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Comments: I started scrambling in the early 1960s, and by 1973 was climbing with a rope. I lived and climbed in National Park areas and climbed in wilderness areas for extended periods during the late 1970s and early 1980s. I put up many new routes, and I'm surely responsible for some of the old bolts that now need replacing. I'm also responsible for some of the habitat damage done back when we were the only people out there and it didn't think it mattered. Now, however, things have changed. All over the country, our public lands are being overrun by people just like me, and despite how much we try, collectively we are creating considerable habitat damage (if by no other means than our cumulative footprints trampling plants and our continual presence scaring birds and animals away).

I hung up my climbing boots some years ago, but I still spend considerable time on our shared public lands. I also spend considerable time encouraging people to experience the lands around my home and facilitating their experience. In doing that, I've seen routes that I opened become overused use-trails and the accompanying habitat damage expand. Trails that I opened with hikers in mind are now being used by equestrians, and the environmental damage is expanding exponentially as a result.

It has become clear to me that protecting Wilderness areas will only be possible if (1) we build sustainable trails and restrict most travel to those trails, or (2) we remove "points" of interest so that people can't focus on specific areas. Eliminating well known points of interest is not possible, but we can restrict the proliferation of such attractions. By establishing a route (bolted or not), we attract people to a specific point. How do we manage use at that point in Wilderness? Maybe there are enough routes and some places need to be left alone to remain as untrammelled Wilderness.

I urge the Park Service to seriously consider restricting the proliferation of climbing routes in Wilderness areas, at least those routes that require fixed installations such as bolted anchors and belay stations. It might be best for Wilderness protection to let my old bolts fade away into climbing history and restore the Wilderness values of the land.

Hikers want to trample, climbers want to bolt, bikers want to ride, equestrians want to ride, OHVs want to drive, fire managers want to saw, and developers want to develop. Where do we stop, and what is to become of Wilderness? With the ever increasing pressure on our shared public lands, we need to think beyond today and tomorrow when we consider landscape protection -- we need to think about the next 1,000 years, and in doing so, perhaps the only answer is to restrain our entry into those areas. Short of that, restricting the use of bolts is a good start.