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Comments: Fixed anchors in climbing are often essential for climber safety. When there are no natural crack systems, bolts are necessary to ensure safe passage. Due to both longstanding ethical norms, and simple effort and logistical considerations, bolts are typically only placed when absolutely necessary, especially in remote settings such as wilderness areas. As such, they're typically in high, remote settings where they're not readily visible, and won't be noticed by wilderness/park users aside from the climbers utilizing them. Furthermore, they are often used as a last resort to descend safely from routes. They should, therefore, not be considered prohibited installations.

If fixed anchors were to be banned, due to the implications for safety and accessibility, climbing would cease to be recognized as a legitimate use of parks and wilderness areas. This flies in the face of the current precedent up to this point, where climbing has always been considered a legitimate use. In fact, many parks and wilderness areas have rich histories of climbing, which current climbers are able to experience and participate in by climbing these same routes. Without maintenance of fixed anchors, many such routes would become unclimbable.

The argument that only fixed anchors are prohibited, not climbing itself, fails to recognize the repercussions under such regulation. In this case, the climbers that chose to continue to participate in climbing in areas where fixed anchors were banned would subject themselves to elevated risk, and consequently climbing related accidents and fatalities would likely increase.

Climbers have typically been strong advocates of stewardship as a community. The ethics that have guided the sport have focused on minimizing fixed anchors and maximizing sustainability. In many cases they have voluntarily avoided certain areas because of wildlife, or cultural resources. I believe climbers would be happy to comply with a reasonable regulatory system (e.g., permits for route locations, installations, etc.). Many parks have already successfully used such systems. Overarching guidance stating that new route development must occur in existing climbing areas and that essential safety equipment is considered a fixed installation is an overstep that will only reduce climber safety and increase conflict.