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Organization:

Title:

Comments: To the USFS,

I am writing to express my concerns regarding proposed policies that would classify fixed anchors as prohibited installations in Wilderness areas. As a passionate climber and resident of California, I regularly trust my life to fixed anchors. I am concerned that proposals to change the management of bolts and other fixed climbing gear will effectively make climbing less safe if not impossible in wilderness areas, and will effectively ban my user group from recreating in the wilderness lands that we love.

I am concerned that prohibiting fixed anchors will create safety issues as it could prevent the regular maintenance of this critical safety equipment. Climbers need to feel enabled to place life-saving gear. I would argue that this legislation could slow down the regular maintenance of anchor bolts, which could lead to increased climbing accidents and demand for Search and Rescue resources. The proposal could also backfire and result in a proliferation of various kinds of climbing gear placed on nature anchors (such as trees and bushes), as climbers reaching the top of an established climb could have no other options to safely descend.

I recognize that climbers are a growing user group. If the ultimate goal is to manage climbing traffic, targeting climbing safety equipment is a dangerous misplacement of attention

I am writing to urge the USFS to continue to partner with climbing organizations such as the Access Fund, the American Safe Climbing Association, the American Alpine Club and local climbing stewardship groups to maintain fixed climbing gear and manage traffic to wilderness areas.

Thank you for your time,

Ashley Haluck-Kangas, Ph.D.

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