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Comments: The benefits of climbing access for the health and stewardship of a natural area far outweigh the extremely minimal and low-profile impacts that fixed climbing anchors (a few bolts, hangers, rappel rings) have on the land. That being the case, the USFS should strive to make our wilderness and non-wilderness forests inviting for climbers so that they might benefit from the care and advocacy such a population brings.

Bolts and bolted anchors are essential to climbing safety and are already implemented sparingly and only when necessary. The climbing community is self-policing on this issue. If the USFS makes it harder to install and maintain such protection, they will undoubtedly lose climber traffic to these areas and could potentially risk inexperienced climbers using rusted or otherwise unusable bolts and anchors.

The climbing community tends to value respect, safety, and concern for the environment. For evidence of this, take a look around the climbing area descriptions on the Mountain Project website. You will find banners warning readers where there may be closures (for trail maintenance, raptor nesting, hunting season, etc.). You will also see admonitions about noise levels/parking/etc. to keep good relations with the locals. In general, climbers spend a lot of time outdoors and so learn to respect and care for nature as a result. Sign up for emails from climbing organizations like the Access Fund or the Southeastern Climbers Coalition and you will receive an inbox full of volunteer opportunities for trail maintenance and cleanup days at climbing areas. You'll see similar opportunities posted on the bulletin board in your local climbing gym.

While it would be naive to claim that climbers are universally conscientious, the overwhelming majority tend towards such decency, and a minority will even take it upon themselves to champion local conservation efforts. People protect what they love, and they best learn to love nature by spending time in it. If outdoor recreation helps people interface with nature, then conservationists should take a special interest in the promotion of outdoor recreation.

A common interest in the health and future enjoyment of America's remaining natural places means we are looking at an opportunity to collaborate. Rather than restricting the installation and maintenance of fixed anchors, the USFS should promote the sparing and respectful use of such hardware so that they might gain an ally in a like-minded group.