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Comments: I have considered both sides of the argument for allowing fixed and permanent anchors in Wilderness areas.

After some research I urge the NPS to reject the allowance. The Wilderness Act prohibits installations and structures like permanent fixed climbing anchors in order to protect the areas' wild character. This prohibition cannot be overcome because some individuals and organizations (some of which are commercial) wish to have their particular activity be given an exception. If exceptions are granted every time that the proponents of a particular activity request one, there will be no true wilderness left. Climbing without permanent fixed anchors is generally compatible with wilderness preservation. While it may be true that fewer people will climb certain routes in Wilderness if they don't have fixed bolts or other permanently-installed protection, natural limits on use is not a bad thing when it comes to wilderness protection, particularly with the recent explosion of outdoor recreation uses in Wilderness. In addition, for those climbers seeking developed climbing opportunities, there are ample permanently bolted climbs outside of Wilderness areas. Less than 5% of land in the lower 48 states is protected as wilderness. Its preservation is a priority, and should take precedence over accommodating activities that are contrary to this. The USFS primary duty with regard to Wilderness areas is to protect the areas in their natural, untrammeled state. The Wilderness Act's ban on installations can only be overcome in rare administrative circumstances where the installation is necessary to protect Wilderness. Any specific proposals for permanent fixed anchor installations in Wilderness must be subjected to public notice and an opportunity for public comment pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act.

Thank you for considering my comments.