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Comments: Hand drilled fixed anchors and bolts should be allowed in Wilderness, as they have been since the Wilderness Act was passed--they are not "prohibited installations." This has been well managed by Wilderness areas. Bolts and other fixed anchors in Wilderness predate the Wilderness Act and allow for safe, low impact recreation on cliffs and crags.

Prohibiting new anchors will cause delays and barriers to maintenance of existing routes which will impact the safety of climbers. One relatively small rockfall can permanently alter a critical rappel or belay station, even on a classic, popular route. To maintain routes and keep climbers safe, climbers need to be able to take swift action and exercise good judgment, rather than worrying about the penalties if they alter an existing dangerous anchor.

Bolted fixed anchors are essential for safety. Bolts allow climbers to recreate most safely without outsized impact to natural features or plants. They last longer and are more reliable than "clean" gear in many circumstances, especially for rappels.

Not only are they safer for people, but they are safer for the landscape. A good metaphor would be how maintained trail features and signs in Wilderness minimize impact to vegetation and soil off-trail and prevent visitors from getting lost. Some "clean" anchors, like pitons or slings around trees, actually degrade rock and can damage trees, and are significantly more dangerous. "Clean" anchors are often more visible from the ground, as a rappel with "clean gear" like cams or stoppers leaves behind brightly colored nylon slings that degrade and become Wilderness trash. Bolted fixed anchors are longer-lasting, safer, lower impact on resources, harder to spot for non-climbers, and leave less trash.

Although we are a relatively small user group, climbing is an ancient practice that predates the Wilderness Act and helps humans explore and connect to the beauty and spirituality of Wilderness--Just look at the incredible Enclosure in the Teton Range. Modern climbers are possibly the last to "explore" new areas in Wilderness, and those explorations are often inspiring for climbers and non-climbers alike. A ban on fixed anchors or new fixed anchors prevents low-impact, human-powered recreation. It limits new explorations and achievements and threatens past ones. Climbing has always been as valid a way to travel through Wilderness as hiking or horseback riding.

In addition, this blanket prohibition of "new routes" is unenforceable and will cause confusion among land managers and climbers.