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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Opposing the Prohibition of Fixed Anchors in Wilderness Areas

Dear U.S. Forest Service,

I am reaching out to express my strong opposition to the proposed policy on prohibiting fixed anchors in Wilderness areas. This policy, in my opinion, fundamentally misunderstands the role of climbing in Wilderness exploration and the importance of fixed anchors in ensuring climber safety.

For decades, climbers have relied on fixed anchors not only for safety but also as a means to explore and appreciate the Wilderness. These anchors have been used judiciously, in accordance with the unconfined nature of Wilderness exploration. By classifying these anchors as "prohibited installations," this policy undermines a long-standing practice that has coexisted harmoniously with Wilderness values.

Furthermore, the prohibition of both new and existing anchors raises significant safety concerns. The climbing community has been proactive in maintaining these anchors, ensuring their safety and reliability. This policy could hinder these efforts, leading to more dangerous climbing conditions.

Additionally, the USFS proposal to restrict the establishment of new routes to "existing climbing opportunities" on non-Wilderness lands is problematic. Such a restriction is not only unenforceable but also creates confusion among both land managers and climbers. It is vital that climbing management policies continue to allow for the establishment of new anchors unless specific analyses show a need to restrict climbing to protect cultural and natural resources.

I urge the U.S. Forest Service to reconsider this policy. A more balanced approach that acknowledges the historical and ongoing role of fixed anchors in Wilderness climbing, while protecting the Wilderness character, would be more appropriate and beneficial for all parties involved.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Ernest