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Comments: I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed guidance on the management of climbing in Wilderness. Fixed anchors have been permitted and used in wilderness areas since before the Wilderness Act of 1964. Climbers have used fixed anchors in wilderness areas for decades as a means to safely navigate vertical terrain. Climbers are visitors like anyone else who pass through wilderness whose impacts are minimal.

The NPS/USFS proposals are highly unpopular with climbers who play a significant role in the outdoor community, a community which not only has historically supported conservation initiatives such as wilderness designations but has been a leader in the preservation of the environment. Climbers are one of the lowest impact user groups of wilderness around. The practice of climbing inherently connects people to the environment on an unusually intimate level. I am concerned that these proposals will make it more difficult to gain support of climbers and the outdoor community in the future.

Collaboration in this process is critical to maintain the safety inherent in fixed anchor placement for climbers. I strongly support agency officials to restart the collaboration process that was demonstrated in 2018 in Tucson, AZ now by chartering a joint DOI- USDA FACA Committee to develop and implement more viable and equitable guidance on the management of fixed anchors in Wilderness.

Sincerely,

Hilary Harris

Access Fund Board of Directors, President