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Comments: Hello!

I think the upcoming change in the view on fixed gear is heavy-handed. As a big fan of the wilderness act, I understand the spirit of this proposal. However, a blanket change from above is generally unnecessary, as the vast majority of climbing areas are already managed through agreements between local climbers and whatever land managers are in charge of the particular wilderness area. Look to sandstone climbing areas such as Indian Creek or Zion National Park, where a mix of local community ethics and government regulation ensures the resource is used sustainably. After rain, climbers avoid climbing until rock has dried so that it isn't damaged by any protection placed in compromised. In the Spring, when raptors nest in the cliffs we climb on, raptor closures declared by the BLM is respected, and well-informed climbers stay on uninhabited walls. Across the country, each area has a blend of rules written and unwritten that best suit the local environment to ensure climbing is enjoyed responsibly and sustainably. It would be impossible to create a blanket set of rules that can fit climbing in all its varied styles and disciplines and ecosystems.

In addition, these mandates would be placed on agencies that are already struggling to meet the demands of their respective tracts of wilderness with the resources they have currently. This mandate would only put more stress on. The process necessary to inspect and analyze each piece of fixed protection would take money and people away from much more pertinent issues and be absolutely impossible to do efficiently, correctly, and universally, leading to a job done poorly or one that is incomplete.

These pieces of gear that are being left in rock are necessary for the sport to be pursued safely, and they are not being placed thoughtlessly. Putting a barrier on the installation and maintenance of them would lead to wilderness climbing become a much more dangerous undertaking, and needlessly so. On a recent climbing trip in Canyonlands National Park--where a full bolting ban is already in place-- I came across some of the most unnerving anchors I've seen in my nearly decade-long climbing career. In some cases, this was due to the somewhat brittle nature of the rock they were in, but I frequently lamented the ease with which an anchor could be made safer, more maintainable, and even lower impact with the addition of a single steel bolt! If this trend were to become common across all climbing areas and not just the remote desert towers I was on, climbing-related accidents would certainly become more frequent.