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Comments: Limiting the creation of new climbing routes to "existing climbing opportunities" on non-Wilderness lands is impractical and could lead to confusion among land managers and climbers. The policy for managing non-Wilderness climbing should allow for new anchors unless and until analyses determine that climbing should be restricted to protect cultural and natural resources.

I am a climber of twenty years I have been informed and inspired by profound adventures in wilderness spaces to advocate for safe responsible stewardship of Americas shared outdoor spaces. Fixed anchors are crucial for climbers' safety and are not prohibited under the Wilderness Act. Prohibiting them will create safety issues and obstruct exploration of Wilderness areas. Climbing management policy needs to protect existing routes from removal and incentivize safe anchor replacement. We need a holistic collaborative process with climbers to ensure Americas rich climbing legacy continues for future generations. It is unreasonable for federal agencies to create new guidance policies that prohibit 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, which is 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 am happy to participate in finding solutions that work for all concerned groups.

Sincerely, Nicholas I Mathis, BSN, RN