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Comments: New USFS Wilderness Fees

I am unable to attend the hearings regarding the proposed fee in Salem/Eugene. However, in the unlikely event a sentient human actually will read, much less understand these comments, I do have a couple for you to put into your pro-con computer list, as everything is done now-a-days. For some historical perspective (something woefully missing currently), I was a USFS compliance officer the first year the \$1 per night charge was assessed in (formerly free) campgrounds in the Siuslaw NF, so have some experience with instituting a new (and somewhat unpopular at the time) fee program.

1) The overnight and day-use permit limits (although arguably necessary, still a big change) are probably going to take some time for users to get used to (ie, swallow).

Adding new fees on top of the new regulations is like pouring salt into a wound. At least let the wound heal, which could take a year or two.

2) Most folks thought the trail head parking fees that are now required were going to recreation management, as it is painfully obvious it is not going to road maintenance

or repair. While I, and most of the current users, certainly will not have to forgo meals due to a permit fee, there is a group of folks that are being nickel-and-dime'd

out of outdoor recreation. They might be your most important customers, and the new fees will just make it that more likely they will say "we just cannot afford it anymore";

3) While the reasons above might fit into one of your multiple response boxes, this 3rd one likely will not. Any government agency that is so degrading the environment

and the public with their truly immoral dereliction of responsibility regarding roads has forfeited any claim on any further charges, fees, etc until they clean up their act.

I have driven (or tried to drive) many, many roads in the Wenatchee, Gifford Pinchot, Mt. Hood, Willamette, and Deschutes over the last decade, and the roads that

meet minimum standards can almost be counted on one hand. I will give credit to the south end of the Clackamas and the north end of the Detroit Ranger Districts

for a 1/2 dozen driveable roads that I recently discovered, including to some north Jefferson Wilderness trailheads. Is it possible the active commercial thinning

occurring on that trailhead road might have been the impetus for road work, or provided the funds for the same? What a wonderful concept of how things might work!

Yes, I have heard all the excuses, but until the damage to mother nature from the washouts, erosion, etc. are remedied, and the hundreds of millions of dollars of

capital investments being lost due to politics, mismanagement, and incompetence are rectified, the USFS should not get another nickel from their abused public owners.

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