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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Discrimination against the Disability Community, and a Suggestion for Section Hiker Permits

Hello,

My name is Liz Fallin, trail name "Rest Step", and I'm a PCT section hiker. I have completed both Washington and Oregon. I am also disabled.

My disability, which has worsened over the last handful of years, has meant that I have only been able to hike about 100 miles per summer, each time over the course of two weeks. It also means that I'm never quite sure how far I'll be able to hike in a day. It's ranged anywhere from 4-12 miles. For sectioners in Oregon, the average is probably 15 miles per day, with thru hikers doing 25 or more.

In addition to planning for my wildly varying mileage, I need to set up multiple resupplies, and ensure that water is available, even if I have to have a friend drop some off. The logistics are quite a challenge.

I was extremely disappointed to learn of the permitting plans. We sectioners don't have the luxury of knowing when we'll enter a particular wilderness. We may arrive a few days early, or a few days late. It really depends on weather, health, or (God forbid) wildfire. And for those of us in the disability community, it's that much worse. I highly doubt I could complete Oregon under the new rules. And I'm not the only disabled hiker who thinks this...many of my fellow challenged hikers agree.

I strongly urge you to modify the permitting plans. My suggestion is to create a different plan for sectioners (maybe those planning on 100-500 mile trips). Allow us to have a window in which to start and finish hiking through the permitting area. Or allow us to start when we arrive, with a couple of days flexibility at the end. But make sure sectioners have the same restrictions as thru-hikers, in terms of where they can camp.

Please listen to our voices. Sectioners are a valuable part of the PCT family, and we bring our love of, and long-term dedication to, the trail. Because we often start or end our sections in Oregon, we bring business to local communities.

And those of us who are disabled need your extra consideration, so that we too may enjoy the Oregon wild spaces.

In the spirit of the trail, and in fervent hope that we can find a good solution for all,

Liz Fallin

"Rest Step"

Bothell, WA