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Comments: I am writing to voice concern over proposed new rules around fixed anchors in wilderness areas. As an avid user of wilderness areas (hiking, climbing, and canyoneering), I see these restrictions of fixed anchors as counter to the spirit of the Wilderness Act, and would result in a de facto prohibition in practice. Fixed anchors are essential safety equipment to climbers and canyoneers, without which these activities would be extremely dangerous at best and inaccessible at worst. Congress has made it clear that there was nothing in the Wilderness Act that would classify fixed anchors as prohibited installations. Moreover, there are decades of established precedence regarding the treatment of fixed anchors in wilderness areas, some of which pre-date the Act itself. A rollback of policy around fixed anchors would effectively prevent exploration of large parts of the wilderness system, which is counter to its intention. Please consider maintaining the status quo approach to the management of fixed anchors.

I would also like to comment on the proposal to restrict the establishment of new routes to existing climbing opportunities on non-wilderness lands. This policy would be unenforceable and create confusion among land managers and climbers. Climbing should by default be allowed unless and until specific areas are shown to require protection for cultural or natural resources.

Thank you.