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Comments: This comment is in response to policies drafted by the NPS and USFS that would classify fixed climbing anchors as prohibited installations in Wilderness areas.

While I hope others have described the importance of fixed climbing anchors (and the maintenance/repair of fixed anchors) in facilitating safe and sustainable climbing practices I'd like to discuss why maintaining access to climbing is important.

As a physical therapist who has spent most of my career working for non-for-profit systems and treating patients that reflect the diversity of health statuses of our country, I see every day how important access to recreational opportunities can be. A large barrier to exercise for many is enjoyment and fulfillment, and for a growing number of people, climbing clicks in ways that other forms of exercise don't.

In addition to promoting physical health, climbing offers a host of other benefits. Outdoor recreation connects people to the environment in which they live, leading to greater appreciation and advocacy for these areas. Climbing builds skills and attributes that are readily transferable to a career or other aspects of one's life such as problem solving, decision making, risk assessment, and discipline. Climbing provides community, and often for marginalized groups or individuals.

While prohibiting fixed anchors would not stop all climbing, it would certainly decrease the safety and sustainability of climbing. If practiced thoughtfully, climbing can help people and the environment thrive, and any legislation that would create barriers to these safe and sustainable practices should not be passed.