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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Climbing is the primary way that many people, including myself, experience the vast wilderness that we are so lucky to enjoy here in the United States. For decades, intrepid climbers and mountaineers have explored a part of the wilderness that most other visitors almost completely ignore - it's vertical terrain. Without those first ascensionists and the incredible amount of work that they did, we who have followed behind would be deprived of one of the most incredible feelings that life has to offer. That of standing on the side of a big wall, alone but for the denizens of the sky. That feeling is still accessible to the average climber because of the work done by countless others in installing, maintaining, and replacing fixed anchors. It is often thankless work, but it is work that has historically been acknowledged and allowed by both NPS and USFS. That is a stance that shouldn't change now. Describing fixed anchors as prohibited installations will have a myriad of cascading effects that go against one of the principal missions of this agency - to allow and encourage access to the wilderness by the people. It also suggests a fundamental misunderstanding of what fixed anchors are to the climbers that use them. In some cases, fixed anchors are the trail that guides climbers up the wall, in the same way that a trail guides hikers through the forest. In others, fixed anchors are the safety system that allows climbers to safely descend from their objective, in the same way that a set of chains off the back of half dome allow hikers to safely descend from its summit. By prohibiting fixed anchors this agency will be effectively prohibiting the safe practice of a beloved recreational activity within the boundaries of some of its most renowned places. All we ask is that you continue to work with the climbing community to develop a more equitable and sustainable set of guidelines for these areas that we all treasure.