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Comments: Hello NPS team

I am a longtime climber (started in 1974) and have climbed in Wilderness areas throughout the country for five decades. I'm a former high-school environmental science teacher and Outward Bound course director. I have been a professional journalist in the adventure-sports niche since 1992 and currently publish guidebooks to rock-climbing areas, whitewater rivers, and backcountry ski terrain within and outside designated Wilderness.

I have personally placed, replaced/improved, and removed anchors on new and existing technical climbs in Wilderness in the normal course of climbing there. I have worked with land managers on climbing-related challenges at our local White River National Forest, as well as conducted interviews with all kinds of shareholders in the "fixed anchor" question for national magazine articles. I'm extremely aware of the nuances of this issue, and its ramifications in the UNIQUE Wilderness climbing situations each climbing resource presents.

Please do not create a default definition of climbing anchors as prohibited installations, and require any kind of formal process for their normal, reasonable use within Wilderness as has been going on for many decades. Bolts, pitons, slings - all of these are indeed "installed," but are low-impact, and all (including bolts) can easily be removed. Upon reading the 1964 act you could make a semantic argument that a trail is an installation. It creates a MUCH more obvious and lasting impact than climbing anchors do. It would be possible to label trails as prohibited installations. Please don't do that either.

I fully support USFS managers being able to remove or prohibit fixed climbing anchors in Wilderness on a case-by-case basis. This authority already exists. The prohibition against power-drill use in Wilderness also is a very effective de facto protection against the placement of "too many" bolts. This prohibition enjoys universal support among climbers.

Wilderness needs more supporters, not less. Please do not make technical climbing impossible or perilous in Wilderness.