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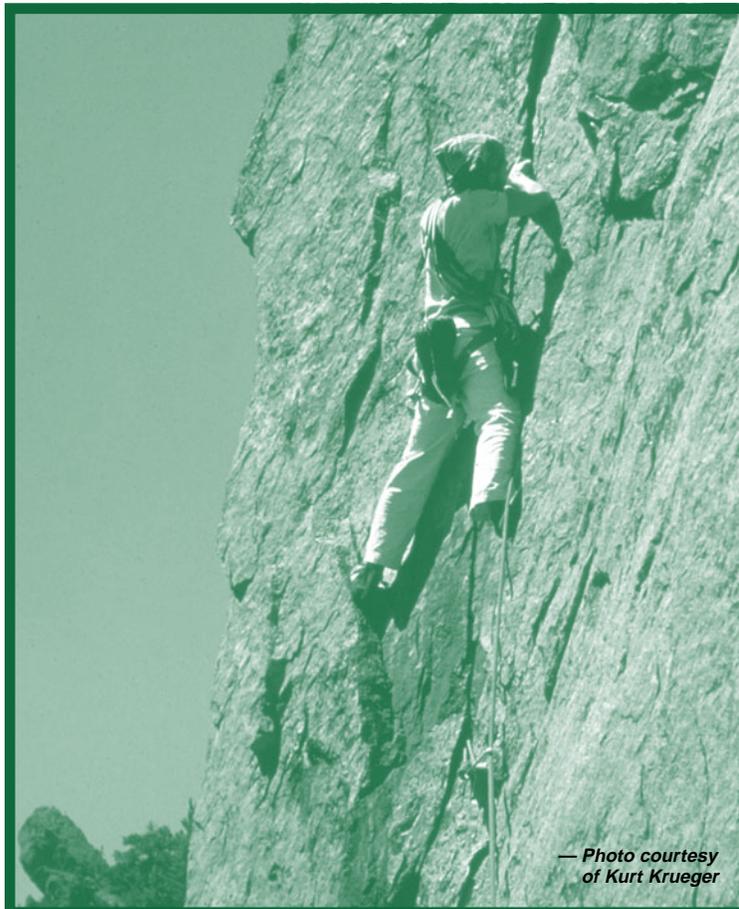
Forest Service

**Technology &  
Development  
Program**

2300 Recreation  
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# Fixed Anchors in the Wilderness



— Photo courtesy  
of Kurt Krueger

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**USDA Forest Service  
Technology and Development Program  
Missoula, MT**

**OEO2A58—Leave No Trace Recreation Climbing Equipment  
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## Introduction

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**A**llowing fixed anchors, expansion bolts, and hangers in designated wilderness is controversial. Advocates of fixed anchors believe the anchors are essential for safety. Opponents of fixed anchors in wilderness base their argument in the statutory language of the Wilderness Act of 1964, which prohibits “installations” for other than administrative purposes. These opponents consider fixed anchors to be prohibited installations.

The Missoula Technology and Development Center (MTDC) was asked to conduct a market search of existing climbing hardware to find a feasible substitute for fixed anchors, or to develop a new piece of equipment that would eliminate the need for fixed anchors.

The Center found no substitute that could do the job as safely or effectively as fixed anchors. The rock climbing community and industry are also searching for alternative climbing equipment, so far without success. Development of a replacement product is best left to the private sector due to liability issues and the fact that climbing is a recreational—rather than an administrative—activity.

MTDC did find one product, the “Geartriever”, that would retrieve gear (such as slings and runners) that normally would be left behind.

The likelihood of finding a technical solution that would make fixed anchors obsolete is slim. The Center will continue to monitor the negotiated rulemaking on fixed anchors. We will also continue to look at new climbing gear.