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First name: Kathy

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Proposed special recreation permit fee

November 15, 2019

To: WillametteRecFeeComments@usda.gov

Regarding: Proposed special recreation permit fee as a part of the limited entry system
in three Central Cascades wildernesses

The proposed Willamette/Deschutes National Forest "Special Recreation Permit Fee" would discriminate against U.S. Forest users with limited income. Forty percent of Deschutes County residents are considered low income. As an example of the user fee impact, let's say it is really hot out and I wanted to take my family of five (all over 12 years old) for a short afternoon hike and swim to Doris Lake - about two miles from the trailhead. The proposed fee schedule would cost my family \$25 -- \$5 in processing fees, \$15 for permits, and \$5 for a trailhead parking pass. This is assuming I had access to a computer to get the permits.

People with slower computers and/or unskilled in computer use are at a severe disadvantage to obtain a permit. Often times I have tried to get a permit for a campground or climbing area through Recreation.gov only to have my computer stall out or permits be gone before I can get on the site due to my computer/internet speed. Trying via the telephone is even less successful.

These additional fees and regulations could lessen the public's support for wilderness areas. The recreational public is tired of multiple permits and fees. In response the public may tend to ignore the proposed permit requirements, and resent any application of restrictions or enforcement.

It's my thinking a better approach to control use in an area is to limit the number of vehicles at the trailhead. If you want to collect more dollars to maintain trail and wilderness areas, increase the parking permit by a few dollars. It would be easier to enforce than a limited entry permit/fee system. It also encourages forest users to volunteer maintaining trails and structures as volunteers can obtain a free annual trailhead-parking pass after volunteering a given number of hours. This would provide an avenue for lower income forest users to obtain a free trailhead-parking pass.

Sincerely,

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cc: Holly Jewkes, Deschutes National Forest Supervisor - holly.jewkes@usda.gov
Senator Jeff Merkley - merkley.senate.gov