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Comments: To Whom it may concern.

I have been climbing for over 25 years. Rock climbing is my favorite sport and/or pastime, depending upon your viewpoint. I love spending time in the mountains and cliffs, valleys, forests, and deserts that make up the US Wilderness Areas.

Whereas I understand that hundreds of bolts covering a rock face is not an ideal situation for wilderness and wilderness user groups, a set of anchor bolts is not particularly intrusive. Plus, anchor bolts are less visible (and much safer) than a bunch of ratty old slings wrapped around a tree.

During my many experiences in the wilderness I have been caught out by darkness, bad weather and pure ineptitude. Getting "off-route" is easily accomplished when the route is not easily followed. In our case, a set of bolts saved my life and the life of my friend. An unforecasted lightning storm approached rapidly and caught us most of the way up a rock-face. If not for the bolts, which allowed us to make a hasty retreat, we would certainly have perished.

I believe climbers need to be monitored like any other user group. We can self-police but at the same time expect some to not play by the rules. If you take away anchor bolts, some climbers will simply defy the rules and find other ways to continue climbing in the wilderness, whereas the rest of us will be left with uncertainty and much reduced safety.

Surely there must be a compromise position for both sides, plus other user groups.

Thank you.

Norm Maultsaid

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