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Comments: Dear USFS,

I am reaching out to ask for your consideration regarding the draft policies that would completely change current and future climbing practices in non-Wilderness areas as well as change the course of recreational climbing for decades to come. Climbing has been an incredibly important part of my life. I have found community, learned much about myself, and been able to connect to the nature and wild spaces that have been the grounds for important growth, learning, and connection. Climbing respectfully and safely in Wilderness spaces is something I hope to do for a long time and share with generations to come.

Imagine you are 300 feet off the purple sunset-painted desert floor and have just reached the top of a beautifully challenging climb that pushed your perceived limits physically and mentally. You are exhausted in the best way, filled up with an experience you will remember and share with your climbing partner for the rest of your life-and are only at the halfway point of your adventure. The rappelle down to the hot chocolate in your packs awaits you, an adventure in and of itself that will rely on the existence of fixed anchors. Anchors that if the draft policies were to come into effect would not exist and with them the deeply meaningful experiences created in these nature spaces through climbing would vanish. Non-Wilderness climbing management policy should maintain opportunities for new anchors given that there is no protection needed of cultural and natural resources.

Creating more avenues of communication between the climbing community and Land Management agencies could be a solution to concerns about responsible recreating and education on best practices for reducing impact while enjoying these places that are such a vibrant part of climbing history-a history that looking back 50 years from now I hope will continue to thrive, grow and create new generations of responsible climbers who care deeply about the environment. Keeping non-Wilderness areas open and safe for climbing now and in the future creates the potential for people to form a connection to the land and care about our environment which our world desperately needs.

In summary

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.

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 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.

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.

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.