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Comments: Allowances for Groups of Hikers

I applaud the Forest Service's efforts to preserve the magnificent area in which I am lucky to live. I agree a system to limit use in the most popular places during peak times is needed.

However, I urge the Forest Service to consider the needs of hiking groups, and allow for group reservations in a manner similar to what is in place today. The fees could be higher as required to offset the costs, perhaps even be a function of group size, but only one reservation and one processing fee should be needed.

While accommodating spontaneity is important, if a large number of the quota (say 40%) are held for day-before or day-of use, then this limits the availability to those who are able and willing to plan in advance. Since there is no way to determine an appropriate number, perhaps an approach would be to pick a small number for the first year and then adjust on a trailhead basis based on experience. If more permits of the quota are unused because they haven't been reserved in advance, then they can be made available the day-before or day-of a trip. But this doesn't work in reverse.

Thank you for your consideration.

Margaret Smith

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