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First name: Keith

Last name: Warren

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Special Recreation Fee/Limited Entry

I have comments on the Limited Entry System and the Special Recreation Permit Fee. These are confusing, so I hope I understand correctly.

If I remember correctly, the Limited Entry overnight permits are issued on a trailhead basis, per party. I believe it is a fundamental flaw to issue these on a per party basis, regardless of whether a party is 1 person or 12. The purpose is to limit the number of people in a sensitive area, so why not per person? Or limit the party size to 4 so that larger groups would have to obtain multiple permits. Based on almost 60 years of wilderness area hiking, I have observed that parties of 1 or 2 people tend to disappear into the camping areas. There is a certain social dynamic in larger parties, perhaps because they are more likely to contain inexperienced people. When a group exceeds around 3 or 4 people, a "party atmosphere" usually is present and these larger groups are often become loud and obnoxious.

And, if you are trying to limit impact, why in the world are dogs still allowed in wilderness areas? Ban dogs from wilderness areas and restrict stock to the PCT and non-wilderness forest trails.

Reservations- It is important that the reservation system be live and usable right up to the date of entry. People should be able to make an online (or phone) reservation the day before entry, or even better, the day of entry. Weather is always a factor in deciding about wilderness travel. Last minute reservations are not simply spontaneous, they are often based on prudent planning based on weather systems. I don't want to drive 3 hours to the ranger station in hopes that a "some day" spontaneous permit is available. Allow me to do this online or by phone. Same-day, show-up-at-the-ranger station permits should be a very small number.

The most important thing is that the system understandable and works smoothly and easily. I have had mixed experiences with Recreation.gov.

Thanks,

Keith Warren