

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/11/2019 5:37:18 PM

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Central Oregon Wilderness fees

Dear USDA,

I have two major concerns over the fee system proposed for three wilderness areas in the Willamette and Deschutes National Forests:

(1) There is a trend now, on Forest Service land, to a multilayering of different permits and requirements, some payable directly to the Forest Service, some to a private entity. This is confusing and onerous to users. Perhaps those close to the affected areas will become familiar with the blossoming array of options, but visitors from other areas are surely going to be stymied. And if this becomes the 'model' for other national forest trailheads, we'll have a scramble of hundreds of trailheads with different criteria for entry (no fee, Forest Pass, permit without fee, permit with fee, concessionaire fee, different requirement for children under 12 at different trailheads, etc.).

(2) Those living close to the three wilderness areas (Bend, Redmond, Sisters, Salem) are disproportionately affected. These trails are in their own backyard, places they go to every weekend. The fee system, separate as it is from the Northwest Forest Pass, affects them directly more than anybody.

Sincerely,

John Sparks

Member and volunteer: Trailkeepers of Oregon, Washington Trails Association