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Comments: Comments on Proposed Special Recreation Permits

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed structure for the special recreation permit fee.

I support the efforts to reduce the impact people are having on the wilderness areas. A limited entry system with required permits and associated quotas has proven to be very effective for the Pamela Lake and Obsidian areas . The current reservation system at www.recreation.gov, which has been in use for many years, is convenient, easy to use, with reasonable fees (\$6 or \$10), allowing families and small groups to plan in advance when they want to hike into these areas.

The proposed new structure, however, requires that each individual obtain a separate permit for day-use costing \$3.00 plus a \$1.00 processing fee. This means a family of 5 with children over 12 years old would have to pay \$20.00 to use one of the 19 designated trailheads; a group of 12 adults would pay \$48.00. This seems unreasonable, and presents a logistics problem for families and groups wanting to hike together in that all members must make and obtain a reservation for the same trail on the same date.

I urge the Forest Service to consider the needs of families and 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 the group size, but only one reservation and one processing fee should be needed. Please note that on page 10 of the May, 2019 Decision Notice it alludes to the provision of group quotas.

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.

Sincerely,

Richard Stockton