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Comments: I have been climbing and guiding in National Parks across the US for over 15 years and hold a Leave No Trace Master Educator certificate. I believe that preservation of the wilderness and natural environment is critical. It has become apparent that in order to attract attention and funding for the preservation of the wild lands we need people to support the cause. The best way for people to support the cause and inspire them to fight for the wilderness and donate to the conservation funds is to allow them life changing experiences in the mountains. In the last decade rock climbing has become one of the most rapidly growing outdoor recreation activities and provides a powerful experience for individuals by allowing them to be more vulnerable to nature than most have ever felt before.

Of course, bolts are not required for rock climbing to occur. I work full time as a rock climbing guide in Yosemite National Park where the deepest roots of North American rock climbing start. In Yosemite anybody is allowed to place bolts and there is almost never an issue with this. There are several reasons for this. First of all, all bolts must be hand drilled in Wilderness areas. Due to the modern bolt standards this requires drilling a hole of about 0.93 cubic inches vs the 0.25 cubic inches the pioneers had to drill. It is very difficult to hand drill bolts and therefore all new holes are drilled with great scrutiny. Additionally, the climbing community has a long history of self policing when it comes to bolt placement. Historically people would remove bolts that were placed "unethically." This historic precedent has led to greater scrutiny with initial bolt placement and the so called "bolt wars" are largely extinct with the exception of some egomaniacs in Tensleep, WY where there was no historical climbing community.

Due to the vast differences of topography, geology, and user demographics amongst the many national forests it only makes sense for each district to set their own climbing policy. A blanket ban on new bolts will result in more litter from nylon slings and the destruction of vegetation including trees from repelling or lowering off. This of course doesn't even come close to the damage caused by rescue and body recovery missions resulting from inadequate protection. I would strongly encourage the NFS to resist a highly controversial blanket ban and allow the individual land management districts to continue to manage their own tenures. If it ain't broke, don't fix it.