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First name: Steve

Last name: Lapen

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Forest Service,

I understand the draft policy currently under consideration would essentially prohibit fixed rock climbing anchors (bolts, pitons) in USFS wilderness areas, by classifying them as "installations" which triggers the "no installations" language in the Wilderness Act. My family and I are avid rock climbers, having spent many years of summer vacations in USFS wilderness areas. We are strongly opposed to this potential shift in policy that would effectively ban new fixed anchors. Bolts are necessary for climber safety, and there is a long history of their responsible use in wilderness areas. Rock climbers are a devoted and legitimate user group, and are strong supporters of the "wilderness" concept insofar as minimizing impact and excessive development. There is already a culture of keeping bolts to the minimum necessary for safety, especially in designated wilderness areas. Most non-climber groups do not even realize anchors are present, as the visual impact is small. Many decades of climbing adventures have relied on fixed anchors in wilderness, even prior to the Wilderness Act.

Please vote against this poor policy idea and instead support the more balanced approach outlined in the Protecting America's Rock Climbing Act and America's Outdoor Recreation Act, which moved through their respective committees in 2023 and is currently making its way through Congress.

Steve Lapen and family

Redondo Beach, CA