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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Upcoming forest fees

To whom it may concern,

I am an avid hiker and trail runner. In the past 14 years living in Oregon I have been on much of Oregon's wilderness trails. It has always been a wonderful time to get out of town and explore some new area and then to take my kids into, what I consider, the best areas. As most who venture into the forest, I enjoy solitude. Over the years I have seen an increase in trail foot traffic. Though I may think this is annoying at times, I also understand that these lands are public lands and must be kept open to the us all. I may like solitude but I also appreciate that others are finding these places enjoyable. I am 100% opposed to limited access trailheads. What is the point of the forests if you can never get access to them. What is the point of having access if you have to plan 6 months ahead of time for a simple little hike into the high cascades where weather patterns, smoke and fire may prohibit you from going. Gone are the impromptu hike when the sun is actually shining and the mountains are revealed without being masked by clouds or smoke. Sure your rebuttal is to go and hike a different trail. To that I say, I simply don't want to hike a different trail at times. You say I should hike midweek. Just like you, most of us have jobs and for most we only have the weekends off. Getting midweek days off isn't usually possible. You say people are destroying the land. I say, a little wider trail is not destruction. You the Forest dept need to find different ways to collect money. These are public lands and need to be kept as such. It may make some upset to have people actually utilize them, but that is what they are for!!! If an area needs revitalized then you the forest service step in there and mark the area as off limits, as you currently do. Don't shut it all down.

Now as for special recreation permit fees. What is this? I am not opposed to fees, but it seems you are just continuing to give additional fees to make it more complicated for people. Are you just wanting to give out more tickets for people who fail to be aware of all the ridiculous changes you're making? Does a NW forest pass no longer do anything for us? If you need more money, then add to the NW forest pass fee or put a donation box at all trailheads. You would probably make more money from a donation box than from fees.

I wish your experts would have really gone out to ask informed public their opinion on these things. I figure you are about to create a much bigger nightmare in 2020. Now rather than putting money into upkeep of these areas, all the money will go to hiring new rangers who will be the new coppers out there trying to nab anyone trying to enjoy a beautiful day in the mountains. Heaven forbid this ever happens again!!!

I think that shares my opinion well enough, not that it matters to anyone.

Matt Knecht, Albany, Oregon