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Comments: Before I started rock climbing in 2007, I had a vague image of climbers as loners, strange people at the fringes of society who didn't contribute much. To my surprise, I discovered that the climbing community is full of people from all walks of life-- doctors, lawyers, restaurant workers, students, artists, you name it. We all get into it for different reasons, but I've discovered that a great many of us have one thing in common: a deep love and respect for our wilderness areas. The climbing community has a long history of contributing to wilderness stewardship, including graffiti and litter removal, trail maintenance, and erosion control work. It only makes sense; of course we want to preserve the areas that bring us joy.

For me, rock climbing has been a way to spend time in the outdoors-- I've climbed all over Arizona, Utah, Texas and New Mexico, and even brought gear to do some climbing when I went to a wedding in Germany. In addition to the physical skills, it's taught me how to stay focused in the face of fear, how to trust and be worthy of trust, and how to persevere when things are tremendously challenging. I'm so grateful to have had the opportunity to learn these lessons in some of the most beautiful and peaceful areas I've ever seen, and it breaks my heart to think that access might be curtailed. Restricting climbing to non-wilderness areas will force large numbers of climbers into smaller areas, increasing their impact while lessening the experience.

Rock climbing is a long-established and, if you consult websites such as that of the Coronado National Forest, Yosemite National Park, and Rocky Mountain National park, a well accepted and even celebrated outdoor activity. The fixed anchors that are placed are absolutely essential safety gear that have been allowed for decades; there are already policies in place that regulate their placement, and adding new policies that prohibit their placement or maintenance is not only unreasonable but will make thousands of climbers less safe. Maintenance of anchors should be prioritized, and policies should not stand in the way of this. Moreover, blanket policies at the federal level about maintenance of existing routes and the establishment of new routes are insensitive to local conditions and customs; local land managers, working in concert with local interest groups, are the people best qualified to make decisions about how to protect local cultural and natural resources while preserving recreational opportunities.