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Comments: I am reaching out to express my deep concern regarding the proposed draft climbing management guidance issued by the U.S. Forest Service on November 17, 2023. The policies outlined in the draft guidance, particularly the restrictions on new fixed anchors and replacements in non-wilderness climbing areas, raise significant issues that could impact the climbing community and access to climbing opportunities.

Key Concerns:

Restrictions on Fixed Anchors:

The policy restricting the placement and replacement of fixed anchors to established "climbing opportunities" is subjective and may be challenging to manage and enforce.

The definition of "climbing opportunity" lacks clarity and may lead to ambiguity in its application.

Lack of Applicable Climbing Management Plans:

The requirement that existing non-wilderness fixed anchors adhere to applicable climbing management plans is concerning given the limited number of USFS climbing areas with such plans.

Impact on Wilderness Anchors:

It is unclear whether the proposed standards for non-wilderness climbing management also apply to wilderness anchors, creating potential confusion.

I urge the U.S. Forest Service to reconsider the proposed restrictions on fixed anchors and work towards developing policies that consider the diverse needs of climbers while ensuring the preservation of natural and cultural resources.