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First name: Chris

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear USFS Land Managers,

I am writing to express my concerns with the proposed fixed anchor guidelines in wilderness and non-wilderness areas.

A little bit about me. I have been climbing for the past 7 years. During this time I have traveled all across the country to some of the world's best climbing destinations. I currently work as a rock climbing guide in areas like Colorado, Utah, Wyoming, and South Dakota. For me, these wilderness areas are right in my backyard. A part of my job that I love is advocating for the outdoors, and educating others how to recreate responsibly.

A part of my everyday life depends on the use of these fixed anchors. I understand how it is possible to interpret the Wilderness Act to include fixed anchors as installations, however, there has been over a half-century of precedent allowing climbers the use of these fixed anchors.

If there were a prohibition on new or existing fixed anchors, there would soon become a huge safety concern for future climbers. Without the ability to replace aging anchors, future climbers must face the choice of climbing on old gear or not climbing at all. Currently, it is up to local climbing organizations to maintain and replace fixed anchors, a job I volunteer for in many of the places I work. If this prohibition on fixed anchors were to take effect, local stewards would no longer be able to maintain these anchors inevitably creating a safety concern for someone's life.

And lastly, climbing has a massive climbing legacy. This dates back to the 50's and even earlier. Then, these pioneers had open access to these beautiful landscapes exploring some of the last untouched surfaces. These pioneers have inspired the current generation to get outside and explore these wild places. I agree that there needs to be some sort of oversight by land managers, however, I think that a strict prohibition of fixed anchors is not the direction we need to be going.

Thanks!

Chris L.