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Comments: I live within a few miles of the edge of the Selway Bitterroot Wilderness near Mill Creek and Blodgett Canyon. An area that has been at the center of the debate over the use of fixed anchors in the wilderness. I frequently hike, run, ski, climb and recreate in the Wilderness and also hold and use water rights as part of the Mill Lake irrigation district which maintains a damned reservoir within the Wilderness boundary.

As a member of the local climbing organization i've sat in numerous meetings with the forest service and discussed many issues including fixed anchors.

I strongly encourage your agency to revise its guidance on fixed climbing anchors to focus more directly on regulating high impact and intensive areas with or without bolts while continuing to allow accustomed limited and low impact use of fixed anchors without the inappropriate Minimum Required Analysis process.

Climbing and the use of fixed anchors in many areas predates the creation of official Wildernesses and even the Wilderness act. Wildernesses have always been created and managed in a way that preserves the character of the land while allowing the continuation of local use. The act specifically calls out many uses including irrigation dams and this has been essential in garnering full local support for new Wildernesses and Wilderness expansion. Here in Montana, the first 10 miles of Blodgett Canyon and the start of other canyon mouths were carved out from the Selway Bitterroot wilderness to reassure locals they could continue to use it in their accustomed ways.

It is essential that this precedent continue to be followed. Near me many Proposed Wilderness, Wilderness Study and wilderness adjacent areas exist including those previously carved out canyon mouths. I strongly believe these areas should eventually be preserved as wilderness however doing so will require support from a broad swath of recreational groups including climbers.

Prohibiting fixed anchors is a radical break from this precedent in a way that will unduly burden a user group and threaten wilderness expansion. It creates a large safety issue for climbers and threatens appropriate, low impact, use of Wilderness areas. It will represent an end of America's rich legacy of adventure climbing.

Instead of outright prohibition, climbing regulations must continue to allow exploratory adventurous climbing and collaborative management to prevent and minimize impacts. This is the most enforceable, sustainable model.

Ryan Bressler