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Organization:

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Comments: To whom it may concern,

Problems prohibiting bolts in wilderness climbing areas.

Safety: Bolts provide a safe means of ascent and descent when traditional protection is not readily available (no breaks in the rock face, cracks, etc.). A prohibition of bolts will likely result in: 1. Climbers ascending a rock face only to realize that the info in their guidebook or guidebook app is no longer relevant because bolts have been chopped. Unfortunately, they are already 10 feet up, maybe 20, and a fall from there could result in a full scale rescue putting SAR members at elevated risks and more frequently. 2. Even worse, they've reached the top out on a traditional route where gear has been placed to ascent. However on this route, at the top, there has never been opportunity for natural anchors or gear anchors so bolts were placed for the descent, but these bolts were chopped due to a prohibition. The climber is now stranded at the top with no means of descent and now requires a rescue putting rescue teams at unnecessary risk. 3. Unruly and unprepared climbers in situations described in 1 and 2 may be inclined to carry bolts and drills for situations like these just in case, because risking a penalty is better than risking death or serious injury. This could result in the over drilling of rock formations and insufficient bolt placements by unskilled and inexperienced bolters. Currently many areas require permits for bolting which limits bolters to experienced climbers only. Drilling and placing bolts with little experience increases the possibility of failure and therefore injury and death.

Aesthetics: Some may argue that bolts may be eye sores but this couldn't be further from the truth. In order to see bolts you often need to be standing directly next to the rock face, looking up, and know exactly where to look. I've been on routes before where I know there was suppose to be a bolt near by but I could see until it's right in my face or even after I passed it. Many climbing areas require bolts to be painting prior to placing to match the color of the rock, a practice I am in full support of. A prohibition of bolts may stop some bolting but not all and the bolts that do get placed will likely not follow the rules of painting them to match. Sometimes, an alternative to bolts is natural anchoring, in which a climber wraps a tree or a boulder with a sling, often used for descent, which means the sling is left behind for other parties until it rots away. This method creates a much more visible eye sore and more pollution as the slings are often made from nylon or dyneema, and they don't last as long as bolts. With a prohibition of bolts this practice would become more common place in the wilderness.

Climbers are among the most active in the outdoor community when it comes to conservation and environmental cleanliness. They do not deserve to lose a key component to of their favorite outdoor activity and they do not deserve to be put at risk of fines or criminal charges for practices that ensure safe return to their friends and family at the end of a climbing trip.

Sincerely,

Matt Banneck

Climber of 9 Years

Eagle Scout

Outdoor Educator

Camp Counselor