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Comments: Dear National Forest Service,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the proposed policies that aim to prohibit fixed anchors in America's Wilderness areas. This decision, which would classify bolts, pitons, and slings as "prohibited installations," not only threatens a rich climbing legacy but also poses significant safety risks to the climbing community.

The history of climbing in iconic wilderness areas such as Yosemite, Rocky Mountain National Park, Joshua Tree, Linville Gorge, the Wind Rivers, and the Sierra Nevada is deeply intertwined with the use of fixed anchors. These anchors have allowed climbers to safely explore and enjoy these natural wonders for nearly six decades. The proposed policy overlooks this heritage and undermines the very essence of wilderness climbing that has been sustainably managed and respected by the climbing community over the years.

The prohibition of fixed anchors will have several unintended consequences:

Compromised Safety: Existing fixed anchors, which are crucial for safe climbing, often need maintenance or replacement. The inability to replace old, unsafe bolts will significantly increase the risk of accidents, jeopardizing climber safety.

Loss of Historic Climbing Routes: Many established routes, which are a part of America's climbing legacy, rely on fixed anchors. Their removal will result in the loss of these historic routes, diminishing the rich climbing culture that has been fostered in these wilderness areas.

Impact on Wilderness Exploration: Fixed anchors have enabled climbers to explore remote and challenging terrains. Their prohibition will hinder this exploration, detracting from the adventurous spirit that wilderness areas are meant to offer.

Environmental Concerns: Ironically, the prohibition may lead to more environmental damage. Without fixed anchors, climbers may resort to less sustainable means to secure their routes, which could lead to more harm to the natural environment.

I urge the National Park Service to reconsider this policy in light of its potential negative impact on the climbing community and the heritage of American climbing. A collaborative approach involving climbers, environmentalists, and park officials could lead to a more balanced policy that respects both the preservation of wilderness areas and the safe, responsible practice of climbing.

Thank you for considering this appeal. I hope that a solution can be found that honors both the spirit of wilderness preservation and the rich tradition of American climbing.

Sincerely,

Mikhail Ivanov