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Organization:

Title:

Comments: To whom it may concern,

I'm a lifelong rock climber who has been fortunate to have the opportunity to climb in USFS-managed areas such as Liberty Bell and Methow Inspiration in the Methow Valley Ranger District and Icicle Creek Canyon in the Wenatchee National Forest. I also recreate responsibly in other ways on USFS lands including hiking, camping, flyfishing, and mountain biking, and I care deeply about our public lands. I'd like to take the opportunity to comment and suggest improvements to the guidance in FSM 2355 Climbing Opportunities #ORMS-3524

These are:

a) 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.

b) 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.

c) 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.

d) 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.

e) 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.

Thank you for considering my feedback as we work towards creating accessible and sustainable National Forests for all citizens.

Regards, Julie C. Briselden