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Comments: Dear USFS Land Managers,

I am writing to you today to express my concern about the proposed directives related to climbing management. I grew up recreating in the White River and Routt NF on dirt bikes and snowmobiles. As an adult I'm mostly in the Roosevelt NF climbing, cycling, backpacking, and backcountry skiing, and love the occasional opportunities to explore and recreate in NF throughout the Western US, often in Wilderness. Our national forests have been a fixture in all 33 years of my life, and the protected Wilderness and its rawness is an especially important place for me.

I fully agree that these places need to be protected and to do so some activities must be regulated. I also agree that there are some bad actors within the climbing community that over bolt and/or do not bolt in respectful or sustainable ways, and these need to be stopped. However, in my experience, all of these are in the front country and zones that are easier to access. I've climbed in Wilderness zones throughout Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, Nevada, and California, and have never had an experience diminished due to a fixed anchor, but rather all my experiences that involved fixed anchors were enhanced due to increased access, safety, and enjoyment. In fact, I would like to point out that the impact I've seen from horses in the Wilderness far exceeds any impact I've witnessed from climbing anchors.

Fixed anchors are an essential piece of climbers' safety system and are not prohibited "installations" under the Wilderness Act. I believe existing climbing policies that allow judicious use of fixed anchors, and have done so for 50+ years, will continue to protect Wilderness character while providing for primitive and unconfined Wilderness climbing, and allow room for contemporary updates. I do not agree that USFS should create new guidance policies prohibiting Wilderness climbing anchors across the country when they have allowed, managed, and authorized fixed anchors for decades.

Furthermore, prohibiting fixed anchors will create safety issues by imposing unnecessary obstacles to the regular maintenance of fixed anchors, a responsibility undertaken by the climbing community. Critical safety decisions often must be made in the moment and any authorization process should not impede those decisions. Fixed anchor maintenance needs to be managed in a way that incentivizes safe anchor replacement and does not risk the removal of climbing routes.

Overall, I believe prohibiting fixed anchors will obstruct appropriate exploration of Wilderness areas, including my own and that deeply saddens me. I believe land managers should allow climbers to explore Wilderness in a way that permits in-the-moment decisions that are necessary when navigating complex vertical terrain. Climbing management policy should allow appropriate anchors and protect existing routes from removal. Also, restricting the establishment of new routes to "existing climbing opportunities" on non-Wilderness lands is practically unenforceable and bound to create confusion amongst land managers and climbers.

I hope for reconsideration to not adopt the proposed directives related to climbing management and instead focus on improving current policies that maintain opportunities for new anchors, maintenance of existing anchors, and equitable access for climbers to explore our Wilderness and National Forest.