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Comments: Fixed anchors in wilderness areas are an appropriate use and should be allowed without excessive and burdensome restrictions. Without fixed anchors for rappelling from climbing routes, climbing is not feasible. The proposed system of requiring pre-existing and new anchors to be reviewed and approved by a committee is essentially a ban on fixed anchors, which is essentially a ban on climbing in all wilderness areas.

While it sounds reasonable that land managers should ensure that proposed anchors are appropriate for the area, in practice I think it's unlikely that this process would ever remotely efficient. I find it more likely that requests are backlogged for long periods of time, especially given the chronic lack of resources that government land management agencies suffer. There may be isolated, specific instances where fixed anchor use might be inappropriate. In those cases, I'm supportive of reasonable restrictions, preferably made with input from local climbing stewardship organizations.

Climbing has been happening in wilderness areas since well before the passage of the Wilderness Act. Climbing is an appropriate use of wilderness areas, and should be encouraged just as other commonly accepted activities which cause much more impact, such as horse packing, fire fighting, etc. Climbing anchors have been used for decades with no impact to the wilderness areas. Climbers have been responsibly policing themselves in the use of anchors without external regulation. Climbers should not be disincentivized from replacing worn or unsafe anchors because of a fear of reprisal for not following a permit process.

It has been suggested, disingenuously, that climbers are trying to grid bolt the wilderness to create outdoor climbing gyms. This is plainly false. Wilderness areas are difficult to get to, there are much easier places to sport climb. Climbers love wilderness for the same reasons that other wilderness-lovers do - the solitude, the beauty, the challenge, the difficulty. Climbers are responsible stewards of public lands and have no interest in degrading the experience.

Climbing in wilderness areas is part of our outdoor heritage. This proposal threatens the historical routes that generations of climbers have enjoyed and limits the possibilities that upcoming generations have to enjoy America's wilderness responsibly. Fixed anchor use and replacement should not require review by committee.