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Comments: Please do not day hike permit the Wilderness Areas

Dear National Forest Service,

Please reconsider your decision to require day hike permits in the Three Sisters, Mt Washington, and Jefferson Wilderness areas. These are special hikes that are appreciated on a beautiful, sunny day. Unfortunately, there is a small window of opportunity to hike in these areas safely due to trail snow cover and severe mountain weather conditions.

From my experience as a periodic visitor to Sunriver, the Green Lakes and Broken Top hikes have a small two-month optimal window of opportunity from mid-July to mid-September. I attempted to hike there this early-July, early-August, and mid-September and October, but decided not to go due to trail snow cover and severe thunderstorm warnings.

I want to be sure that a hike is safe and enjoyable in my senior years and especially when hiking with children. With a day permit requirement, I am concerned I will never be able to plan a spontaneous hike in these wilderness areas again on a beautiful, perfect hiking day.

As noted above, with such a small hiking window of opportunity, it seems to me that there is only large traffic in these areas on a safe, sunny day. Which is when the Forest Service is counting hike traffic. Other times, these areas are not so traveled. And even on a busy day, it doesn't feel overcrowded due to the expansive wilderness area.

Perhaps there is a need to limit and permit overnight backpackers. That might make sense. Mt Rainier Wilderness area does that. But the Rainier Wilderness area allows day hiking without a permit. And the area is still beautiful and well preserved.

I suggest an idea for a yearly hiking permit that requires an educational hiking course online to ensure people know how to properly take care of the wilderness areas. This could be a permit with an annual fee and required for hikers in these areas.

Please keep these wilderness areas accessible to all day hikers. Please do not require day hike permits. Instead, consider alternatives such as those suggested above. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Walter McGovern

