and rangers should be working together to make the wilderness more accessible so people can have the incredible experiences I and so many others have had. The National Park Service and the U.S. Forest Service should be working in collaboration with climbers to create effective and impactful policies to promote sustainable use of our forests and parks.

The NPS and USFS have allowed, managed, and authorized fixed anchors for decades. These new guidelines go against nearly 60 years of practice; the sudden shift will cause significant difficulty for climbers. The requirement for a Minimum Requirements Analysis for every new fixed anchor and any fixed anchor that needs to be replaced will result in significant delays in decisions that need to be made quickly and on the ground. The unnecessary delays and bureaucratic red tape required to get approval for installing or replacing fixed anchors will not stop climbers; they will climb regardless and put themselves in danger that could have been prevented. Additionally, MRAs open the NPS and USFS up to potential litigation, which could harm the NPS and USFS and benefit nobody.

Climbing is something I am very passionate about. Climbing has given me an avenue to experience the outdoors in a way I hope others can, but this policy makes that more difficult. Allowing or prohibiting fixed anchors may not be important for most people; in fact, I am sure most people have no idea what a fixed anchor is; however, for those who do care, this is a crucial issue. Without fixed anchors, climbers will have to trad climb. Trad climbing is a significantly more dangerous and much more expensive form of climbing that is not beginner-friendly in any capacity. So, while prohibiting fixed anchors may seem like it could improve the protection of our wilderness, it will ultimately make nature less accessible to yet another group of people.