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Comments: Hello,

I'm a climber. Rock climbing and the use of bolts and fixed anchors has a long precedence in the national parks in this country, and is a legitimate use of our wilderness spaces in the U.S. This proposal should not be accepted, as it stands on no legitimate basis.

The draft proposal states that "Although fixed anchors may be small, there is no 'de minimis' exception to the Wilderness Act's restriction on installations, and the combined impact of many fixed anchors in a single area or rock wall can have a significant effect on wilderness character." As a basis for the change in classification of fixed anchors (as defined in the proposal), this statement is false.

First, a lack of clarification on the size of impact in the Wilderness Act does not mean that anything left in the environment should be considered an installation. There is no rationale provided for a change in classification.

Second, it is not true that the establishment of bolted anchors is incompatible with wilderness preservation. Bolts and other fixed anchors should not be considered "installations" as this designation should be reserved for changes to the environment that constitute a "significant" impact. Placement of bolts is the most viable method to ensure the safety of climbers with minimal impact to the environment. Encouragement of responsible climbing and a connection with the outdoors as the sport grows will have a much larger positive impact on wilderness preservation than by creating animosity with a user group.

Maintaining the current status for bolts in NFS wilderness areas is important to maintain the culture and safety of an American pastime and meaningful connection to nature for many public users. It's short-sighted to think that the climbing community won't continue to grow or seek to safely climb in some of our cherished public lands which will be severely restricted by this proposal.

I believe that almost all climbers consider themselves environmentalists. I do. And this proposal, despite its intentions, will significantly hurt a dedicated and growing group of people who care deeply about our public lands. Working with climbers to manage our use of NFS lands has been the long-standing and successful approach, and does not need to end with this proposal.