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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Permit fees

I'm writing to you to comment on the Special Recreation Permit Fees.

First, the sooner this program is in place, the better. I'm an avid hiker, a member of the Obsidians, and the Scorpion Trail Crew. I fully support Forest Service efforts to manage and disperse the recreationalists in the affected Wilderness areas. I hope folks will come to realize that reaching a destination lake or view point is only a small part of the wilderness experience and any time on a trail is time well spent.

Given the challenge you face with some areas being loved to death and the natural, expected resistance to change, I find the proposed fees to be more than reasonable. The proposed fees will be necessary to pay for putting people on the trails to educate the public and enforce policies.

I do have some questions about how this might all work. If corporations are people, then what about hiking/climbing clubs? I schedule hikes and backpacks for the Obsidians and would like to be able to have the organization hold the permit and then designate the leader(s). Having an organization hold the permit would somehow need to be limited to groups with an established standing such as an IRS standing as a 501(c)(7) recreational club.

As I understand it, right now the permit can only be held by an individual and is non-transferable. This past week an Obsidian trip was cancelled when the leader's mother, in hospice, took a turn for the worse. In such situations when a permit has been issued I would hope that an assistant leader could become the permit holder. I'm particularly concerned for climbers in the Obsidians. The majority are of working age and climbs usually get scheduled for the weekends. Climbers should be able to have the permit held by the leader or an alternate member of the team. I understand that permits shouldn't be completely transferable or there would be a black market and scalping but I would hope that there could be some flexibility.

I've heard that volunteers will not count against the limits of the permit system. I hope this will apply to persons scouting trails. Hopefully, the High Cascade Forest Volunteers will be able to get a database up and running so there can be a more immediate and accessible reporting of trail conditions for users and trail crews. Ideally, volunteers could carry something to indicate their purpose and affiliation when they are scouting trails.

Thank you for your efforts to address the heavy use in our Wildernesses.

Dave Cooper

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"Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a few minutes, including you."

- Anne Lamott

