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Comments: For almost 20 years now I have spent time rock climbing in our National Parks and National Forests. I have had the opportunity to climb in six different National Parks and about a dozen National Forests. I have so many memories of incredible climbing experiences in these wilderness areas. I have never sensed being more detached from civilization and more immersed in the wilderness as I have climbing in remote locations such as within Grand Canyon National Park. These type of memories I cherish and they linger with me.

Most Saturdays I spend time with my friends climbing in the Coronado National Forest and the Pusch Ridge Wilderness Area which are near to our homes in Tucson, AZ. At 62, I hope I can continue to enjoy these wilderness outings with friends for another 10 good years or so. I feel fortunate to be able to experience and immerse myself in the wilderness through climbing. I realize that it is only possible for me to do it reasonably safely in many places with access to well maintained anchors. The management plan, as proposed, will force me to retreat back to the city as anchors age or are removed. Worse still, future generations of climbers will not experience climbing outside on real rock at all without significant risks to themselves.

Deciding to remove all fixed anchors/bolts would be an expensive and gargantuan task to perform. Not because of the amount of fixed hardware to remove but the sheer amount of vertical terrain that must be traveled over and the risk to the employees performing the job. So many routes have been established over decades of climbing.

Alternatively, leaving the anchors/bolts without maintaining them due to process delays or neglect creates ticking time bombs. Who will be injured or die when a particular anchor fails from degradation? How many injuries will occur before this problem is readdressed?

Currently, we rely on our ability and that of other climbers to identify unsafe anchors and bolt protection and to maintain/replace them. This cannot be achieved if someone does not observe the condition of the protection first hand. I have tightened, repaired, and reported anchors/bolts to be fixed. I seen many times other climbers alerting the community and action taken to fix the problem before someone in the community gets hurt. This would be a major burden on the government to take on. Given all the climbing routes that have been developed over the past four or five decades, the most prudent method is to continue to rely on the community of climbers to observe and maintain the anchors.

I have also participated in trash cleanup and trail maintenance activities with the Climbing Association of Southern Arizona (CASA). It is inspiring to work alongside a group of people volunteering their own time and energy to make the wilderness a better place for other citizens they will never know. That organization and the climbing community help to maintain a safe climbing environment but also leave the wilderness in better condition than others who have visited. Organizations like CASA throughout the country, who support the wilderness, will become lost assets to the USNF and NPS if climbing as a recreational activity is terminated.

Please consider updating the management plan so it does not make the vertical terrain in our National Parks and National Forests less safe and/or off limits for adventure and exploration.