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Comments: First of all, thank you for all that USFS has done to protect and help recreationalists enjoy unique corners of the US. Without the formative family camping trips to the forests of northern Wisconsin I would not be the outdoor enthusiast that I am today. Although I strongly believe in protecting these places, the mission of the USFS is one of both protection and use. The climbing history of places like the Wind River Range, the High Sierras, and numerous others have inspired people to visit these places and explore areas that have been unchanged from when the stories were first written. Without the continued safe upkeep of fixed anchors for climbing and descending these historical routes, this will no longer be possible for future generations.

I've personally benefited from fixed anchors on many climbs, ones that stand out are those on climbs in the high sierra and the numerous wilderness areas that this includes. Without fixed anchors in these areas, climbers may not be able to protect portions of the climbs or descend as rapidly in case of emergency. Furthermore, placing bolts in a wilderness area is laborious and climbers typically only do it as a last resort or as a way to reduce dangerous tat that may build up on common descent routes. New burdensome regulation that interferes with organizations, like the American Safe Climbing Association, ability to maintain and update fixed anchor hardware will undoubtedly decrease the safety of climbing in these areas.

Beyond the safety issues, this proposal also upends more than half-century of existing policy precedence where climbing has been viewed as a legitimate activity inside wilderness areas and where the climbing community self-regulated the placement of fixed hardware. Over this time, the climbing community has successfully self-regulated to minimize impact. An example of this self-regulation is detailed at the end of Steve Roper's Camp 4 book where he discusses the conversations and letters that led the climbing community towards the clean climbing practices that are ubiquitous today. To this day, the climbing community still self-regulates through both formal structures, like the Access Fund, and informal structures, like Mountain Project forums and social media. Although it may look chaotic at times, this has been a historically effective means of regulating fixed gear placement and I personally believe that redefining fixed gear as installations is an unnecessary perturbation of a system that has worked and is still working.

Besides, the fact that this proposal may make some historical routes unsafe due to the inability to replace fixed anchors, I believe this proposal would deprive this next generation of the opportunity to write their own chapter in the annals of climbing history and explore areas that the previous generations may have overlooked or thought impossible. A recent example of this could be any of the new routes put up in the high sierra by Vitaliy Musiyenko and shared publicly in his guidebooks. Many of these climbs do not have fixed gear but those that do were only found to require them after attempting the route and not being able to find other options. This type of exploration is a common thread through all of climbing history and this proposal seriously threatens the ability of future generations to go and explore for themselves. I fear that burdensome regulations will stifle climbing exploration and won't allow for new classics to be developed that will help decrease the impact in current high-traffic areas.

To summarize, this proposal to reclassify fixed anchors and installations is a radical deviation from historical precedent and threatens the safety of current and future climbers, myself included, as well as the ability of climbers to enjoy and explore unique corners of wilderness areas. I hope you keep this in mind as you consider this proposal.