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Comments: To whom it may concern,

As a dedicated climber who has devoted much of his life and resources to climbing in a personal and professional setting, the proposed policy of limiting, removing and prohibiting the maintenance of fixed anchors and fixed equipment in National Forest System Lands causes great unrest. I am an outdoor guide with AMGA and New York State certification, and reliance on appropriately maintained fixed anchors is of the utmost importance for ensuring the safety of my clients. When installed properly and with the appropriate equipment, these systems are safe, reliable, and in many cases essential to the continued use of wilderness areas for climbing. It is for this reason that I, with the utmost respect for the staffers who work tirelessly to protect and preserve America's natural places, suggest that the resources of the National Forest Service can be better used to solve the underlying issue that this Policy seeks to resolve.

To be clear, with safety in mind I am in agreement that the efficacy of fixed anchors in wilderness areas is paramount. Indeed, without proper training or equipment fixed anchors can be installed improperly and put the user at significant risk. Therefore, I instead propose that the resources which would be allocated for this Policy be redirected towards education initiatives on fixed anchor best practices. This would be done with the intention of ensuring that proper equipment is used and installed in appropriate manners in wilderness areas across NFS lands.

Wilderness areas, including the nation's extensive NFS lands, are one of the greatest prides of the United States. I feel incredibly fortunate to live and recreate in a country that has such robust protection in place to conserve these natural places. Exploration of wilderness areas as a young boy was integral to shaping my life's direction, and I now work to pass on that experience to others as a guide in the outdoor industry. Appropriately installed and maintained fixed anchors are just one of the many essential tools that continue to enable first-time and vetted outdoor enthusiasts from safely and extensively exploring wilderness areas. This proposal comes at a time of particular importance as the outdoor industry continues to expand greatly. At a time when many novice climbers are eager to get out and explore, having fixed anchors will not only ensure their safety but importantly it will lower the barrier of entry on a discipline that historically requires significant financial and educational resources.

To close, I will highlight that fixed anchors are just one of the components that make up the strong history of climbing in the United States. Many of the iconic first ascents that now serve as pieces of history or modern day test pieces rely on fixed anchors, meaning that the removal and prohibition of these anchors would be forever damaging a piece of America's climbing history. Climbing culture in our country is deep-rooted and ever developing, and fixed anchors are a key part of enabling that story to continue.

I would like to thank the United States Forest Service for having a generous open comment period and for listening to the climbers, outdoor enthusiasts and professional guides whose lives would inevitably be impacted by this Policy.

Respectfully submitted,

B. Correll

New York State