**Central Cascades Wilderness Limited Entry System**

**Proposed Special Recreation Permit Fee**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

1. **What is the proposed fee?**
2. The Forest Service has proposed the following structure for the special use permit fee:

* No special use permit fees for youth 12 and under, though each person requires a limited entry reservation regardless of age.
* Day-use permit fee $3.00 per person (needed at 19 trailheads, 60 trailheads no fee)
* Overnight permit fee $5.00 per person, per night (needed at 79 trailheads)

The special recreation permit fee will be required from the Friday before Memorial Day to the last Friday in September in the Mt. Jefferson, Mt. Washington, and Three Sisters wilderness areas. The special recreation permits would be available through the Recreation.gov website.

**Q. Some wilderness trailheads require the payment of a $5-day use fee or displaying the Northwest Forest Pass, a Senior Pass, or other recreation pass; if I pay the special recreation permit fee, will I also have to have a recreation pass or pay the day use fee?**

A. No. Any visitor with a valid wilderness limited entry permit and who has paid the special recreation permit fee will not need to pay any trailhead fees. The permit will come with an attachment that can be left on the dashboard of the vehicle to show that no additional payment of fees is required.

1. **If I am volunteering with the Forest Service in a limited entry area would I need to make a reservation and pay the special recreation permit fee?**
2. No, while you are volunteering with the Forest Service under an approved volunteer agreement you would not need a reservation in the limited entry system or pay the special recreation permit fee.
3. **You said you might offer an annual pass option for people during your analysis of the limited entry system, why aren’t you offering that option?**
4. At this time, it doesn’t appear to be possible to offer an annual pass based on the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act. We are continuing to see if it is possible, but in the meantime, we really would like to hear from you about what benefits you wanted from the annual pass so we might be able to provide those benefits without offering an annual pass.

Please remember also that if we can offer an annual pass people would still be required to have a limited entry reservation. The annual pass would only cover the special recreation permit fee.

1. **Are you shutting people out of accessing public lands, especially wilderness?**
2. In terms of acreage, the Deschutes and Willamette National Forests manage approximately 3.2 million acres in total. The three wildernesses that will be affected by a limited entry system are approximately 437,000 acres. The limited entry system will affect public access for overnight use to 13% on the total acres of the two national forests. For day-use only 19 of 79 trailheads within the three wildernesses will be within the limited entry system.
3. **How many day-use and overnight use reservations will be reservable ahead of time and how many will be day before or day of?**
4. During the public comment period we are looking for the public’s feedback on what percentage limited entry reservations should be reservable and how many should be more spontaneous. Please let us know your thoughts.
5. **Are you pricing lower income people out of being able to access these wilderness areas on public land?**
6. The two forests are working with partner organizations and local libraries to develop a system that will allow people to have access to the limited entry areas without paying the special recreation permit fee.
7. **When would the fee be charged?**
8. The limited entry system would be in effect seasonally from the Friday before Memorial Day weekend to the last Friday in September. The special recreation permit fee would be charged only during the limited entry season.
9. **How would the fee money be used?**
10. Under Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act, 80 to 95 percent of the proposed special recreation permit fees would be invested in wilderness management activities, trail maintenance, visitor education and expanding work with volunteers and partners within the three wildernesses.
11. **What would happen if the fee is not approved?**
12. There would be multiple impacts if the fee was not approved.

* The two Forests would struggle making enough staff available to help visitors obtain the newly required wilderness limited entry permits.
* The two Forests would have limited capacity to educate visitors about Leave No Trace, the limited entry permit system, and what makes wilderness special.
* The two Forests would not be able to increase trail maintenance activities,
* There would be fewer wilderness rangers making contacts, educating visitors about Leave No Trace, enforcing the permit system, cleaning up after visitors (burying human waste, carrying out garbage, etc.).
* The two forests would be limited in growing volunteer and partnership programs, because our current staffing workloads are at capacity.

1. **What happens after the comment period is closed?**
2. The fee proposals, outreach efforts, and all the comments about the fee will be presented to two Resource Advisory Committees, one on the east side of the Cascades and one on the west side of the Cascades. The two Resource Advisory Committees will give the Forest Service recommendations on the special recreation permit. The Regional Forester for the Pacific Northwest, Region 6, will make the final decision regarding the special recreation permit fee structure.
3. **What is the difference between the special recreation permit fee and the reservation fee?**
4. The reservation fee covers the cost of the permit reservation system and phone system through Recreation.gov. The fees are set nationally and are not a part of this proposal.

* The special recreation permit fee is the subject of this proposal. Revenues from the special recreation permit fee will be retained by the Deschutes and Willamette National Forests to support the stewardship of these wilderness areas.

1. **How will I make a reservation in the limited entry reservation system?**
2. The special recreation permit fees will be paid at the time of making a reservation in the online limited entry system through Recreation.gov. ([www.Recreation.gov](http://www.Recreation.gov)), over the phone (1-877-444-6777), and at some Willamette and Deschutes National Forest offices and welcome centers.
3. **When will I have to start paying the fee?**
4. The limited entry system will begin on May 22, 2020. If approved, the special recreation permit fee will begin at that same time.
5. **What happens if there is a wildfire and I have a reservation in the limited entry system and have paid the special recreation permit fee for an area that is closed due to the wildfire?**
6. All your costs would be refunded.
7. **If I cancel my trip, will I be refunded?**
8. We have not determined the cancellation rules yet. We are interested in hearing the public’s ideas on how we should manage cancellations. We expect that if you cancel a trip in advance, the special recreation permit fee will be refunded; the reservation fee through Recreation. Gov is non-refundable. Refunds are less likely for cancellations shortly before a trip starts.
9. **Under what authority are you proposing to charge this special recreation permit fee?**
10. The special recreation permit fee is being proposed under the Special Recreation Permit authority of the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act.
11. **How can I comment on the proposed special recreation permit fee for these Central Cascade wildernesses?**
12. The comment period on the proposed special recreation permit fee will open on October 9, 2019 and closes on November 25, 2019.
    * Comments may be mailed to the Willamette National Forest, ATTN: Recreation Fees, 3106 Pierce Parkway, Suite D, Springfield, OR, 97477. Comments can also be submitted by email to WillametteRecFeeComments@usda.gov or dropped off at any Willamette or Deschutes National Forest office during business hours.