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Comments: The new draft proposal prohibiting fixed anchors on climbing routes in wilderness areas is dangerous and unreasonable and is contradicted by many other practices that will remain untouched.

The proposal directly threatens the safety of climbers in wilderness areas. These fixed anchors are a critical safety mechanism in backcountry wilderness climbing. Removing them will directly threaten the safety of climbers, even on so-called classic 'easy' routes. We already prohibit the use of electric drills to place bolts in wilderness areas. As someone who has drilled and placed bolts by hand, I can tell you that prohibition alone will naturally limit the indiscriminate use of bolts. It is a tiring and time consuming business to place a bolt by hand and no one will do it unless absolutely necessary.

The bolts amount to an affordance that allows climbers to see parts of the backcountry in a way that does not directly affect their experience of the wilderness. I have been backpacking and climbing in the Popo Agie and Bridger Wilderness areas in the Wind River Range in Wyoming for over 30 years, and I have used many similar affordances such as trail steps and bridges over creeks and rivers.

These affordances allow users to experience the backcountry in a safer way than if they were not there. A raging early-season creek in the Winds is a dangerous thing, and the bridges keep injury and death to a minimum.

By the implicit logic of this draft proposal, all of these bridges and trail improvements should be removed as well. I can say with certainty that removing bridges on these trails would be danger to users of the wilderness areas and increase the likelihood of rescue and body removal operations.

The logic for the retention of the current bolting policy is similar. Removal and prohibition will directly affect the safety of the users and increase the probability of damaging rescue operations. The current policy is a naturally limiting one - the difficulty of placing bolts by hand keeps their use to a minimum. I strongly disagree with the proposed changes and hope that reason will prevail and the current policy is kept intact.