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Comments: Hello,

I am writing to you as a concerned climber and outdoorsperson. The proposed NPS/USFS draft policies regarding fixed anchors in Wilderness present a dangerous, unenforceable and backwards approach to maintaining wilderness character and exploration. This policy has many specific issues which my peers have been painfully advocating for. It should not be implemented as is. I want to focus on another reason why this new policy should be abandoned outright until such a time as it can be implemented in a meaningful and respectful way.

It is irresponsible for the government to propose further regulation when they lack the commitment and resources to properly implement and enforce it. The proposal regarding fixed anchors is not explicitly funded and sets no acceptable time frames, resourcing or sufficiently specific enforcement policy. So regardless the specifics of the proposal its impact will be damaging.

Why is that? Because freedom is a primary aspect of wilderness recreation and exploration. Policies which limit the freedom to recreate and explore wilderness areas in a responsible way should guarantee the preservation or improvement of that freedom for those later explorers. This regulation on fixed anchors does not provide this guarantee. Given the consistently under-resourced department which would enforce this policy we can be sure to see limitations which suppress this inherent wilderness aspect rather than improve it.

The time and effort needed to establish specific, useful guidance on a case by case basis for different wilderness areas is too high to be done with proper care. The evaluations of the permits for adding fixed anchors is too resource intensive to be added on top of existing duties without specific funding. It will incur too large a cost in other aspects of the well-functioning of Wilderness or take too much away from the inherent freedoms provided by Wilderness if presented as is.

If the NFS and USFS and to a larger degree, the Wilderness using public at large feels that additional regulation is warranted regarding fixed anchors. They should first provide adequate resourcing for it. And then, working closely with the community find solutions which respect the history of Wilderness use, and protect future explorer's freedoms.

Abandon this guidance on fixed anchors until such a time as proper investment to the issue can be made.

Best,

Nathan Jewell

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