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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I grew up climbing in the Wasatch-Cache National Forest.

I grew up feeling the wind in my hair on a rocky face, clipping bolts and setting up top ropes for my friends below. I grew up hiking the forest and feeling the air and appreciating nature through the scope of granite and limestone faces and crags.

But I also grew up an environmentalist. I grew up knowing that bolts were not always placed safely or with the environment in mind. I also know that it has gotten better, and that to ban bolts in wilderness areas is to take away safety from climbers and access for many different groups to a new form of recreation.

Here's what I'll tell you. I grew up climbing, it is forever and irreversibly a part of my life. I grew up dreaming of climbing in the wilderness and experiencing it in solitude and knowing that climbing and I had a love affair that would never end. I don't think bolts and anchors taint this landscape. There is much worse going on. There are ugly toll roads and scars to our public lands, pollution and too many people hiking the trails and creating erosion of a landscape.

There are guardrails on Angel's landing. Should we take those away? They make a beautiful place accessible and keep people safe, but also scar the beauty of the rock formation. I don't think we should.

Here's what I'll say. Firstly, safety. Safety should always and forever be a priority of the forest service. Climbing is inherently unsafe, but stripping bolts and prohibiting bolt replacement efforts poses a serious risk to our lives. Secondly, this is a way to experience the outdoors for many. For me, I grew up dreaming of rock faces all over and now I may never get to touch them because of this. This is my way of experiencing and appreciating nature. Because I learned to clip bolts, I now help the climbers alliance clean graffiti, maintain trails, and educate the public about erosion and best practice in the wilderness. Taking that away is taking it away from a new generation.

Thirdly, access for marginalized communities. Many BIPOC groups and guiding groups that take groups who have historically had outdoor activities restricted and unavailable to them have began to go climbing. These bolts are essential to increase access and keep people safe. Trad is less impactful on the environment, but less safe for first time climbers and expensive. For those who come from BIPOC backgrounds or have less money in general, safe maintained bolts allow them to experience climbing without massive expense and many social barriers that they face in the struggle for access to recreation.

I am a climber, and I am an environmentalist, and I truly believe that the bolt prohibition is irresponsible for safety. Of course, MRA's may be conducted with funding, but that funding is scarce. Let's work with climbers, most of whom care and encourage environmental protection to ensure best practice when placing bolts. Let's educate instead of restricting. Climbers have educated, worked hard, and advocated for our wild lands for decades, I hope you will advocate in conjunction with us in order to come to a safe and equitable solution that will protect climbing and our wild lands.

Forest service and NPS, I appreciate everything you have done for our wild lands. I hope you will make the right choice on this and support our wild lands now and forever in the form of climbing.

Adalayde Scott,

Environmental Activist and Climber