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Comments: Hello,

I am writing to voice support for climbing access in wilderness, but against the idea that climbing anchors are "installations". Permanent climbing anchors are the best, most effective way to reduce human impact on wilderness. On climbing routes without permanent descent anchors, climbers frequently leave behind cord, webbing, or other materials (often referred to as 'tat') that are not permanent, but nonetheless remain a mark on the landscape, often more visible than two small bolts would be. These items are a necessity. In the event that climbers can't simply hike down a different way, something must be left behind. Tat tends to accumulate. The material sits at high elevations, exposed to the elements, and degrades quickly. As such, most climbers add their own before trusting the anchor. If that anchor was replaced with two stainless steel bolts, there's no reason to add tat. Two bolts can last for years, accommodating climbers without the need to leave behind more material. While I recognize that drilling holes into rock is an alteration, unless humans are excluded from wilderness altogether, it seems a minimal alteration.

To argue that a few bolts, often an inch or so across, hundreds of feet up rock faces are equivalent to a road, parking lot, buildings, etc. is nonsense. The impact of each is vastly different, and to require bolting projects to go through the same review process as these large-scale projects would effectively shut climbers out of wilderness. Climbers are some of the most fervent protectors of wilderness, because we understand the value of having wild places. The harder it becomes to visit and experience these places, the faster people will stop believing they are places worth protecting. You don't value something you don't understand.

Thanks very much for your consideration.