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First name: Shadrock

Last name: Roberts

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I stand to object recent draft policies from the U.S. Forest Service that will profoundly affect the safety of rock climbers by making fixed anchors (bolts, pitons, slings) prohibited in America's Wilderness areas. These policies would overturn nearly 60 years of sustainable Wilderness climbing precedent and impact some of America's most iconic climbs including those of my favorite climbing area, Rocky Mountain National Park.

Fixed anchors are an essential piece of climbers' safety system and are not prohibited "installations" under the Wilderness Act. Following existing climbing policies that allow judicious use of fixed anchors for more than a half century will do more to protect Wilderness character while providing for primitive and unconfined Wilderness climbing.

It is unreasonable for federal agencies to create new guidance policies prohibiting Wilderness climbing anchors across the country when they have allowed, managed, and authorized fixed anchors for decades.

Prohibiting fixed anchors will create safety issues by imposing unnecessary obstacles to the regular maintenance of fixed anchors, a responsibility undertaken by the climbing community. Critical safety decisions often must be made in the moment and any authorization process should not impede those decisions. Fixed anchor maintenance needs to be managed in a way that incentivizes safe anchor replacement and does not risk the removal of climbing routes.

Prohibiting fixed anchors obstructs appropriate exploration of Wilderness areas. Land managers need to allow climbers to explore Wilderness in a way that permits in-the-moment decisions that are necessary when navigating complex vertical terrain.

Prohibiting fixed anchors will threaten America's rich climbing legacy and could erase some of the world's greatest climbing achievements. Climbing management policy needs to protect existing routes from removal.

I urge you to reconsider the language used in your draft to align with existing guidance that protects our wilderness areas and climbers at the same time.