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Comments: I am writing as an experienced rock climber, who has climbed in wilderness areas including Linville Gorge, NC, and Yosemite National Park, going back 30 years. Although I have not placed fixed anchors or left behind fixed gear myself, I consider the option of using fixed anchors as essential to the safety of wilderness climbing. The reality is that there are already many such anchors in place, and these anchors have facilitated climbing in wilderness areas for decades. It would in fact be very dangerous for climbers at this juncture to impose a ban on bolts, especially, given that bolts have been used to establish many routes, and existing bolts need to be replaced occasionally -- especially if they have not been replaced in recent years -- in order to function safely as anchors. Moreover, prohibiting all new bolts will limit the creation of any new routes, which interferes with the access of climbers to the vertical wilderness. Climbers have historically been important supporters of wilderness protection and continue to be strong advocates. I encourage you to collaborate with the Access Fund and other organizations of climbers to develop mutually acceptable plans for managing the potential impacts of climbing.

Additionally, I believe that non-wilderness climbing management policy should maintain opportunities for new anchors unless and until analyses determine climbing should be restricted to protect cultural and natural resources.