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First name: Teresa

Last name: Shirkova

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Hello,

I would like to express my significant concern with the policy proposal around fixed Anchors and Equipment in Wilderness areas that would deem these to be illegal until a Minimum Requirements Analysis process is undertaken. Climbing isn't just about getting up on some rock and testing your muscles, it's about appreciation of the wilderness and nature that's all around us. That vantage point - in the middle of a cliff, or on a ledge, or on an otherwise unreachable summit - means that people from all ages and walks of life look out and grow their appreciation for how fragile our environment really is, and become driving forces of conservation in their communities. This policy, by restricting the placement of key safety gear for climbing, will reduce that appreciation for these key wilderness areas, the very opposite of the intent to protect our environment.

I would encourage the USDA Forest Service to consider looking at what are the underlying issues at play. If animal population restorations need to occur, restricting access to specific areas on a periodic basis, instead of a blanket policy on anchors, would be better placed. If there is erosion that is occurring from trail use (which would be happening from hikers in general), invite those same climbers and hikers to a trail day. If it's a matter of additional education of all visitors to the wilderness areas, have a video orientation and require email proof that the orientation was watched before a visitor enters the park. There are many creative ways to address the many challenges with protecting our environment, but restricting it to some of the people who love it the most should not be one of them.

Thank you.