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Comments: Dear USFS Managers,

I am writing to say that I am against the prohibition of bolting and fixed anchors in our National Forests. I have been a climber for most of my life and fixed anchors are a large reason why climbing is now safe and accessible to all people. This is especially necessary in national forests, where there are extremely high volumes of people, and especially beginner climbers. Without fixed anchors these climbers are at higher risk which outweighs the extremely minor blemish on the landscape anchors present.

Fixed anchors are an essential piece of climbers' safety system and are not prohibited "installations" under the Wilderness Act. Following existing climbing policies that allow judicious use of fixed anchors for more than a half century will do more to protect Wilderness character while providing for primitive and unconfined Wilderness climbing. 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.

Additionally, 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.

Prohibiting fixed anchors also obstructs appropriate exploration of Wilderness areas. Land managers need to allow climbers to explore Wilderness in a way that permits in-the-moment decisions that are necessary when navigating complex vertical terrain. Without fixed anchors we must rely on stop-gap solutions that are unsafe and can lead to accidents.

Prohibiting fixed anchors will threaten America's rich climbing legacy and could erase some of the world's greatest climbing achievements. Climbing management policy needs to protect existing routes from removal.

Even if this were to be written into law, restricting the establishment of new routes to "existing climbing opportunities" on non-Wilderness lands is unenforceable and will create confusion amongst land managers and climbers. Non-Wilderness climbing management policy should maintain opportunities for new anchors unless and until analyses determine climbing should be restricted to protect cultural and natural resources.

Thank you for considering my comments and I hope you vote to not prohibit bolting in our wild spaces.

Sincerely,

Will Plantz