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Comments: I am writing to express my concerns and provide feedback regarding the proposed policies on fixed anchors in Wilderness areas. As an avid climber and someone who values the preservation of our natural landscapes, I believe it is crucial to find a balanced approach that ensures both the safety of climbers and the protection of Wilderness character.

Fixed anchors have been an integral part of climbers' safety systems for decades, and their judicious use aligns with existing climbing policies that have been in place for over half a century. I urge the National Park Service (NPS) and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) to consider maintaining these established guidelines, which have effectively protected Wilderness character while allowing for primitive and unconfined Wilderness climbing.

It is my belief that implementing new guidance policies across the country to prohibit Wilderness climbing anchors is unreasonable. The federal agencies have historically allowed, managed, and authorized fixed anchors, demonstrating that such installations can coexist with the preservation of Wilderness areas. Prohibiting fixed anchors may create safety issues by hindering the regular maintenance of these anchors, a responsibility that the climbing community has undertaken for years. Critical safety decisions often require immediate action, and any authorization process should not impede these decisions.

Moreover, the proposed prohibition on fixed anchors may obstruct the appropriate exploration of Wilderness areas. Land managers should permit climbers to navigate complex vertical terrain with the flexibility to make in-the-moment decisions. Restricting fixed anchors could impede climbers from engaging in safe exploration, thus limiting the full potential of Wilderness experiences.

I am particularly concerned that prohibiting fixed anchors could jeopardize America's rich climbing legacy and potentially erase some of the world's greatest climbing achievements. Climbing management policy should prioritize the protection of existing routes from removal, ensuring the preservation of our climbing heritage.

In conclusion, I encourage the NPS and USFS to reconsider the proposed policies on fixed anchors and work towards a solution that balances the safety of climbers with the preservation of Wilderness character. Collaborative efforts with the climbing community can lead to policies that incentivize safe anchor replacement, rather than risking the removal of climbing routes and the erosion of our climbing heritage.

Thank you for considering my comments on this important matter. I trust that, together, we can find a solution that maintains the delicate balance between preserving our natural treasures and allowing climbers to continue enjoying and respecting these unique landscapes.