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Comments: I am writing to express my strong disagreement with the proposed rule regarding safe anchor placement on Forest Service land. I agree with the spirit of the regulation, which is to preserve the pristine wilderness experience for all to enjoy. However, the language and execution of the regulation is misguided and the expected outcome is an effective ban on safe climbing anchors, as establishing a new bureaucratic process without additional funding or resources to complete that process will ensure that in effect, no anchors will be allowed to be established. I am concerned that the proposed regulation involves multiple fundamental misunderstandings of the nature of climbing anchors and their impact, as well as the impact of any alternatives, and that this was drafted without input or consultation with the climbing community. The result will be an effective ban on access to wilderness climbing and to jeopardize the safety of climbers by removing fixed bolts or allowing them to age without replacement.

There has been no evidence provided of an actual problem that this regulation will solve. I challenge advocates of this policy to cite a single route or area in which A) bolts are noticeable by someone not looking for them B) bolted anchors significantly impair the wilderness experience C) bolted anchors are less safe than the alternative anchors for safe descent D) bolted anchors are more visible than the alternative anchors for safe descent. In contrast, there have been multiple fatal incidents involving anchor failure on Forest Service land that could conceivably have been prevented by having access to a fixed anchor.

I fully agree with the position statement articulated on <https://safeclimbing.org/fixed-anchor-directives>, which I will not reproduce here.

Climbers have historically been responsible stewards and advocates for wilderness preservation. Please consider involving climbing advocacy organizations such as the American Alpine Club and the American Safe Climbing Association to participate in the development of this regulatory process, to ensure the safety and access to wilderness land of future generations of climbers.