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Comments: The USFS draft guidance for managing wilderness climbing is a well intentioned but severely flawed proposal. The current draft guidance threatens to erase wilderness climbings rich legacy while simultaneously unduly hampering wilderness recreation and exploration. Prohibition of 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. Fixed anchors are an essential piece of climbers' safety system and are not prohibited "installations" under the Wilderness Act. At its core the Wilderness Act was intended to preserve wilderness climbing and the current draft guidance would effectively undermine that very intent. Additionally, restricting the establishment of new routes should be done on a case by case basis rather than blanket policy and should be restricted to protect cultural and natural resources. I urge the USFS to abandon this draft guidance and work directly with leadership in the climbing conservation community that better serves ALL interested parties.

Sincerely,

Christopher Beauchamp