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Title:

Comments: Dear United States Forest Service,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the potential restrictions on the establishment of new climbing routes, particularly those that involve the use of fixed anchors, on non-Wilderness lands managed by the USFS. Climbing is not only a sport but also a cultural activity that connects millions of Americans with their natural heritage, fosters a deep appreciation for our public lands, and drives forward the progression of climbing as a sport.

The proposal to restrict the establishment of new routes by confining them to "existing climbing opportunities" is both unenforceable and likely to sow confusion among climbers and land managers alike. The dynamic nature of climbing and route development requires a flexible and nuanced approach, one that recognizes the evolving nature of the sport and the diverse landscapes under USFS stewardship.

It is essential that non-Wilderness climbing management policies maintain the opportunity for the establishment of new anchors, allowing for the organic growth and evolution of climbing. Such policies should only impose restrictions on climbing to protect significant cultural and natural resources, and these determinations should be made through careful and comprehensive analyses that involve stakeholder engagement, including the climbing community.

Climbing, with its rich history and cultural significance, represents a unique form of engagement with our natural world. The establishment of new routes is a core aspect of the climbing experience, offering not only recreational opportunities but also fostering innovation and progression within the sport. Fixed anchors are an integral part of this process, ensuring the safety of climbers as they explore and develop new routes.

The establishment of new routes and the use of fixed anchors are practices that have been carried out responsibly by the climbing community for decades, with a demonstrated commitment to minimizing environmental impact and preserving the integrity of the landscapes we cherish. Restrictive policies that hamper the ability to establish new routes risk stifling this tradition of responsible stewardship and innovation.

I urge the United States Forest Service to consider the cultural and recreational importance of climbing in its policy decisions. Non-Wilderness climbing management should continue to support the thoughtful and responsible establishment of new routes, including the use of fixed anchors, to ensure that climbing can continue to thrive as a vibrant and dynamic aspect of America's outdoor culture.

Thank you for your consideration of these important issues. I look forward to seeing policies that reflect the values and needs of the climbing community while safeguarding our natural and cultural resources for future generations.

Sincerely,

Albert