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Comments: Hello,

My name is Althea, and I am a Michigan resident. I first started climbing when I was about 13, and found mentorship, friendship, and joy through engaging in my environment in a completely new way. I discovered hidden crags tucked away in popular hiking locations, and grew closer to my hometown because of it. It inspired a strong appreciation of natural spaces and fostered my commitment to stewardship. Many of the areas I grew up climbing were safely equipped with fixed anchors, which were essentials that enabled me to get into climbing. Here are some points to consider in this decision:

Fixed anchors are an essential piece of climbers' safety system and are not prohibited "installations" under the Wilderness Act.

It is unreasonable for federal agencies to create new guidance policies prohibiting Wilderness climbing anchors across the country when they have allowed, managed, and authorized fixed anchors for decades. Why should children who could benefit so greatly, like I did, from climbing equipped with fixed anchors not have the same access as I did?

Prohibiting fixed anchors will create safety issues by imposing unnecessary obstacles to the regular maintenance of fixed anchors, 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.

Let us instead take time to formulate a sustainable, safe solution in which the government, land owners, developers, and climbers can work together to come up with low impact alternatives to this potentially devastating ban.

Thank you for your time,
Althea