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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Limited access permits and recreation fees comments

To who it may concern:

I, Paul L. Campbell, have been a resident of Bend for over 40 years. During most of those years, I have had very limited time to hike in the wilderness areas due to working schedules and other responsibilities. I looked forward to turning 62, so I could qualify for the Senior Pass and therefore be entitled to free access and discounted campground fees. However, I was not retired until age 67, so I still lacked the time to enjoy the Senior Pass and hike in our great wilderness areas.

Now that I am age 70, I am still an avid hiker and am also able to get onto the trails much more frequently. But to my dismay, I now discover that I will not have the access I had dreamed of and looked forward to all those working years. The new, proposed permit systems will severely restrict all retirees from accessing the wilderness areas covered by the system, because they will now be competing with large numbers of people for a limited number of permits. No longer will we be able to wake up in the morning and drive up to one of the affected trail heads and go for a day hike. This feels a bit like a slap in the face, because it diminishes the benefits of the Senior Pass, aka Federal Recreational Lands Pass, by cutting back on the rights and privileges which were intended as integral in the creation and implementation of the Senior Pass system. In other words, it feels like we are now not getting the benefits we were promised and looked forward to.

I therefore humbly offer these suggestions:

1. Offer seniors with valid Senior Passes in their possession unrestricted access to the affected trails on weekdays for day hikes only. Limit the number of people using each pass to no more than two to four people.
2. All fees should be waived, as it is for trail head parking and entering the National Parks.

These suggestions seem fair to me, the right thing to do. I feel they are in alignment with the spirit of the Senior and Federal Recreational Lands Pass. We have worked hard, paid our taxes, and earned these rights and privileges. I hope you will seriously consider implementing these suggestions into your final plan.

Thank you,

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