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Comments: Dear Forest Service,

I have been a trad climber for over 20 years, and have in the last 5 years started to enjoy sport climbing as well. What I love about climbing, above all else, is the intimate relationship I develop with the rock. Before climbing I would still hike in nature and enjoy the views but I never thought twice about every crack, every ledge, or the texture of the stone. Once I started climbing I realized these rocks have a personality that extends throughout the whole route. It helped me slow down and appreciate the details of nature as much as I was appreciating the grandness of it. I hope to teach this to my children some day.

As a trad climber I would occasionally encounter a bolt, usually placed in a tricky part of the climb where there was no natural protection. These were welcome, even if they were a bit older and rusty, because I knew someone placed them there deliberately to make the climb safe for me. Whenever I see a shiny, new bolt, I silently thank the individual who took their precious time to rebolt the route. Every year I contribute to ASCA's rebolting initiative, since I cannot do it myself, but I personally appreciate every new bolt I see.

Bolted anchors are a godsend as well! On many climbs I've been tired, taking longer to reach the top than I expected, and being able to rappel down instead of doing a long hike made a big difference to my safety. As a trad climber, there is no way for me to escape a difficult climb without leaving my gear behind, unless there are rappel bolts and rings set up. I specifically look for these climbs when I am reading my guidebook and trying to 'push the grade' (do a harder climb), because it feels much safer to attempt something knowing that others have prepared it for you to descend, if you must.

I was very disappointed to hear that rebolting routes in the future may require permission from the Forest Service. Any additional friction that our rebolting heroes have to go through will lower the number of old bolts that get replaced. This will, over time, affect my safety and others. I see no reason why old bolts should be allowed to remain, unless it is to discourage climbers. Discouraging climbers would be discouraging nature lovers and people who respect and take care of our natural resource more than the average citizen. I don't think that's what the Forest Service wants to accomplish.

I'm a big fan of new routes as well, although I understand the need to balance those with other uses of the land. Requiring permission for new routes probably makes sense. I don't understand, however, why an exact set of bolts or locations needs to be requested ahead of time. That's not how climbing works: you do the route, and as you go, you figure out what is the *minimum* number of bolts you need to be safe. Anyone creating a new route is an advanced climber, and they will generally follow this guideline.

Please, please reconsider these rules. They will directly go against the mission of the Forest Service to protect our lands so that future generations can enjoy them.