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Comments: I am writing to oppose the new policy that would prohibit fixed anchors in wilderness areas. If implemented as written these policies could threaten safe, responsible wilderness area use. Fixed anchors are a key part of safe climbing, and in many instances are the only way to safely navigate wilderness terrain. Current management practices may not be perfect, but climbers and land managers have been able to use them as a basis for responsible recreation and sustainable land use.

It is important to note that these policies overturn decades of precedent, and would completely upend long-held recreation practices. They also inject uncertainty. It would be far better to pursue area-specific rulemaking than to implement a blanket ban.

A key part of climbing safely is knowing what to expect when you start up from the ground. If climbers are unsure whether they will encounter fixed anchors--even on long established routes--there is a serious risk to safety.

This is a critical issue for climbers and one which can seriously impact a user group that desperately loves to recreate in the wilderness.

I do not want to represent that climbers are a perfect use group, or that individual anchor decisions have always been made wisely. But, climbers have a track record of working with land managers to steward our wild spaces well, and of developing innovative, community first means of governance.

I implore the NPS to reconsider these policies and to work with climber advocacy groups to develop policies that keep users safe, achieve intended management outcomes and steward the rich heritage of climbing in our wild spaces.

This is a matter of critical importance to a wonderful, joyful pursuit that means so much to millions in America.