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First name: Ryan

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Hello, Representatives.

My name is Ryan Nelson, I am a resident and constituent of Montana.

I was born and raised in Kalispell. Climbing outdoors has been the focus of my life since I was a teenager. I'm now almost middle-aged and have built my life professionally and personally around the sport of climbing. So this issue is important to me and I thank you for the opportunity to comment on both the National Park Service's and Forest Service's draft guidance regarding fixed anchors.

Climbing has been a recognized and celebrated form of recreation allowed on public lands for over 125 years. People travel from all over the world to climb here in the United States. Fixed anchors are an essential and necessary piece of a climbers' safety and must not be prohibited under this new guidance.

The proposal to declare fixed anchors as prohibited "installations" under the Wilderness Act is unwarranted and in my opinion, potentially dangerous!

Existing management systems, such as cost share or volunteer agreements, between the agency and climbing organizations adept at anchor maintenance and climbing area stewardship, further enhances high quality recreation with sustainable, publicly sourced funding support.

I urge the federal agencies to continue working with these existing partnerships. Collaboration like these help steward our natural landscapes and deepen our community pride ... instead of the hazardous inverse of this new policy directive.

Local and regional coalition groups do an excellent job at maintaining safety equipment for all. They do so with professionalism, are insured, and hold all other necessary requirements to perform this public work. These organized coalitions allow for communities to develop a healthy and proud relationship with their fellow humans and natural environment.

The goal of protecting and preserving natural landscapes in wilderness will suffer if the agencies require a blanket MRA/permitting bureaucracy. Instead, I suggest the National Park Service and Forest Service continue preserving the existing authority outlined in National Park Service Director's Order 41. The current authority that allows for local land management agencies to regulate climbing to ensure it protects wilderness character, natural resources, and cultural values-and provides a vital means for public participation of community members in decisions impacting their local wilderness climbing area(s).

I respectfully request that the agencies reach for higher quality, common sense directives that utilize location specific Climbing Management Plans. The overarching proposal to declare fixed anchors as prohibited "installations" under the Wilderness Act is unwarranted and will lead to unnecessary complications and risks that could endanger lives.

Thank you for considering my comments regarding this important issue.

Sincerely,

Ryan Nelson

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