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To:

Willamette and Deschutes National Forests <WillametteRecFeeComments@usda.gov>

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Subject: Recreation Fees

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Dear Willamette and Deschutes National Forests,<br/><br/> Dear U.S. Forest =

Service:<br><br>I=E2=80=99m adamantly opposed to your proposal to charge pe=

ople for simply taking a walk in the in the Mount Jefferson, Mount Washingt=

on and Three Sisters Wilderness areas in the Oregon Cascades. <br> <br>Your=

proposed fee violates the intent and purpose of the Wilderness Act, includ=

ing protecting Wildernesses from commercialization and commodification. Wil=

derness areas belong to all of the American people. They are an irreplaceab=

le birthright to all our citizens, open to all the public and not just thos=

e wealthy enough to pay additional fees. All citizens across the nation alr=

eady own the Wildernesses in the National Wilderness Preservation System an=

d we have paid for them with our taxes. It is simply unjust to charge peopl=

e to visit the Wilderness they already own.<br><br>These fees would also be=

illegal under the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act and would exclu=

de the public from accessing and enjoying their public lands.<br><br>The Mo=

unt Jefferson, Mount Washington and Three Sisters Wilderness Areas already =

plan to require limited-access permits starting next year to prevent overcr=

owding and resource damage. While I support quotas to protect Wilderness ar=

eas from being over-run by people, I=E2=80=99m adamantly opposed to the fed=

eral government charging hikers a fee simply to take a walk in the Wilderne=

ss.<br><br>This fee proposal is unprecedented as the Willamette and Deschut=

es National Forests would be the first national forest in the U.S. to imple=

ment a fee system across three Wilderness areas that will charge for all ov=

ernight use plus day use at 19 trailheads across 450,000-plus acres of Wild=

erness.<br><br>The USFS is incorrectly claiming authority for charging such=

fees under a clause in the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA=

) that allows a fee for "specialized recreation uses" such as group activit=

ies, recreation events, and motorized recreational vehicles. Congress never=

meant that to apply to private individuals who are hiking, walking, horseb=

ack riding and camping in a completely undeveloped part of a national fores=

t.<br><br>Such fees would set a horrible national precedent for other Wilde=

rness areas around the country and I urge you to abandon your fee scheme fo=

r the Mount Jefferson, Mount Washington and Three Sisters Wilderness areas.=

<br><br>Thank you.<br><br>Sincerely,<br> Dita =C5=A0kali=C4=8D<br>Levsti=

kova ulica 4<br>Moravske Toplice, SI-078 9226<br>