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Comments: Prohibiting fixed anchors on Forest Service land is detrimental to the safety of climbers everywhere. Fixed anchors are a crucial part of a climber's safety system. Often times, there is not a safe or easy way to get off of a formation other than to descend using a fixed anchor. Furthermore, fixed anchors are pivotal in rescue scenarios. Without them, rescue teams would not be able to evacuate climbers as quickly and efficiently. If the Forest Service was to prohibit the use of fixed anchors, the amount of casualties due to climbing on Forest Service land would drastically increase.

Up until recently, the use of fixed anchors was not being threatened by the Forest Service. It would be extremely obstructive to create and enforce a new policy banning fixed anchors when federal agencies have allowed, managed, and authorized fixed anchors for decades. Existing policies are already in place that permit the use of fixed anchors. There are already established strategies for maintaining and authorizing the use of fixed anchors. These policies and maintenance strategies have been followed for decades. By banning the use of fixed anchors, the Forest Service greatly impedes the routine safety maintenance of these anchors. If people are unexpectedly forced to alter their plans on a certain route, a fixed anchor might be a life saving tool. If that tool is not preserved appropriately, it could cost people their lives.

Additionally, there is no realistic way that limiting the establishment of new routes to "existing climbing opportunities" on non-wilderness land will be easily or casually enforceable. In fact, it will likely be unenforceable. It will create extreme confusion between land managers and climbers. It will make the relationship between land managers and climbers deteriorate further. Unless scientific evidence determines otherwise, non-wilderness related climbing policies should maintain the ability to install new fixed anchors when necessary.

Lastly, banning the use of fixed anchors will erase much of America's rich climbing legacy. The remote wilderness areas where fixed anchors are most crucial are incredibly meaningful to generations of climbers. We have put blood, sweat, and tears, into ourselves, these places, and our relationships with them. Don't force us to change how we interact with them. There is no reason to make climbing more inherently dangerous.