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Comments: As an avid rock climber and someone deeply invested in the preservation of our natural spaces, I believe it is crucial to strike a balance that safeguards both the safety of climbers and the pristine nature of our Wilderness areas.

Fixed anchors serve as an integral component of climbers' safety systems, and it is important to recognize that they are not prohibited "installations" under the Wilderness Act. Adhering to existing climbing policies that have allowed for the judicious use of fixed anchors for over half a century can effectively preserve the Wilderness character while accommodating the needs of the climbing community.

I find it unreasonable for federal agencies to introduce new guidance policies that would prohibit climbing anchors across the country, especially when these agencies have previously allowed, managed, and authorized fixed anchors for decades. This sudden shift could create safety issues by imposing unnecessary obstacles to the regular maintenance of fixed anchors, a responsibility shouldered by the climbing community. Timely and critical safety decisions often need to be made in the moment, and any authorization process should not impede these decisions. A managed approach to fixed anchor maintenance is essential, one that incentivizes safe replacements without jeopardizing climbing routes.

Moreover, prohibiting fixed anchors may obstruct the appropriate exploration of Wilderness areas. Land managers should allow climbers to navigate these areas with the flexibility required to make in-the-moment decisions, especially in complex vertical terrain.

Lastly, the prohibition of fixed anchors poses a threat to America's rich climbing legacy and could potentially erase some of the world's greatest climbing achievements. Climbing management policies should aim to protect existing routes from removal, ensuring that our climbing heritage remains intact for future generations.

I urge you to consider these points as you deliberate on policies affecting rock climbing in Wilderness areas. Striking a balance that prioritizes safety, conservation, and the preservation of our climbing legacy is crucial for the well-being of both climbers and the natural environment.