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Comments: As someone who dearly values our national parks and wilderness areas, I can attest to the reckless nature of many local climbing groups and the continued defacing of our natural environment through unlawful bolting.

With respect to aesthetics, bolts are an eyesore and are noticed by the general hiking public. These are not invisible installations that go unnoticed.

With respect to Wilderness, many of us grew up with a conceptual idea of what Wilderness means, especially as it relates to the federal Act. Many sport climbers have steadily chipped away at the Act by disregarding federal law, as bolts are considered prohibited installations in designated wilderness areas. The fact that these climbers have spent decades taking advantage of a lack of enforcement does not justify a complete abandonment of federal law, nor does it justify a carve out. Just because a coalition has adopted the "ask for forgiveness, not for permission" mantra does not mean that the law should all of the sudden be ignored or turned upside down.

Sport climbing has exploded in popularity, and with that comes a purported scarcity of secluded crags. Since everyone wants to climb in their "hidden" spots, route development has increased exponentially in some of the more remote areas. The presence of bolts simply attracts more climbers to these spots until the original group declares the crag too popular and goes to bolt another area, to repeat this process indefinitely.

Climbing groups will bemoan bolting regs by claiming that these regulations threaten safety, but we know that climbers have access to front country rock with existing, authorized bolting, and to areas where traditional climbing is safe. Bolting regulations do not amount to a "ban on wilderness climbing" for similar reasons: there are plenty of wilderness climbing areas where climbers can ascend safely without permanently defacing the natural environment.

In New Hampshire, there is a trail in the White Mountain National Forest called the Huntington Ravine Trail, that is considered a difficult but non-technical scramble in dry summer conditions. Hypothetically, if someone hiked this trail and decided to install permanent rebar in the steepest spots in the name of "safety", they would be immediately investigated and likely charged under 36 CFR 261.9. Not only that, they'd also be told "there are others areas you can hike without needing to install rebar". Why should bolting be any more acceptable?

Federal land managers should continue to treat fixed anchors as installations as per the Wilderness Act. If bolts are to be accepted in a limited form, they should at least have to undergo MRAs as a minimum requirement.