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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Wilderness Permits

We are strongly opposed to the new permit system as it is being implemented. The permit system should only be used on the most heavily used trails. Other trails should only be added as needed. Too many trails are being lumped into the permit system.

* Years ago we were promised that if we would pay to park at the trailheads the money would go to trail upkeep. Immediately after the fees were implemented, trail upkeep plummeted. We don't have much confidence that paying more to hike and camp on PUBLIC land will improve the trails.

* More efficient trail crews would save a tremendous amount of money and provide many more miles of maintained trails. Currently most crews are too large, are often poorly trained, and commonly do not have the physical ability to do the job.

* The processing fees always stick in my craw. We would rather you be honest about the real cost and include processing fees in the cost of the permit.

* \$5.00 per person per night for wilderness camping becomes expensive in a hurry for a family spending several days in the wilderness. This fee will exclude poor people from enjoying the wilderness - turning it into a playground for the rich and educated. There needs to be some sort of family pass.

* Are the fees refundable if plans change or the weather becomes horrendous?

* A percentage of the fees should be given to the county sheriff departments carrying out the search and rescue operations in the wildernesses.

* Do you have exceptions for active military personnel who have no control over when they are free to go hiking?

* The campfire ban elevation is unreasonable and harmful to the global environment. It should be closer to tree line. Fires need to be allowed where there is excess wood accumulating. The fire ban at the proposed elevation essentially bans spring and fall camping in the wilderness. Thus, the low elevation fire ban works against your goal of dispersing users. We like to camp in Park Meadows and Linton Meadows in late September and October. Without a fire or use of my wood stove it will be too cold to camp then. Furthermore, the overall damage to the global environment by implementing a policy which will result in a significant increase in the use of DISPOSABLE fuel containers is just simply wrong.

We have been enjoying hiking and camping in the wilderness areas being included in the fee system for over 50 years. Seeing the wilderness being made difficult to access and possibly unavailable for my children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews to enjoy is heartbreaking.

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