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Comments: I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed policy on the prohibition of bolts in Wilderness areas. Fixed anchors play a vital role in ensuring the safety of climbers and should not be deemed as prohibited "installations" under the Wilderness Act.

It is crucial to recognize that fixed hardware, including bolts, is no more intrusive than other necessary trail elements such as signs, and in fact, often less visually obtrusive than trails themselves. Furthermore, the presence of minuscule fixed hardware has proven to be instrumental in preventing accidents in remote areas, highlighting their importance in enhancing safety measures for climbers.

The proposal to create new guidance policies nationwide, prohibiting Wilderness climbing anchors, seems unreasonable, especially considering that federal agencies have historically allowed, managed, and authorized fixed anchors for several decades. Such a prohibition would not only hinder the regular maintenance of fixed anchors, a responsibility shouldered by the climbing community, but also pose safety risks by discouraging safe anchor replacement practices.

In addition, the prohibition would impede the Search and Rescue teams' ability to swiftly and safely rig systems on existing anchors during rescue operations. This poses a significant concern for the effectiveness of emergency response efforts in Wilderness areas.

Furthermore, the prohibition of fixed anchors would restrict the appropriate exploration of Wilderness areas by climbers. Land managers should allow climbers the freedom to navigate complex vertical terrain and make in-the-moment decisions, crucial for safe exploration.

Lastly, the proposed policy jeopardizes America's rich climbing legacy and risks erasing some of the world's greatest climbing achievements. Climbing management policies should prioritize the protection of existing routes from removal, ensuring the preservation of our climbing heritage.

In conclusion, I urge you to reconsider the proposed policy on bolt prohibition in Wilderness areas, taking into account the essential role fixed anchors play in climbers' safety, the climbing community's commitment to responsible maintenance, and the preservation of America's climbing legacy.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Anthony