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Comments: I am writing today to provide feedback on the proposed rules on managing fixed anchors within USFS wilderness. Wilderness climbing has taken place for decades on Forest Service land, proving that it is an activity on par with other recreational pursuits within these areas. This activity has included the replacement and maintenance of fixed anchors such as bolts during this period, so I find this current proposal concerning.

Climbing is a legitimate pursuit, and occasional use of fixed anchors is necessary for safety. Leaving gear to bail off a climb due to unsafe conditions would violate these rules, and creates a serious safety hazard for parties on any route. Additionally, restricting the ability of climbers to update and replace old and unsafe hardware would severely impact the safety of climbers on routes that currently have fixed gear. Most of this gear will likely remain in situ, and climbers on said routes will face serious danger where existing dangerous anchors cannot be updated for safe passage. Forcing climbers in the field to worry about these regulations while making life-or-death decisions is a recipe for disaster. Regulations should reflect these realities, and while oversight of climbing activity is welcome and necessary, distinctions should be drawn for existing and replacement hardware, as well as impromptu gear necessary for exploration of wilderness areas.