Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/23/2024 9:47:26 PM First name: Meghan Last name: Balk Organization:

Title:

Comments: Thank you for providing a draft of the new guidelines for fixed equipment in wilderness. I greatly appreciate the protection of the outdoors, and also want to keep the outdoors safe for everyone. I worry about the proposed plan for a couple of reasons. I worry that there is not a plan to enforce the inspection of fixed gear and it is at the expense of maintenance of gear. Fixed anchors are safer than non-fixed anchors, and much better than worn anchors. Further, newer climbers may not know what old, worn gear looks like and may use no longer maintained fixed anchors. Additionally, it worries me that this was seemingly not created in collaboration with climbing groups that have the same goals, maintaining the wilderness and safety of those using the wilderness, and seemingly undermines the mission of these groups. In the southwest, much collaboration has been done between climbing organizations and the USFS. A proposal such as this erodes the bridge that has been built.