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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear USFS folks,

I'm writing as a volunteer search and rescue team member (Mountain Rescue Association), citizen scientist, and avid outdoor recreationalist. I am a caver and canyoner (caving and canyoning/canyoneering are both recognized sports), and I regularly participate in those activities on USFS land (wilderness and non-wilderness), including during SAR missions, field science work, and recreation. So my personal background has a comparatively broad perspective while also being specific to activities and access that this proposal directly affects.

Based on my relevant experience over more than a decade, I strongly disagree with FSM 2355 as it relates to fixed anchors. As written, it is short sighted, overly restrictive to users and land managers, would require an inordinate amount of funding and resources to implement, would likely lead to negative impact on the environment, and certainly would result in an increase in rescues and body recoveries from sensitive environments.

The current way that fixed anchors are being managed on USFS land is working well and should be left in place. USFS lands vary widely, and right now, policies on fixed anchors can be tailored to the specific needs in a given area. I understand this because I've visited canyons and caves in more than a dozen states. This has enabled a good balance of access, user safety, conservation, and protection of resources.

From a canyoner and caver perspective, fixed anchors are absolutely necessary to access these locations. I appreciate that the folks who wrote the proposal may not understand that or may not have enough experience to know this. I ask you to reconsider and listen to those who do have the experience, care deeply about these environments, and understand the importance of safe and low impact access.

I urge decision makers to remove from the proposal any restriction or potential restriction on fixed anchors.

Sincerely,

Jesse Houser