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Comments: I urge the US Forest Service to follow existing precedent by allowing fixed anchors for climbing in NFS wilderness areas. Climbing in wilderness areas has been practiced for many decades by legends such as John Muir, and the use of fixed anchors has been practiced by many of America's preeminent environmentalists such as David Brower and Allen Steck. The paths followed by these forefathers are part of America's history and should not be erased or prohibited. Banning fixed anchors from NFS lands would destroy the history and practice of climbing as we know it.

Fixed anchors are a critical part of a climber's safety system. Banning fixed anchors and their upkeep would create a serious safety hazard on public lands. Decisions on whether the placement or replacement of an anchor is needed should be on a case-by-case basis, or remain in the hands of climbers whose very lives depend on these decisions.

Fixed anchors allow the exploration of wilderness areas in an appropriate way, which many people can and do enjoy. Currently they are not prohibited "installations" under the Wilderness Act. In the course of my personal explorations of NFS wilderness areas, I have encountered a great many government-approved installations that are much more intrusive, destructive and inappropriate than climbers' occasional pitons, bolts and textile anchors: trails dynamited into the rock, permanent structures, weather stations, signage, etc. To single out fixed anchors seems hypocritical in this light.

There are certainly instances where fixed anchors are not appropriate, such as culturally significant or environmentally sensitive sites. These situations should be managed on a case-by-case basis, not with a blanket ban on commonly used, well-established practices heretofore approved by NFS management. 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 your time and consideration.