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Comments: I am both a climber and a Forest Service employee. The goal of conservation in wilderness areas is extremely important to me, but as a life-long climber, safety is equally important.

I started climbing when I was 16 and have seen the sport change immensely since then. When I started climbing, nobody knew what it was. In the last decade, the expansion of the sport has been mind blowing. Our climbing areas are overwhelmed with climbers, and many of them are inexperienced. Requiring a thorough review of bolt installations would, in practice, halt the replacement of old hardware and new bolt installations that will create safer climbs. I know first-hand that new climbers think they are more experienced than they are (I sure did when I was a teem). The absence of bolts or presence of old bolts that have not been replaced would not deter inexperienced climbers; it would just mean more accidents and increased demand on the Search and Rescue system.

Furthermore, bolts on a rock face is different than other forms of recreation banned from wildnerness areas. Installing bolts is done without motorized or mechanized equipment. Stretching this to argue that bikes or ATVs/heli drops for hunters should also be allowed is, in my opinion, inappropriate. The only adverse affect of a bolt is that it might shine differently in the light. Bikes would change the experience of hiking in wilderness areas due to trail flow impacts, and motorized access would change the experience as a whole due to the noise impacts.

The climbing community I know is very aware of its impacts and accountable for the safety of its members. We have been maintaining hardware and pushing for higher safety standards without causing additional adverse impacts all on our own. Forcing regulation would only slow the process, create more red tape for those putting in the hard work to keep our sport safe, and ultimately, lead to more accidents and deaths.